

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



5 February 2014

Mrs Jane Verity
Headteacher
Brookfield Community Primary School
Watling Street Road
Preston
Lancashire
PR2 6TU

Dear Mrs Verity

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Brookfield Community Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 4 February 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.

This was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in February 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- tackle the low expectations of some teachers so that pupils are not just kept busy but are challenged to do their very best
- review teachers' checks on pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics to make sure all of the data you hold is accurate
- disperse the responsibility for improvement across all leaders and managers by reviewing their roles; making their responsibilities explicit and holding them to account for the work they do and the difference this makes to teaching and pupils' achievement
- take a greater role in directing and coordinating the wide range of support so you get best use out of external advice and guidance.

Evidence

During my visit, meetings were held with yourself, three leaders and managers, three members of the governing body, a local authority officer and a local leader of

education to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. We visited four classrooms to talk to pupils, observe them at work and to look at their books. We also watched four lessons led by four teachers. School data, including the unvalidated 2013 results, were scrutinised. Your checks on teaching were also considered. I met with a small group of older pupils to gain their views on the changes you have made since the last inspection.

Context

Since the inspection in February 2013, two teachers have left the school. Two temporary teachers took up post in September to cover these vacancies. The Reception teacher returned to school following a period of extended leave. Considerable building refurbishment has taken place. At the time of the inspection, the Year 1 and Year 5 and 6 teachers were absent. These classes are being taught by temporary teachers. An acting assistant headteacher joined the school in January and is teaching the Year 4 and 5 class, replacing a temporary teacher. This arrangement is set to last until the end of the academic year. A local leader of education is working closely with the school.

Main findings

Considerable changes in staffing, teacher absence and prolonged building work have all played a part in hampering your progress since the last inspection. Although the pace of change has gathered momentum recently, too much time has been lost. As a result major shortcomings are not being tackled quickly enough. This raises serious concerns about the school's capacity to become good before its next inspection.

There are signs of success, but these are not widespread enough to make a real difference to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The 2013 unvalidated results show standards improved at the end of Key Stage 1; Year 2 pupils did as well as all pupils in the country. In contrast, pupils' achievement fell at the end of Key Stage 2 so Year 6 pupils started their secondary school career over two terms behind in their learning. Writing results shot up and are the best you have gained for a long while. However, this improvement was at the expense of reading, which has typically been one of your strengths, and mathematics. Year 6 pupils did not make enough progress in these subjects and standards fell.

Your own data paints a more positive picture of pupils' achievement. However, pupils' books tell a different story; they show pupils in some classes are not making enough progress. Despite checking teachers' views and records on how well pupils are gaining skills and knowledge, not all the data you hold is accurate. As a result, some teachers do not have a secure understanding of pupils' achievement and you do not have a clear view of teaching over time.

You and officers from the local authority are putting a lot of time and energy into improving teaching. Nonetheless, teaching is not getting better on a day-to-day basis in all classrooms quickly enough. Teaching in Reception is going from strength-to-strength; learning is carefully crafted so children are making swift progress from their starting points. For example, the physical skills children need to form letters

were skilfully developed in a mathematics activity because children used tweezers to pick up and count the correct number of beans for the bears in their story. Children are keen to share their work; they talk with confidence about their learning because the activities they are experiencing are truly memorable. However, the chances of children building on this excellent start are too variable across the rest of the school. In some classes, pupils are not expected to do their very best. As a result, the quality and volume of work they produce is not as good as it should be for their age or ability. Presentation is weak in some books because teachers do not insist on high standards. The over-use of worksheets and cutting and sticking activities show too many pupils complete work that keeps them busy but does not extend their learning.

Pupils are fiercely loyal. There is nothing they want to change about their school. They have high hopes for their futures; many plan on going onto further education so they can secure their dream job. You continue to be very successful in harnessing pupils' enthusiasm for school to promote positive attitudes to learning. Although this has been a challenging year and there have been many calls on your time, you have kept a close eye on attendance and behaviour. As a result, pupils come into school regularly, on time and ready to learn.

The school's journey to good has faltered because you continue to hold too much of the responsibility for improvement. You have moved roles around to develop a stronger team approach. However, this has not gone far enough; you are not giving leaders enough responsibility to make the necessary changes and you do not hold people accountable for the work they complete. You have established strong systems for checking the quality of teaching and you have improved your own skills in giving teachers accurate feedback to help them improve their performance. Nonetheless, not all teachers are following this guidance with sufficient urgency to lift the quality of teaching across the school.

The governing body is rising to the challenge and are making great strides in improving their effectiveness. A frank discussion, led by the Chair of Governors, is helping governors realise the level of commitment they need to make to help the school improve. This has led to some vacancies in the governing body in the short term, but has also shored up a core group of governors who have a very good grasp of current weaknesses. These governors know that progress since the last inspection has not been rapid enough; they are not making excuses but are asking the right questions and seeking to work with you to get back on track.

External support

You are fortunate to access a wide range of quality support. The locally authority is providing a generous amount of support and challenge. You are drawing on the expertise of teaching and learning consultants to improve teaching and you are using the guidance from a local leader in education to enhance your skills in checking teaching and providing clear feedback. In response to your need to extend the leadership team, the local authority brokered, and is partly funding, a temporary assistant headteacher to work with you until the summer break. The local authority recognise all of this extra help has not made a big enough difference. This is partly due to staff turnover. You clearly embrace and welcome all the support that is

offered. However, you do not always take a strong enough role in directing and coordinating this support to make sure you and the teachers are getting the most of out of external guidance and advice.

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

Yours sincerely

Joanne Olsson
Her Majesty's Inspector