

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566863
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jbennett@cfbt.com



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Mrs Heather Watts
Headteacher
Fishwick Primary School
Downing Street
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 4RH

Dear Mrs Watts

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Fishwick Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 1 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- Refine the improvement plan to identify key milestones so that the governing body and leaders can use them to check the impact of actions.
- The school effectiveness committee should review its timetable of meetings. It must make sure that they coincide with the school cycle of assessment to allow them to evaluate progress and impact of actions promptly.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with senior leaders, pupils, governors and representatives of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the section 5 inspection. The school action plans, monitoring files and recent attainment and progress data were evaluated and learning walks taken around the school. A selection of pupils' exercise books was examined.

Context

A new deputy headteacher started in September 2013. This is a new post.

Main findings

The Governing Body had recognised weaknesses before the inspection and had already begun to take action. Its new School Effectiveness Committee has raised the bar for leaders. The committee has a clear focus on checking the impact of actions taken and is already having a positive effect on the pace of improvement and pupils' standards. The Governing Body has also commissioned a skills audit from the local authority to identify gaps in governance to be filled through recruitment or training.

The appointment of a deputy headteacher has added capacity to the leadership team. She has been given responsibility developing and sustaining high-quality subject leadership and is working with the support of staff from an outstanding school. Links to another school are supporting improvements in the teaching of mathematics.

The headteacher has improved the way the quality of teaching is monitored. Senior leaders have a clearer understanding where strengths in teaching lie and what needs to improve. Teachers have been deployed more effectively to make better use of their skills. More thought has been given to weaker areas and resulted in immediate actions. Senior leaders have planned appropriate further training.

The reorganisation of classes for English and Mathematics in Years 5 and 6 has had some early, positive impact on pupils' progress, particularly for Year 6 pupils. However, further work is required if pupils are to reach expected levels of progress this year.

Marking of pupils' work has improved following the revision of the school's marking policy and subsequent monitoring by the headteacher. Lesson planning is better and tasks for pupils are more closely matched to their individual learning needs. Homework clubs for pupils in both key stages 1 and 2 are providing extra opportunities for learning.

The school action plan identifies clear priorities for improvement based on the inspection. However, it does not have sufficient milestones to allow senior leaders and governors to check whether the plan is working. The school effectiveness committee should review its timetable of meetings. It must make sure that they coincide with the school cycle of assessment to allow them to evaluate progress and impact of actions promptly.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The school is well supported by the local authority, which demonstrates a clear understanding of what needs to improve. The level of support and intervention it provides has increased since the inspection. Support is being used effectively to provide challenge and training for staff and governors from the monitoring and intervention team advisor and learning consultants.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire and as below.

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

Her Majesty's Inspector