

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566862
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
rcowley@cfbt.com



5 March 2014

Miss Jo Sawyer
Headteacher
Park Grove Primary School
Park Grove
York
North Yorkshire
YO31 8LG

Dear Miss Sawyer

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Park Grove Primary School, York

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you and the deputy headteacher, subject and phase leaders, the Chair and the vice-chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. The school development and action plans were reviewed, together with records of monitoring activities, and information on achievement, appraisal, governance and external support. I jointly observed, with you, a sample of lessons, including all classes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and also looked at pupils' workbooks.

Context

The school appointed an Early Years Foundation Stage leader in October 2013. A new class teacher for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Year 1 has been appointed since the previous inspection in November.

Main findings

The pace of improvement since the previous inspection has been swift. There have been leadership and staff changes in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and this has already resulted in better quality teaching and provision. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has worked closely with class teachers to ensure that children have every opportunity to reach a 'good level of development'. As a result, the school's assessment information is already showing a significant increase in the number of children attaining this measure than in the previous year. Other notable actions, helping to support this improvement include an extensive reorganisation within classrooms, to introduce a better range of focused activities to encourage children to make progress across all the required areas of learning, and also targeted training for teaching assistants, to support better quality assessments. Evidence of emerging improvement in children's development in the Early Years Foundation Stage is evident in children's learning journeys.

A similar picture of improvement is evident for pupils in Key Stage 1. The school's assessment information shows that progress is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in both Year 1 and 2. Pupils in Year 1 are also on track to reach the school's challenging target in phonics, with a much higher proportion reaching the expected standard of phonic decoding. Regular monitoring of teaching and pupils' work, together with well-targeted professional development for teachers in this key stage, including attendance at 'getting to good' training, provided by the local authority has helped to support these improvements. Notably, the school's work on improving marking can also be seen in comparing examples of workbooks from before and after the previous inspection. In lessons, pupils in both key stages were able to explain how teachers' marking is now helping them to improve and gave examples of their 'responses' to teachers' comments. Pupils also understood the more recently introduced 'target ladders' showing national curriculum target levels in their workbooks.

The school's assessment information indicates that the majority of pupils in Key Stage 2 are continuing to make at least expected progress in English and mathematics. Better progress is also evident for more-able pupils and those with additional learning needs. However, a more forensic approach to monitoring these groups within classes, key stages and across the school would further support leaders' drive to secure at least good progress for all groups.

Since her appointment in April 2013, the headteacher has refreshed the line management structure and delegated greater responsibility to subject leaders. Since the November inspection, subject leaders, for areas other than English and mathematics, have increased their monitoring role and also now have some budget responsibility. Appraisal objectives ensure all are held to account for their leadership, however, although developing well, the impact of their work is at an early stage.

There has been significant change in the leadership and membership of the governing body since the previous inspection. Five new members have been appointed with specific skills to better support and challenge the school's work. A new Chair and vice-chair, with experience in education and business, have been elected, the number of committees has been reduced and a full external review of governance, led by a National Leader of Governance has taken place. The governing body is now working swiftly to adopt the 'getting to good' actions recommended by the external review. This includes, for example, the introduction of a more strategic approach to planned meetings across the year and closer links with curriculum

areas, whole school aspects, and individual classes. The Chair, vice-chair and senior leaders meet weekly to monitor the school's current position and governors have started to ensure that all visits are well-focused and that the impact of their visit can be measured. These changes are strengthening the capacity of governance to hold the school to account.

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's support is well-judged and effective. The local authority has provided funding to support the external review of governance and for extra support days from the school's 'challenge partner'. Lesson observations and detailed scrutiny of pupils' progress in workbooks have been jointly carried out by the 'challenge partner' and school leaders. The impact of this work is evident in the improvements in marking and provision, particularly for younger children in the school. Local authority consultants have also supported the school's improvements in Early Years Foundation Stage and phonics. The local authority regularly monitors the impact of its work at school improvement panel meetings, attended by school leaders and governors.

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

Yours sincerely

Angela Headon

Her Majesty's Inspector