

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



12 March 2014

Mrs Diane Wakefield
Headteacher
Hawthorn Primary School
Elmham Road
Cantley
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN4 6LQ

Dear Mrs Wakefield

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Hawthorn Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 11 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 December 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:

- Secure interim leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage so that there is consistent day-to-day leadership.
- Build on the improvements in pupils' writing so that they apply their skills across all subject areas.
- Ensure the improvements in marking are applied across all subject areas and give pupils consistent opportunities to respond to teachers' written comments.
- Ensure the teaching of letters and sounds is always precise.
- Make sure pupils regularly check their own work for errors and make corrections.
- Tweak the school's action plan to make it clear what success will look like at monitoring points.

Evidence

During the visit, I met with you and the deputy headteacher, members of the Early Years Foundation Stage team, two members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's action plans. During the morning I toured the school and made a series of brief lesson visits

with you and the deputy headteacher. I also visited the Early Years Foundation Stage classes. A sample of pupils work was scrutinised for improvements in writing and marking. I looked at a few case studies of individual pupils.

Main findings

Senior leaders, supported well by the governing body, are bringing about steady improvement. Pupils and staff are enthused by the small group approach to improving reading and writing. Pupils are engaged and maintain their concentration during these sessions. Teaching assistants are gaining confidence and as a result pupils are beginning to make better progress. Occasionally teaching assistants do not spot when they need to intervene and so pupils are not sufficiently precise when they are sounding out words in their reading.

Teachers and teaching assistants have worked well with the partner school and made changes to the way they check on children's progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has given staff a sharper understanding of each child's needs and how well they are making progress. However, improvement is not as fast as it could be because of the lack of day to day leadership. Plans to recruit an Early Years Foundation Stage Leader are underway but current arrangements are somewhat fragmented. Leaders and governors appreciate this is an important aspect which needs urgent attention.

Pupils' writing is improving in literacy and they can write lengthy stories and letters. However, this is not the same in all subjects and so pupils do not get regular opportunities to practice their skills. Teachers' marking has also improved, especially for literacy based work. Teachers make helpful comments about what pupils have done well and what they should do next to improve their work. This good practice is not routinely followed in other subjects. Pupils sometimes respond to the written comments made by teachers and this helps them to improve their own work. Leaders are working to ensure this is done regularly so that pupils learn to check their own work for errors and correct them.

Behaviour in class and around the school is calm and leaders have put in place individual plans to help pupils with specific behaviour difficulties. Teachers and other adults have managed this well and these pupils are having more success in adjusting their own behaviour. Leaders have used the support of the partner school effectively to train a teacher to take responsibility for overseeing how well disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are doing. This along with the work involving agencies and parents is leading to improvements in attendance.

Leaders have sound plans to sustain improvements. They have identified the right priorities and regular opportunities to check on progress. However, plans are not clear enough about what success will look like at these interim points. This makes it difficult for leaders and governors to know if improvements are on track. Governors continue to offer effective support and challenge to the school. They make rigorous checks on how well the school is doing. Their regular visits to the school help them to maintain first hand evidence of improvements. Staff training has been well-focussed and timely, leading to teachers' increased confidence and putting down firm foundations for further improvement.

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 school continues to value the effective support of the partner school and the local authority. Of particular note has been the support from the local authority adviser in doing joint observations of teaching with leaders. This has helped leaders identify how they can best support teachers in improving their practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Joan Hewitt

Her Majesty's Inspector