

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

Direct T 01695 566868
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: pnuttie@cfbt.com



16 June 2014

Mr Simon Pritchard
Acting Headteacher
Crawford Village Primary School
Crawford Village
Skelmersdale
Lancashire
WN8 9QP

Dear Mr Pritchard

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Crawford Village Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 13 June 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection 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 second 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:

- consolidate improvements in English including better spelling
- complete the start made on systems for monitoring the performance of staff and use of the pupil premium grant, including a local authority review which governors have commissioned
- capitalise on links with other schools so pupils have opportunities to talk with a variety of other children
- re-focus topic work in Key Stage 2 to raise standards.

You have made good progress since my last visit, especially on the action plan, governance and in some aspects of English. I would like to be informed of test results and further progress on the action plan.

Evidence

The focus of this second visit was to spend time in classrooms and check progress on the action plan. I evaluated the action plan with you, which has been re-drafted since my first visit, and the governors' action plan. I met classroom teachers to talk about the practical impact of the plan. I joined all classrooms in the school in both key stages, talked with children and looked at their work in English and topic books. I joined pupils on the playground, saw an assembly, and read work on display.

Main findings

Children's writing has come a long way in the short time since my first visit. Teachers have found reasons to write that appeal to children. The local authority has moderated teachers' assessments and agrees with them. In 2014, at the end of Year 6, all pupils gained at least a level 4. At the end of Year 2, everyone who took tests got at least a level 2B. Teachers are confident that other targets can be achieved. Teachers have taken up changes in the action plan with enthusiasm and energy.

I saw younger and older children concentrating well and persevering with longer pieces of work. Books and writing on display showed a variety of kinds of writing: letters, factual accounts, instructions, spy thrillers, fantasy stories and work in history and geography, some using ICT. Older children have completed an extended project folder on 'Africa', work which involved parents. As one older pupil commented, it is a good preparation for going to secondary school next term.

All children I talked to could identify how their work had got better recently, in a variety of ways. This is a big improvement on my first visit, when children saw good work as mainly about neatness. Teachers' marking is now consistent, using coloured highlighting, and individual advice is given to move children towards their targets.

Across the school, spelling is weaker than grammar and punctuation. Many pupils cannot spell everyday words ('wile', 'wen', 'nise', 'humen'). The same word (such as 'beautiful' and 'famaly') was spelled different ways in the same piece. Children did not use dictionaries or word banks, though spelling mats were available. Children were able to read their work to me but their confidence and skill in speaking and listening are still areas for development. You have made links with another school over the internet, with 'email pals' and Face-Time to come shortly.

Improvements in English are starting to carry over into topic books. Marking is now consistent across most subjects. Children refer to literacy targets when writing in other subjects. Topic work is done in the afternoon. Two classes come together to make a group of 24 children in Years 3 to 6. The room they worked in was small. In the session I joined, too many children lost focus and fidgeted. Few could explain the purpose of the lesson when I asked them.

The school has taken swift action on bullying. In the playground, children are keen to be 'Playground Buddies', and to use the new friendship bench. Pupils could tell me about the ways of being kind and not retaliating, discussed in assemblies this term.

In a short time, you have made a big impact as acting headteacher. There are regular meetings with staff about the action plan and the needs of individual children. The plan itself is sharper and clearer, with baselines, targets and dates. It is a living guide to action, displayed on the wall and discussed with staff weekly. You have linked with other schools, to share professional ideas. You have put in place systems to prevent bullying and reward children, including a survey of children's views. In assemblies and around the school, you are a role model for improvement.

You have put in the foundations from which performance management and appraisal can be fully developed by the permanent headteacher who starts in September. You have set up pupil progress meetings as a foundation for better targeting of Pupil Premium resources. Both these areas need more work.

Governors have made very good progress on their action plan. They have extended the governing body with new expertise and taken part in relevant training. The governor visits policy is now live action. Visits have taken place in ICT and in English. An example I saw of a report by governors was very thorough and useful. Firm plans are in place to for an external review by the local authority by the end of term. Governors have taken the initiative to keep me informed of progress by email.

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 local authority has given effective and well-targeted support in the last six weeks that has contributed well to improvements in children's standards of English. Governors have been trained in using performance data, and new governors have had induction. Training for teachers has been delivered in school. The local authority has moderated work in Key Stage 2 and in Early Years, which has helped teachers to feel more confident and equipped to change their practice.

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

Yours sincerely

Barbara Comiskey
Her Majesty's Inspector