

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 566939
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: glaw@cfbt.com



18 March 2014

Mr Mick Hayes
Headteacher
Grove House Primary School
Myers Lane
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD2 4ED

Dear Mr Hayes

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Grove House Primary School, Bradford

Following my visit to your school on 17 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on 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 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 not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection and plans are not sharply focused on rapidly bringing about improvement. The school should take immediate action to:

- ensure leaders at all levels check improvements with a greater sense of urgency and insist teachers consistently follow agreed approaches to teaching and the marking of pupils' work.
- review the current school development plan to strengthen the focus on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' progress by:
 - clearly stating the key features and attributes of good teaching and how these will be checked, so that leaders and teachers can focus their actions on developing these and ensuring they are consistently in place
 - sharpening success criteria and milestones so that leaders and governors can measure improvements and ensure robust accountability and accurate evaluation of the school's progress
- quickly establish the proposed governing body committee to focus on pupils' progress and attainment and to provide robust accountability for pupils' achievement.

Evidence

During my visit, I held meetings with you and your deputy, other senior leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair 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 improvement plans and looked at a range of evidence including information on pupils' progress and a sample of work in pupils' books. You accompanied me on a learning walk to most of the classes in the school.

Context

Since the inspection there have been no changes in teaching staff at the school. At the time of my visit five student teachers were on Initial Teacher Education placements at the school.

Main findings

Most of the school's leaders and governors agreed that the inspection judgement about the quality of education provided by the school was the correct one. Leaders, with the support of an external consultant have gained a clear understanding of the issues and challenges which face the school. However, senior leaders accept that there has not yet been enough impact to secure improvements in the quality and consistency of teaching and the achievement of pupils. For example, although teachers have been given direction from senior leaders about the improvements required in the marking of pupils' work, a quick and random sample of pupils' books revealed different approaches and standards of marking across Key Stages 1 and 2. Furthermore, approaches to teaching are inconsistent and requirements have not been clarified. For example, pupils in Year 2 spend time copying learning objectives into their books, this takes time away from their writing, whilst older pupils have learning objectives printed and glued in their books. This means these pupils spend more time focusing on their own writing.

The school has drafted plans which set out actions leaders will take to address the points identified at the last inspection. However, while there is evidence of the systems leaders have put in place, there is too little focus on the precise actions the school will take to improve the quality of teaching. The plans do not show clearly which aspects of teaching need to be improved, what action will be taken and how leaders will check that this is having the desired impact. Leaders have had discussions about training for teaching assistants, but this has yet to result in concrete action.

Targets for the proportion of pupils achieving higher levels in assessments at the end of Years 2 and 6 have been raised. However, targets for the proportions of pupils' achieving expected levels at the end of Key Stage 1 are not ambitious enough and currently only reflect levels of achievement similar to those seen in 2013.

Governors have undertaken an audit of their skills and functions with support from the local authority governors' services. This has resulted in an action plan which has helped them address their statutory functions. Nevertheless, there is still further to go to ensure that there is closer scrutiny and accountability for the progress of pupils. Currently the Chair of governors meets with the Headteacher to discuss pupils' progress. There have been discussions about setting up a committee to oversee this aspect, however, this has yet to be agreed and constituted. Governors have agreed to visit the school regularly to look at aspects of the school's improvement in their link classes. However, to date only the Chair of Governors has visited the school in this capacity.

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

Following the decline in standards, the local authority placed the school at a level of increased priority. However, the level of support and challenge from the local authority has not been commensurate with the needs of the school which has hampered its progress. Leaders at the school feel well supported by partnership arrangements with other local schools, for example in moderating pupils' work. Nevertheless the pace of improvements has not been fast enough to get the school securely on the road to being judged good at its next inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Bradford and as below.

Yours sincerely

Adrian Guy

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Local authority - including where the school is an academy
- Contractor providing support services on behalf of the local authority - where appropriate
- The Education Funding Agency (EFA) if the school has a sixth form
- < Diocese - for voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools
- The person or body responsible for appointing foundation governors if the school has a foundation
- DfE - Academies Advisers Unit [colin.diamond@education.gsi.gov.uk] - for academies