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

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Mrs Hazel Palmer
Headteacher
Grange Community Primary School
Brindley Avenue
Winsford
Cheshire
CW7 2EG

Dear Mrs Palmer

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grange Community Primary School, Cheshire West and Chester

Following my visit to your school on 23 January 2014, 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 November 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:

- continue the drive to raise standards and improve the consistency of learning through increased staff stability.

Evidence

During the visit I met with you, other senior leaders, the Chair and four members of the governing body, and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school's action plan was evaluated. You and I visited each class in the school to meet the staff and pupils and discuss recent changes to the school environment. I talked to six pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6 and examined their books. I also evaluated the action plan for mathematics and your analysis of pupils' progress since the last inspection.

Context

Since the last inspection there have been changes to the senior leadership team. Your deputy head teacher has left for a promoted post in another school and you have two temporary assistant headteachers. A new family support worker has also joined the school.

Main findings

The school action plan tackles all the areas for improvement identified in your recent inspection. The timescales and review process for the actions reflect a clear sense of pace and purpose. For example: your middle leaders have clear short-term targets to drive improvements in teaching and learning, and increased accountability for pupils' progress through improved monitoring of teachers' planning, teaching and assessment.

Teachers understand there is a need for more outstanding teaching and there is a programme of support which links with an outstanding school nearby. You have increased the regularity with which you check pupils' progress. Staff monitor the progress of all groups of pupils every six weeks so that any pupils who need extra support to make accelerated progress are clearly identified and appropriate action is taken quickly. Pupils know and understand their class and group targets and these are discussed daily with individual pupils so that targets can be amended as pupils meet their targets. Teachers have increased the opportunities for pupils to tackle mathematics problems in other subjects, for example: pupils worked on measurement, area and averages when planting bulbs and collecting leaves.

Pupils respond to the marking of their work more consistently as they have a set time every morning to improve their work and respond to teachers' comments. The pupils I spoke to could show me how they had improved their work and talked positively about the help and support they received from staff during lessons. They talked enthusiastically about the work they had done recently on ancient civilisations, Charles Darwin, Shakespeare, science experiments and said teachers are up-beat and enthusiastic and inject excitement into lessons. Displays in classrooms are used more consistently to support learning, share examples of best practice with pupils and give prompts for subject specific language.

Although some senior leaders are in a temporary position they share a vision, team spirit and commitment for school improvement. However, there have been a number of staff changes which have meant that although improvement has been made consistency is difficult to maintain. The governors are aware of the need for greater stability on the staff team and are keen to recruit good quality teachers to the school team. Governors have undergone recent training to improve their knowledge of governance including taking a strategic role and analysing the impact of pupil premium funding.

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 mathematics consultant has worked closely with the school to provide support and training which will continue in the future. The attendance officer also works closely with the school. The school improvement officer has worked well with the school and reviewed the data, given advice on the school action plan and offered links with other schools to share good practice. The local authority advisor has also offered support to the governing body.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cheshire West and Chester.

Yours sincerely

Christina McIntosh

Her Majesty's Inspector