

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 566863
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
jbennett@cfbt.com



29 April 2014

Mrs Helen Davey
Headteacher
Willow Tree Community Primary School
Wetherby Road
Harrogate
North Yorkshire
HG2 7SG

Dear Mrs Davey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Willow Tree Community Primary School, North Yorkshire

Following my visit to your school on 28 April 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 February 2014. 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:

- ensure senior leaders and governors strengthen and extend the school's plans over a longer timescale and share plans widely to provide a guide to staff and parents about the expected improvements.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and representatives of the governing body and the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school action plan was evaluated. Meetings were held with pupils from Years 3 to 6 and their books were scrutinised. Meetings were held with ten teachers. Pupil progress data and monitoring records were reviewed.

Since the section 5 inspection, which judged the school to require improvement, one teacher has left and one is absent through illness. Temporary teachers are in place to cover these absences in Year 2 and Year 4 classes.

Main findings

The school have moved quickly to plan for improvement. Plans are closely aligned with the areas for improvement identified in the inspection report. Initial expectations are clear and the targets for April, May and June 2014 help senior leaders and governors gauge whether pupils' progress improves rapidly. However, the plan does not extend beyond the end of the current term. In discussions during the monitoring visit you recognised that a longer term plan, with milestones to guide the school's development, is required to increase the pace of the work you have started and to make your vision of getting to good and outstanding clearer to everyone. Strategic changes, for example in reorganising the work of teaching assistants and support staff, are well advanced. A greater focus on the progress that specific groups of pupils are making such as those with disabilities and special educational needs and those who are eligible for pupil premium is evident in leaders' monitoring of the school's work. The developments you have made to systems and practices are enabling leaders and governors to interrogate school data in more depth and identify where inconsistencies remain. In light of the wide gaps in attainment and progress in writing, particularly in Year 2 and Year 5, good decisions have been made to work together with other local schools on an initiative to support pupil premium eligible pupils and their families to close the gap. External reviews of governance and of the school's use of pupil premium funding are planned but have yet to take place.

Programmes of regular staff training, revisions to handwriting and marking policies, new tracking systems and better analyses and interrogation of data are helping teachers to review their practice in teaching writing and mathematics. Teachers' expectations of pupils' learning are rising and in most classes progress is quickening. Pupils' work rate is increasing; they are writing more frequently, and at length, in response to more interesting assignments and tasks. Pupils are starting to receive clear guidelines about what is required to improve the presentation of their work and are beginning to act upon teachers' marking comments to support their learning.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection. Her Majesty's Inspector and school leaders discussed and agreed that the school will attend an Ofsted seminar later this term.

External support

Advice and focused support from the local authority, planned prior to and since the section 5 inspection, is helping the school to improve the quality of teaching. Training by local authority officers on techniques to assist teachers in evaluating the impact of their work on pupils' learning and progress are supporting the school's improvement. Decisions about how best to use the Harrogate Rural Teaching Alliance as a source of additional support have yet to be made.

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

Yours sincerely

Gina White

Her Majesty's Inspector