

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



8 October 2014

Mrs Lesley Matthews
Acting Headteacher
Broom Cottages
Broom Road
Ferryhill
Unknown
DL17 8AN

Dear Mrs Matthews

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Broom Cottages, Durham

Following my visit with Margaret Farrow, Her Majesty's Inspector, to your school on 7 October 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 your colleagues gave us and for the time you made available to discuss the actions being 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 October 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders, the management committee and the local authority are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. However, the school should take further action to :

- urgently ensure that all attendance registers comply fully with statutory requirements
- urgently ensure that the programmed curricular time meets statutory requirements in all key stages; this should include in-school and out-of-school provision. This needs to be addressed immediately and the monitoring HMI informed when this has happened
- improve the clarity of all priorities and actions in the school development plan to ensure greater alignment with the areas for improvement from the previous section 5 inspection
- clarify and make more explicit the roles and responsibilities of all members of the management committee in evaluating and monitoring the progress of priorities and actions over the life of the school development plan

- improve the quality of the behaviour and restraint logs to ensure that these are reviewed on an incident by incident basis as a means of identifying additional staff training needs or revised/adapted behaviour and/or restraint strategies for identified pupils
- plan for senior leaders and managers, including members of the management committee, to review, on a regular basis, the quality of all external provision being used by the school to ensure it meets the needs of the pupils.
- ensure that all commissioned support work in the school results in a detailed note of visit, which can be used by senior leaders and members of the management committee to evaluate fully how this is helping to increase their capacity to bring about the required improvements.

Evidence

During the visit, Margaret Farrow and I met with you and one of your acting deputy headteachers, and the Chair and another member of the management committee. I also met with a representative of the local authority, while a further discussion took place between Margaret and one of the two external partners, a local headteacher, who has been working with the school on a commissioned basis. All meetings focused on the actions taken since the last inspection monitoring visit. Both Margaret and I read and evaluated the latest school improvement plan. We also scrutinised the behaviour and restraint logs provided, the attendance registers and the latest school self-evaluation about the quality of the current school provision. Margaret and I also visited all areas of the school, including some classrooms, where a sample of books was reviewed.

Context

At the time of the previous monitoring visit last December, one of the deputy headteachers held the post of acting headteacher; this person has now been seconded to the local authority. The remaining deputy has been promoted, from the start of this academic year, to acting headteacher, and two other members of staff are now acting deputy headteachers. One teacher retired at the end of the last academic year. Two fully qualified teachers have been appointed on temporary contracts, together with two learning support assistants, also on temporary contracts. Two unqualified teachers, in post during the previous inspection, have now gained qualified teacher status, which has reduced the overall number of unqualified teachers still working in the school. Three staff, who were previously on long-term absence due to ill health, have returned to work on a phased basis, with one now back to full-time working. Three new members have joined the management committee with one parent vacancy available.

Main findings

The recent senior leadership appointments have yet to make a significant impact, especially in the quality of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4, and in the overall coherence and robustness of leadership and management across the school. However, these newly appointed acting senior staff are aware of the need to accelerate planned actions to ensure that the school moves more speedily towards becoming a good school.

There is now greater clarity about the senior staff structure, especially individual roles and responsibilities, and a move towards ensuring that all teachers provide a quality of learning that meets and challenges all pupils to achieve the best of which they are capable. Some weaknesses remain, however, which present barriers to continued and rapid progress. The latest version of the school development plan combines school-based priorities with the recommendations from the previous inspection report. Although the logic of this methodology is sound, the various priorities and associated actions lack focus and clear outcome or impact measures for senior leaders, including members of the management committee, to accurately know that progress is being made at a sufficient pace to bring about the required improvements.

The evaluation and monitoring responsibilities of the management committee are limited only to aspects of leadership and management in this development plan, and not all aspects of the school's provision. There is detailed information in the behaviour log, but no review, on an incident by incident basis, to assess if there are emerging staff training needs, or further/adapted behaviour management strategies needed with identified pupils. Although the restraint log presented to inspectors was inadequate in its content, another more detailed version was only made known at the time of the formal feedback and could not, therefore, be scrutinised for the quality and suitability of its content.

The school uses an electronic attendance register, which is transcribed onto a written version used in the event of an emergency evacuation of the school buildings. There are significant technical inaccuracies and statutory non-compliance in these registers; not least in completing individual pupil entries prior to the register being formally taken, marking pupils present on a Tuesday afternoon when all are not at school because of a programmed half day provision. Although senior staff are aware of the need to change the current half day timetabled provision on Tuesday, in order to meet the minimum time requirements at all key stages, this provision still exists. Also, the school's use of off-site alternative provision for some pupils has not yet been rigorously monitored by senior leaders for its quality, in order to ensure that it accurately meets the needs of these pupils.

External support

The local authority continues to provide focused and increasingly effective support for the school. Regular contact between the school and the link local authority officer and the school support group are helping to highlight the key issues for improvement from the previous inspection. Additional, commissioned support from one local authority headteacher, and another from a neighbouring local authority, is helping to increase senior leadership capacity within the school. However, no formal notes of visit are produced from this commissioned work, which limits the ability of senior leaders and members of the management committee to evaluate fully the quality of this support work as an aid to the school making rapid progress.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Management Committee and the Director of Children's Services for Durham.

Yours sincerely

Brian Blake

Her Majesty's Inspector