

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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



18 December 2013

Mrs Patricia Shepherd  
Headteacher  
St Matthew's CofE Primary School  
Chadderton Hall Road  
Chadderton  
Oldham  
Lancashire  
OL9 9BN

Dear Mrs Shepherd

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Matthew's CofE Primary School, Oldham**

Following my visit to your school on 17 December 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 October 2013. 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:

- Devise an action plan which plots a route for the school to be judged as good at the next inspection rather than solely focussing on the points for improvement identified in the report. In the action plan, make sure the measures to check if the actions have been successful, are precise and easy to evaluate.
- Increase the attainment and attendance of pupils who are known to be eligible to receive pupil premium funding (pupil premium is a fund provided by the government to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals; pupils in the care of the local authority; and pupils of families in the armed forces.)
- Enable all subject leaders to evaluate pupils' learning across the school.

## **Evidence**

During my visit I met with four representatives from the governing body and a representative from Oldham local authority. I met with you and the deputy headteacher and with three teachers who lead subjects. I evaluated the school's improvement plans.

## **Context**

Since the last inspection two teachers have returned from planned absences.

## **Main findings**

The inspection judgement was clearly a disappointment to all in the school. However, no time was wasted and school leaders immediately refocused their attention to tackling the issues identified by the inspection team as needing to improve.

Senior leaders introduced a new policy and procedure for marking pupils' work and for pupils to respond to teachers' feedback. According to staff, this has already started to have impact and pupils have a better understanding of what they need to do to improve their work. The targets pupils need to achieve by the end of the summer are more challenging.

The teacher who is responsible for leading reading in the school, with other staff, has created a reading policy which identifies how pupils should be taught to read. She created 12 'reading champion' posts for Year 6 pupils. These champions promote reading in the school, advise the reading leader, and have become role models for other pupils. In addition, she bought new books so that pupils in Key Stage 2 (Years 3-6) have more challenging books to read. As a result, according to leaders, the approach to teaching reading is more consistent across the school and the teaching of reading has improved. Pupils are now more engaged in discussion about more complex texts.

Leaders have started to tackle weaknesses in teaching with more frequent visits to lessons. Key to the improvement is following up from observation to observation to check teachers have worked on and improved areas for development that were identified. As a result, lessons that were deemed to be inadequate by the school have improved as have those which were deemed to require improvement. There is a new system of managing teachers' performance which is more tightly focussed on pupils' making progress. Teaching assistants are also included in the performance management system.

Although senior leaders have completed observations and an evaluation of pupils' work, few teachers who lead subjects have monitored learning, this is in the plan for the spring and summer terms. Where leaders have had the chance to check on pupils' learning they have been mainly restricted to one school site. The next stage is to make sure they have the chance to work across both school sites.

Subject leaders have however created an action plan for improving their subjects and have spoken to pupils to gather their views, as a result, they have started to get a better picture of what needs to be improved in their subjects.

The school's improvement plan covers the points for improvement identified by the inspection team and the senior leaders have rightly been focussing on them. The plan however needs to be extended to plot a route for the school to be judged as good at its next inspection. For instance, the school's data indicates that pupils supported by pupil premium money attain less well than other pupils and have more absence. This would be a barrier to the school being judged as good at its next inspection. The plan also needs to be refined so that it separates the staff monitoring the actions taken to improve the school and those evaluating whether the actions have been successful or not. It also needs to be written in a way so that governors, senior leaders and the local authority can measure whether the actions have been successful.

There is a new Chair of Governors since the inspection and a new committee which meets monthly to check on progress towards tackling the points for improvement. To check on progress governors have a new, visual way of identifying which pupils are on track to make progress and which pupils are not. As a result, they are able to ask more challenging questions to leaders more frequently in the year and deploy or buy resources to improve pupils' achievement. They have a better oversight of teaching because they meet frequently to discuss the results of lesson observations and other forms of monitoring. There are plans in place to review governors' impact and effectiveness and if necessary to restructure the governing body and the committees.

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 local authority has provided support through an external consultant who started work in September. The consultant and the school improvement partner have conducted joint observations with senior leaders. As a result they have agreed the headteacher and deputy headteacher both have an accurate judgement about the quality of teaching.

The local authority has brokered a partnership with a teaching school. Teachers at St Matthew's have been paired with teachers who have been judged by the teaching school as good or outstanding. In the spring, the pairs of teachers are due to work closely together with a view to further improve teaching.

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

Yours sincerely

Allan Torr  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**