

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 566857

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jkinsman@cfbt.com



10 July 2014

Mrs C Egginton
Headteacher
Wellgate Primary School
George Street
Mapplewell
Barnsley
South Yorkshire
S75 6HR

Dear Mrs Egginton

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Wellgate Primary School, Barnsley

Following my visit to your school on 9 July 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in April 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 there are more opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their literacy skills in a wide range of contexts across the curriculum
- challenge the strongest teachers to experiment with teaching approaches that extend the most able pupils, so that more make good progress
- narrow gaps in attainment between pupils supported by the pupil premium and their peers.

Evidence

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and other senior leaders, a group of middle leaders, a group of pupils and with the Chair and vice-chair of the governing body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of Lacewood Primary School, who is providing support. You accompanied me on a tour of the school to observe the learning environment, pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning. I evaluated the school's plans for improvement and scrutinised a range of other documents, including records of governing body meetings, checks on the quality of teaching and assessment data.

Context

Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed to permanent posts. One teacher has left the school. Another teacher has resigned and will leave at the end of the summer term. Two teachers have returned from maternity leave. Some classes in Year 3 and 4 have been re-organised so that they are smaller and have the same teacher throughout the week.

Main findings

You were not surprised by the judgements contained in the previous inspection report, as you had a very clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Since your arrival in the school in September 2013 you have put in place effective plans to tackle the weaknesses and progress has been brisk. Since the last inspection, you have revised your plans for improvement and set out a clear vision of what you want to achieve. Your plans contain milestones which describe what should be achieved at key points across the next year, and these are helping governors to check whether or not the school is on course to be a good school.

The quality of teaching is becoming more consistent. When I toured the school it was clear that teachers' planning now routinely identifies learning objectives and success criteria and these are shared with pupils each lesson. Pupils appreciate the 'steps to success' they receive in literacy and numeracy lessons. This is helping them to assess their own work and identify for themselves how it can be improved. Teachers' marking is also improving. Comments recognise what has been done well and give specific suggestions for improvement. Pupils are now expected to make corrections and improve their work, and evidence in books show this is beginning to happen. You recognise however, that more needs to be done in order to ensure all teaching is of a good standard. For example, some teachers do not challenge the most able pupils to think deeply enough, and need further training to equip them with strategies to extend these pupils further.

New guidance has been introduced to give greater structure to the teaching of writing. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to apply their

literacy skills in other subjects, or to write at length about topics that interest and engage them fully.

Much has been done to improve the accuracy of assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1. Because of this teachers now have accurate data to use when planning lessons. This is helping to ensure the work provided is increasingly pitched at the right level to challenge pupils, although some pupils told me the work provided is sometimes too easy.

You have established the roles of senior and middle leaders more clearly and they are rising to the responsibilities they hold. Phase leaders have a good understanding of what needs to be done to improve teaching and raise achievement, because they carry out a wide-ranging checks and review pupil progress data. Their meetings with colleagues focus very much on improving teaching. Where teaching is weaker, good support is provided to improve planning and practice.

The governing body now has a higher profile and is contributing effectively to the strategic direction of the school. The School Improvement and Standards Group meets each half-term to evaluate the impact of the school's actions and to review the progress pupils are making. Governors are aware that gaps between the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium and their peers were too large last year. Consequently this issue has been prioritised. The school's own data suggests gaps in attainment in 2014 continue to be larger than seen nationally.

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 a highly effective working partnership with the headteacher and governors. Good strategic support has been provided to inform the school's self-evaluation and improvement planning. Local authority reviews are also helping to develop the skills of middle leaders and to check on the impact of their work. The attendance of the local authority representative at School Improvement and Standards Group meetings has helped to develop the skills of governors. Consequently, governors have a deep understanding of achievement data and provide good challenge to leaders across the school.

The partnership with Lacewood Primary School is proving highly beneficial. Initial partnership work focused on developing provision for the teaching of reading and writing in Key Stage 1. As a result of this work more pupils in Year 1 have the necessary phonics skills (linking sounds and letters) that underpin literacy development. The focus of partnership work has broadened recently and is now contributing to the development of leadership in the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith

Her Majesty's Inspector