

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22

West Lancs Investment Centre T 0300 123 1231

Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566932

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: hcarnall@cfbt.com



7 July 2014

Mrs Sharon May
Headteacher
Packmoor Primary School
Carr Street
Packmoor
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST7 4SP

Dear Mrs May

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Packmoor Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in September 2013. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-on-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Susan Barkway
Additional Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2013

- Rapidly improve teaching so that it is good or better by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and setting pupils more challenging targets
 - improving teachers' use of assessments of pupils' work to check each pupil's level of understanding and to provide future work closely matched to their needs, particularly to challenge the most able and ensure middle-ability pupils do not fall behind
 - improving the quality of teachers' questioning in order to check and develop pupils' knowledge of key words, to encourage pupils to explain their understanding and to deepen their understanding of what they are learning
 - ensuring that all teachers provide pupils with good opportunities to check and improve their work in response to teachers' comments in marking.

- Raise the attainment of pupils so that they reach their potential and achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics, and particularly in Key Stage 1 by:
 - ensuring that pupils are always given reading books that are appropriate for their ability, particularly for those who struggle with their reading
 - making sure that adults check carefully that pupils understand what they are reading
 - making sure teachers use evidence of all pupils' previous written work, including their handwriting and spelling, to plan future lessons and make sure that pupils learn from any mistakes
 - improving the teaching of sounds that letters make so that pupils' understanding improves, particularly in Key Stage 1
 - developing pupils' knowledge of key mathematical vocabulary so that they are able to use it confidently when describing how to solve problems.

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership, management and governance by:
 - ensuring that the systems for checking and improving the quality of teaching are rigorously applied so as to speed up pupils' progress
 - continuing to check that staff training is helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 4 July 2014

Evidence

The inspector met with the senior leadership team, curriculum and phase group leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. She carried out learning walks in each year group, during which she observed aspects of teaching and behaviour, talked to pupils about their learning and looked at pupils' work in books. In addition, the inspector spoke to a small number of parents to gain their views about the school and she scrutinised school documentation, including information on the progress pupils are making, external reviews of the quality of teaching and learning, and the single central record of safeguarding checks made on staff.

Context

There have been no significant changes since the last monitoring inspection of the school.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The rate of improvement since the serious weaknesses designation is impressive. School leaders have a very clear vision of what they expect for the school and they have communicated this well to the whole school community. They have been relentless, rigorous and focused in their drive to secure improvements but have balanced an appropriate level of challenge with high quality support. As a result, actions have been completed within timescales and there is very strong evidence of the positive impact on the quality of teaching and achievements of pupils. For example, school data indicate significant improvements in attainment and progress for all pupils from their starting points and the quality of teaching is now consistently good with increasingly outstanding teaching taking place. End of key stage data for 2014 are better than they have ever been and the proportions of pupils achieving expected or higher levels is likely to be around or above national averages. Similarly, almost all pupils made expected progress throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, with a high proportion making more than expected progress. Data from externally marked Year 5 tests indicate that outcomes in 2015 are likely to continue this improving trend.

Governors are very supportive of the school. They scrutinise information about pupils' progress and have asked for evidence that assessments of pupils' achievements are accurate. They attend a senior leadership team meeting once every half term, which helps to ensure that governors are involved in monitoring progress against the school improvement plan. Governors' meetings are focused and provide a high level of challenge and support to the school. Through strategies such as these, governors have an excellent understanding of both what the school has achieved and also of what needs to be done to secure further improvements.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Pupils and parents are proud of the school. Parents say that they know how well their children are doing and they are very pleased with the progress that their children have made, particularly this year. They also say that their children enjoy school and are cared for well.
- Pupils are enthusiastic and excited about showing their work. They can talk about how teachers make lessons fun and interesting and how the marking helps them to improve their work. They are articulate and can explain how targets and levels are used to help them to make progress.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They listen carefully to teachers' explanations and are very clear about what is expected of them. They support each other well. For example, when a pupil in Year 2 explained to the inspector how he was helped to improve his work, a pupil who overheard the conversation said: 'and don't forget that I have helped you as well!' He was able to go on to explain exactly how he had helped by being a talking partner, peer assessing work and supporting each other when they were not sure of the answer.
- The implementation of a systematic and consistent approach to the teaching of letters and sounds (phonics), combined with careful assessment of progress and well-targeted teaching, has resulted in significant improvements in the proportion of pupils achieving the threshold in the Year 1 national phonics screening check.
- The targets set for pupils are challenging and have been very effective in raising expectations.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and are used well to ensure that work is well matched to abilities and to challenge all groups of pupils.
- Marking in all subjects is consistently of a high standard and pupils have the opportunity to correct or improve their work.
- The curriculum is planned so that opportunities across the curriculum are taken to develop skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology, for example, there are regular opportunities for extended writing in topic work.
- Classroom and corridor displays celebrate pupils' work and are used well to stimulate and support learning.
- Senior leaders respond very quickly to advice but have taken a measured approach so that support is well targeted and teachers are given the time to consolidate revised approaches.
- Systems for checking and improving the quality of teaching are rigorously applied but teaching staff feel supported and enthusiastic about the approach taken. Praise and recognition of achievements are balanced well with challenge for further improvement.
- Middle leaders have a very good understanding of their role and are making a

significant contribution to school improvement.

Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- During the monitoring visit, no weaknesses in the school's approach to securing improvement were identified. The senior leadership team has been relentless in focusing on what needs to be done and has made sensible decisions about next steps. They constantly monitor to ensure that actions are having a positive impact and have been highly successful in this. However, they now need to ensure that the level of challenge does not slip and the rate of improvement is maintained in the new academic year.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide a good level of support. External reviews, followed by discussion with senior leaders, have confirmed judgements about the quality of teaching and learning and have helped to identify next steps for further development. Additional funding from the local authority has enabled the school to make full use of professional development opportunities as well as to purchase necessary resources to implement revised programmes, for example, for the teaching of letters and sounds.