

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231
Maple View Text Phone: 0161 6188524
Skelmersdale enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
WN8 9TG www.ofsted.gov.uk



8 November 2013

Mrs J Brown and Mr L McClure
Executive Headteacher and Head of School
Shawlands Primary School
Shaw Street
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S70 6JL

Dear Mrs Brown and Mr McClure

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Shawlands Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 7 November 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in July 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the executive headteacher and head of school, the Chair of the Governing Body and three governors, a representative of the local authority and three middle leaders from the school staff. The local authority's statement of action and the school's improvement plan were evaluated.

Context

At the time of the last Ofsted inspection the headteacher was still in post but not present in the school. The deputy headteacher had represented the school during the inspection and was appointed head of school in September 2013. Simultaneously the governing body appointed as executive headteacher a local leader of education, as recommended by the local authority, who had been working with the school to

make improvements. The senior leaders have restructured the staff to focus on improvements which were also identified in the inspection report.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The senior leaders in the school have taken the judgements of the Ofsted report as defining the areas for improvement necessary in the school. Their approach has been systematic and energetic. Working closely with the local authority, senior leaders have agreed an improvement plan that is detailed and covers all the issues identified as areas for improvement by the inspection. The senior leaders have then taken the agreed improvement plan and broken it down into weekly targets that allow them to track progress closely. This tracking document is shared with the staff and communicated to parents through a display in the entrance hall of the school using language appropriate to the audience. Senior leaders, teachers, local authority staff and governors monitor improvements using the tracking document.

Much of the work is focused on improving systems and processes in the school. As a precursor to taking action, the senior leaders have undertaken audits in collaboration with local authority staff. For example, an audit of provision and standards in literacy led senior leaders to appoint a literacy coordinator who leads a team in which individuals take responsibility for leading work on each of writing, reading, spelling and phonics. The local authority school evaluation officer supports this team.

There is clear evidence of close collaboration between the school's leaders and the local authority. This shows itself in the joint planning for improvement and the range of support given to the school. This support is extensive and well-recorded, covering such areas as planning, joint lesson observation, learning walks, performance management activities, contributions to the school improvement strategic group, review of phonics, teaching and learning review days. The relationship of the school and the local authority is close, productive and well-managed. The local authority had identified the school as a matter of concern before the inspection by Ofsted and had put in place a range of support, not least the services of a local leader in education who is now executive headteacher. The school leaders and the local authority are monitoring and collecting data on improvements in each of the areas identified by Ofsted as in need of improvement. Communications between partners are much in evidence and are seen to be effective.

The governing body is now making significant contributions to improvements in the school by the increased challenge they are providing to the school's leadership. The governing body has been reorganised with a new Chair and vice-chair and the majority of governors are new to the governing body of the school. They have received training on key areas of understanding such as the analysis of performance data and the interpretation of RAISEonline data. Having recognised there were problems with the performance of the school the governors initiated a self-review process prior to the inspection. This was carried out with the support of the local authority and they identified what they needed to do to improve their own performance and contribute to the improvement of the school. As a consequence

governors produced a development plan and are now better equipped to be critical friends to the school. They recognise the improvement to teaching and learning brought about by improved systems and more effective monitoring. They welcome the current focus on the performance of individuals and groups of pupils in order to raise standards more effectively. Governors attribute much of the improvement to the effectiveness of the school's leadership.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

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

Yours sincerely,

Ian Richardson

Her Majesty's Inspector