

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

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01695 566 937

Direct F 01695 729 320

Direct email: [jsimmons@cfbt.com](mailto:jsimmons@cfbt.com)



17 March 2014

Mrs Ruth Lyons  
Headteacher  
Shafton Primary Academy  
High Street  
Barnsley  
Yorkshire  
S72 8QA

Dear Mrs Lyons

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Shafton Primary Academy, Barnsley**

Following my visit to your academy on 14 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the findings. 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy 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 academy should take further action to:

- accelerate change in upper Key Stage 2 so that it matches that in the rest of the academy
- identify appropriate ways for governors to collect first hand evidence in order to closely monitor the impact of improvement
- devise a structure so governors can spend time monitoring the impact of the improvement plan in detail.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the sponsor to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The academy improvement plan and other evidence provided by the academy were evaluated. The headteacher took HMI on a tour of the academy.

## **Context**

The headteacher is now working at this academy full time.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders have devised an extensive action plan to address the areas for improvement which is broken down into useful weekly steps. These steps include actions, monitoring activities, questions to evaluate impact and key milestones. The weekly plans are analysed and evaluated at senior leadership team meetings and are a strength of the plans for improvement.

In Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2 teachers have worked in teams to produce 'development learning plans' designed to improve application of knowledge and skills and increase engagement. Teachers have been empowered to be more creative and pupils are enjoying learning about topics and then using that learning to write in context. For example, Year 3 and Year 4 pupils have produced varied pieces of cross-curricular work about Asia which demonstrate extended writing and a range of other skills, including some excellent art work. Comments from pupils show that they value this new style of learning. Teachers say it is encouraging a less formulaic approach. Very new changes to the mathematics curriculum are also contributing to this. Pupils are now provided with problems to solve which challenge them to develop their mathematical skills in a context. Early indications are that this is having a positive impact. Year 5 and Year 6 have yet to be fully included in these new learning styles and this is an important next step to accelerate progress in this part of the academy.

Marking and feedback have improved. Pupils are given feedback which helps them to understand how to improve their work and most are responding to this feedback. Pupils can explain the marking and feedback policy. This now needs to be applied consistently and embedded.

The work of teaching assistants is developing. They have had training on questioning techniques which enables them to help pupils make better progress.

The weekly planning and monitoring format ensures better evaluation of all the academy's activities, including the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers whose practice is not yet good have individual improvement plans and are working closely

with the deputy headteacher to develop their planning and teaching and learning. There are signs that teaching and learning are improving.

Regular progress meetings between teachers and the deputy headteacher are effective in identifying the progress of different groups and the pupils who need some extra help. The impact of this extra help is carefully monitored.

Leaders are receiving coaching and support from consultants working for the sponsor and an external consultant. This support includes the development of leadership and management for middle leaders, and for the leaders of mathematics and special educational needs. Middle leaders say that the training is empowering them to lead their teams and take ownership of changes to teaching and learning.

The academy is including a variety of opportunities for pupils to enhance their understanding of how to live in 21<sup>st</sup> century Britain. The special educational needs coordinator has been trained as a 'Stonewall champion'; and the topics for learning and circle time are used to improve pupils' understanding of different types of bullying, including homophobic bullying and bullying of the disabled.

Governors are monitoring the impact of actions taken to improve the academy as part of the half termly full governing body meetings. They need to consider ways in which to collect and record first hand evidence to gain a detailed picture of how well the academy is improving, and an appropriate group which can spend time monitoring the impact of the improvement plan in detail. The Chair of the Governing Body is undertaking training with the academy sponsor and through the National College.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the academy until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The Regional Director of Education for the academy sponsor (AET) meets the headteacher half termly. The sponsor provides support for the development of mathematics, special educational needs and governance. This support will continue throughout the year. An external consultant is working with middle leaders.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Barnsley and the Department for Education Academies Advisers Unit.

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

**Her Majesty's Inspector**