

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566863

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** [jbennett@cfbt.com](mailto:jbennett@cfbt.com)



13 November 2014

Mrs L Williams  
Headteacher  
Abbey Hulton Primary School  
School Road  
Abbey Hulton  
Stoke-on-Trent  
Staffordshire  
ST2 8BS

Dear Mrs Williams

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Abbey Hulton Primary School, Stoke-On-Trent**

Following my visit to your school on 12 November 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 December 2013. 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.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. I also met with the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor and with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated a range of documents including leaders' records of the checks made on the quality of teaching and the information you collect about pupils' achievement. In addition we considered leaders' views of the school's current strengths and areas for improvement.

## **Context**

Since the previous monitoring inspection in March 2014, two governors have resigned and two new governors, including a new Chair of the Governing Body, have been appointed. Two teachers have left the school. Two teachers returned from maternity leave in September and two new permanent teachers and one temporary teacher have joined the staff team.

## **Main findings**

You and other senior leaders continue to have a clear and determined focus on improving the quality of teaching in order to accelerate pupils' progress. You make regular checks on the work of teachers by observing teaching, checking the work in pupils' books and collecting information about the progress each pupil is making. Leaders keep detailed records of these monitoring activities and use these to provide feedback to staff to help them improve their work. However, occasionally these records are descriptive rather than evaluating the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. The recorded areas for improvement are sometimes a little vague and your records do not always record how and when leaders will check that the required improvements are being made.

When your monitoring of teaching identifies an aspect which requires improvement you are using an appropriate range of well thought out strategies to help teachers improve. For example, you review written guidance for teachers, organise whole staff training, or arrange for staff to observe skilled and experienced teachers within and beyond the school. Senior leaders also work alongside individual teachers to help them plan and teach lessons which meet the different needs of pupils in their class. Your work to improve teaching is having a positive impact. Your evaluations of teaching and of pupils' progress show that a greater proportion of teaching is now good or better. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils are making at least expected progress and more pupils make progress which is better than this.

School leaders are more confident in collecting, organising and evaluating information about pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders carefully analyse the achievement of different groups and individuals and are using this information to target support for those pupils who need additional help. For example, leaders know that the standards reached by pupils eligible for additional support through the pupil premium, remain below those reached by other pupils. As a result you are targeting further resources and support towards these pupils and are regularly checking the impact of this on their achievement.

Over half of pupils are currently identified as having a disability or special educational need. This is well above the average nationally. Leaders recognise that some pupils may have been wrongly identified as having a special educational need, when in fact they are underachieving because of previous weak teaching. The

Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO) and other leaders are now considering the most effective ways of identifying special educational needs and meeting the needs of these pupils as well as the needs of others who need additional help in order to catch up with their peers.

Attendance has improved and is now closer to the average for all primary schools nationally. However, the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent is above the national average. School leaders and the home school links worker have identified each of these pupils and are working with the local authority education welfare officer to follow up absences promptly and rigorously and to ensure that parents and pupils understand the importance of good attendance and the consequences of continuing absence.

You, other senior leaders and governors are now starting to update your evaluation of the schools' strengths and areas for development in relation to the good grade descriptors in the school inspection handbook. This is helping leaders and governors to be clear about which aspects of the schools' work have improved and which are not yet securely good. Governors are becoming more skilled and effective in checking that the judgements made are accurate and secure. For example, they ask questions such as 'How do you know?' or 'Why is that?'

### **External support**

School leaders and governors are confident that the local authority knows the school well. A representative of the local authority has carried out reviews of teaching and learning, leadership and management and numeracy. These reviews have supported senior leaders in identifying strengths and areas which continue to require improvement. The local authority has also committed some additional funding to assist the school in providing targeted training for staff.

The local authority has helped the school to establish a partnership with a successful local primary school. The headteacher from Waterside Primary School is providing helpful advice and support to leaders at Abbey Hulton. For example, with the support of Waterside's headteacher, leaders have improved their systems for organising and analysing information about pupils' achievement. Several teachers from Abbey Hulton have visited Waterside in order to observe and learn from examples of effective practice. This has included opportunities for Early Years Foundation Stage staff to work with colleagues at Waterside in order to improve the learning environment in classrooms and the outdoor area at Abbey Hulton. Leaders and staff from the two schools have also begun to work together to check that judgements about the quality of teaching and the standards of pupils' work are accurate.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-On-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Morag Kophamel

**Her Majesty's Inspector**