

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 566933
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
ggleaden@cfbt.com



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Mrs Gail Worrall
Headteacher
Callands Community Primary School
Callands Road
Callands
Warrington
Cheshire
WA5 9RJ

Dear Mrs Worrall

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Callands Community Primary School, Warrington

Following my visit to your school on 18 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 taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- identify a precise date when the school will be good
- establish a clear strategy to ensure that, by the time they leave the school, pupils can spell accurately and make good use of dictionaries
- relate the targets in the action plan to national figures.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, the teachers, three governors including the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority and six pupils, to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school action plans and we discussed the most recent information on pupils' performance. In addition, I made a brief visit to each classroom and spoke to pupils as I walked around the school. I also examined the single central record.

Context

Since the inspection, the deputy headteacher has taken on the role of acting headteacher.

Main findings

You, your staff and governors accept that the school requires improvement and are working well together to make the necessary improvements. Your action plan focuses clearly on the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. You have set challenging targets for all year groups and pupils of all abilities, and have introduced rigorous systems for tracking the progress of individual pupils. The action plan does not give a precise date when you expect the school to be good and the staff and governors are unclear about this. The targets in the plan are not explicitly related to national figures.

Your data show that all year groups are making good progress from their starting points but there is still further work to be done to ensure that all Year 5 and 6 pupils reach their stated targets. The most able pupils are making good progress in reading and writing but less so in mathematics. However, you have clear strategies to tackle this. Pupils are being given more opportunities to develop and extend their writing across a range of subjects but the school does not have a clear strategy for improving spelling and ensuring that older pupils make regular use of dictionaries to check their work.

The teaching staff are very positive about the changes that you are making, as is clear from their responses to the recently-completed questionnaire and from the comments they made to me. They value the training and support they receive, as well as the opportunities to plan together and to assume a wider range of responsibilities. Your evaluations show that the quality of teaching is improving but is not yet consistently good.

The pupils to whom I spoke said that work was now more challenging and they were learning more. Marking was clear and helpful. Less time was being wasted in class and behaviour had improved. They valued the booster sessions in mathematics and could show how they had made greater progress as a result.

As acting headteacher, you are providing clear direction and leadership and have the confidence of the staff and governors. The external review of the governing body has been completed and consideration is being given to reducing its size, in order to make it more effective. The governors to whom I spoke had a clear understanding of what the school needed to do to improve and were now regularly involved in reviewing attainment and progress.

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

You are making good use of support from the local authority and other agencies to extend the knowledge and skills of staff, to provide training in evaluating the quality of teaching and to gain an independent view of the speed and extent of improvements made.

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

Yours sincerely

Aelwyn Pugh

Her Majesty's Inspector