

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 566933
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
ggleaden@cfbt.com



24 October 2013

Mrs Debbie Glover
Headteacher
Poppleton Road Primary School
Poppleton Road
York
North Yorkshire
YO26 4UP

Dear Mrs Glover

Special measures monitoring inspection of Poppleton Road Primary School

Following my visit with Christine Millett, additional inspector, to your school on 22 and 23 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in May 2012. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for York.

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012

- By July 2013, improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good, and raise attainment to be at least in line with national averages by:
 - ensuring expectations are consistently high in all classes and for all pupils
 - providing activities and tasks that are challenging enough for pupils of all abilities
 - increasing the pace of learning, providing stimulating activities and avoiding lengthy introductions to lessons so that pupils maintain their interest and engage actively in their learning
 - using day-to-day assessments to adapt teachers' planning to meet pupils' learning needs
 - marking pupils' work consistently and clearly to identify strengths and areas for improvement, showing pupils how to improve their work and giving time for them to respond to feedback
 - deploying all teaching assistants effectively
 - ensuring teachers plan more purposeful opportunities for pupils to apply and develop their skills in writing, calculation and mathematics skills across the curriculum.

- Improve the effectiveness with which leaders and managers monitor teachers' performance and the learning and progress of pupils by:
 - establishing a more rigorous cycle of monitoring and evaluation of teachers' lesson planning
 - checking the progress that different groups of pupils are making by undertaking regular scrutiny of their workbooks and a termly analysis of assessment information
 - ensuring the assessments used to monitor pupils' progress are accurate
 - focusing lesson observations on the impact that teaching has on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils, and reflecting this emphasis in feedback to teachers
 - using the outcomes of monitoring to secure improvement in teaching and pupils' achievement
 - setting challenging targets, so an increasing proportion of pupils make or exceed two sub-levels of progress each year in reading, writing and mathematics
 - developing the skills of middle leaders so they can effectively monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility.

Report on the fourth monitoring inspection on 22 and 23 October 2013.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the senior leaders, six members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, a group of pupils. One inspector spoke to parents informally in the playground. The headteacher accompanied one of the inspectors on a series of brief lesson visits.

Context

Four teachers left the school at the end of the summer term 2013 and four teachers took up posts in September 2013. Two members of staff, including a member of the senior leadership team, are on long-term sickness absence.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The trend of improvement has been maintained for the most part. Pupils' progress in mathematics has been a highlight. The enjoyment and confidence of pupils in mathematics has been transformed. Recent tests demonstrated almost all pupils in Year 6 made the progress expected of them and about a third made more progress than expected. Tests also showed the improvements in pupils' writing have been maintained but results for reading were not as positive. However, the school has made great strides in closing the gap in the progress made by pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium and other groups of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. Gains were not as marked for pupils in Key Stage 1 and the results of the phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) screening check at the end of Year 1 were disappointing.

Across the school, pupils' writing is continuing to improve. Pupils are confident in writing for different purposes. Writing in English is particularly strong and is developing across other subjects. Pupils enjoy reading, especially fiction, and enjoy talking about the characters and stories that are engrossing them. Guided-reading sessions often help in developing pupils' confidence in tackling unfamiliar texts. For example, Year 5 pupils were confident and articulate as they rehearsed a dramatic interpretation of a new story. However, there are times when tasks are not demanding enough. Consequently, pupils sometimes lack resilience in tackling demanding non-fiction texts.

Pupils continue to have positive attitudes to learning. They readily link their learning across different subjects. For example, Year 6 pupils used the information they had about rebuilding bomb-damaged buildings to calculate how much repairs would cost. They also had a sophisticated conversation with their teacher about the merits of an experienced, slower craftsman against the speed and lower costs of a less-experienced worker.

The quality of teaching

Improvements in teaching continue to gather pace. Teachers remain vigilant in seeking out ways to improve their work and support each other. This contributes to the buoyant and optimistic atmosphere in the school. They use assessment information to plan work to match the different needs and abilities of pupils so that most pupils are suitably challenged. Teachers new to the school have settled in quickly because they are supported well by senior leaders. However, as they get used to their new classes, there are occasions when expectations are not high enough. Teachers' marking in literacy is of a very high quality. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect on teachers' comments and tackle tailored challenges the teacher has set for them. This excellent practice is beginning to be used more consistently in other subjects.

Lessons are often exciting and teachers use a variety of methods to engage pupils. For example, Year 2 pupils were enthused by a recent science visit. The teacher skilfully built on their interest to engage them in writing confident accounts of the visit. Pupils used their writing to learn about how checklists are constructed. Teachers have worked hard to improve their questioning and this is eliciting thoughtful answers from pupils. However, there are times when teachers select answers only from those pupils who have their hands up. Consequently, there are occasions when some pupils choose not to contribute.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils continue to respond well to the opportunities to do challenging work and co-operate in groups. Their behaviour is sensible and calm in classrooms and as they move around the school. Pupils understand the responsibility they have in maintaining a safe and happy community. They are routinely polite and friendly with each other and all the adults in the school.

Pupils' enjoyment of school is seen clearly in their attendance which remains above the national average. The school has had marked success in improving the attendance of pupils who are supported by the pupil premium funding. There are also compelling examples of where this funding has been used very effectively to support pupils to adjust challenging behaviour or overcome social difficulties.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The headteacher continues to lead the school with dogged determination and high expectations. She is highly regarded by staff, parents and pupils alike. The absence of two teachers, including a member of the senior leadership team, has been challenging for the school. However, leaders have responded to the situation with cheerful optimism and practical solutions that are typical of the school. Significant changes to staffing have been managed effectively and teachers new to the school have been well supported. Leaders continue to be rigorous in checking on the quality of teaching and take effective action to forge further improvements. Consequently, teachers understand that every lesson counts.

Members of the governing body continue on their journey of improvement. They have taken full advantage of available training to evaluate their work. They are now confident in providing the school with challenge and support in equal measure. Pupil premium funding is used wisely and tracked forensically to make sure it has maximum effect. Plans to make sure the new sports funding is used just as effectively are not as sharp.

Governors continue to work with the Department for Education to identify a suitable sponsor as they explore the possibility of becoming an academy.

External support

The local authority continues to offer the school appropriate support. This has quite rightly reduced as leaders and teachers tackle improvements with increasing confidence. The school has particularly valued the work of the Challenge Partner in evaluating the quality of senior leaders' work.