

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 566850

**Direct F** 01695 729320

**Direct email:** dmccarrick@cfbt.com



18 November 2014

Mrs Emma Ford  
Headteacher  
Clarendon Road Community Primary School  
Clarendon Road  
Eccles  
Manchester  
M30 9BJ

Dear Mrs Ford

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Clarendon Road Community Primary School, Salford**

Following my visit to your school on 17 November 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the 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 July 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 senior leaders' written evaluation of how well the school is doing is sharper. For example, making sure that the sources of evidence used to support each judgement on aspects of the school's performance are clearly identified
- tweak the school improvement plan so that the individuals responsible for each of the actions in it are always identified, time-scales are clearer and targets for pupils' achievement are broken down to show the school's expectations for the different groups in the school.

## **Evidence**

During my visit I held meetings with you and members of the senior leadership team. These enabled me to gauge the progress that you and your colleagues are making against each of the areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection report. I also met with a representative of the local authority and the Chair of the Interim Executive Board (IEB); this is the group of stakeholders who are responsible for governing the school. I also had a discussion with a group of charming Year 6 pupils. I examined senior leaders' evaluation of how well the school is doing and the school improvement plan. I scrutinized the single central record of the checks made on behalf of the IEB, to determine the suitability of adult employees and volunteers in the school to work with children. I also scrutinised the work in a sample of pupils' book. You accompanied me on a tour of the school where I had the opportunity to meet members of staff and see the pupils at work.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection two teachers have joined the staff. One teacher has become a member of the senior leadership team and taken responsibility for Key Stage 1. The other teacher has been appointed, initially, on a temporary basis to cover the absence of a teacher on maternity leave. The IEB is concluding its work and a shadow governing body is in place ready to take full responsibility for governing the school from the start of the summer term 2015.

## **Main findings**

There is unanimous agreement among the stakeholders I met that the judgement of inspectors at the recent inspection accurately describes the school's current position on its journey to good.

Since the previous inspection the unvalidated data for KS1 and KS2 have been published. Pupils' attainment on the Year 1 phonics screening test (the sounds that letters and groups of letters make), although improving in 2014 remained below the national average. In order to improve pupils' phonics skills senior leaders introduced a bespoke phonics teaching scheme in September. This encourages teachers to use a range of approaches to develop this fundamental aspect of reading in their pupils, paying particular attention to matching activities to the way that pupils learn. Although this new methodology has only been in place for a relatively short period of time, you presented evidence showing that it is already having a positive impact on pupils' ability to read.

Compared to the previous year, attainment in 2014 shows signs of improvement at both Key Stages. However, some inconsistencies remain. For example in writing, although there was an improvement in the proportion of pupils attaining at Level 4 and above the proportion of pupils reaching the higher Level 5 declined by five

percentage points in 2014 when compared to the previous year. In 2014 pupils' progress improved in reading and mathematics but declined in writing. A contributory factor to this weaker progress in writing was the underachievement of the most able pupils. To address identified aspects of underachievement you made the decision to change the way pupils are grouped for literacy and numeracy lessons. The intention being to provide an appropriate degree of challenge for each group of pupils and so accelerate their progress. However, this strategy is relatively new and it is too early to determine whether it will have the desired impact. Nevertheless, the work in the sample of pupils' books I scrutinised and the displays of pupils' writing around the school indicates that pupils' achievement in writing is starting to improve. However, a legacy of weak teaching in the past is putting a brake on more rapid progress, particularly for pupils in lower Key Stage 2.

Senior leaders' have introduced greater rigour to the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning. With much more emphasis, than was the case in the past, on evaluating the effect that teaching has on pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is monitored carefully. Data on pupils' performance are collected regularly and used as a focus for pupil progress meetings. These meetings enable senior leaders and class teachers to identify those pupils who are underachieving and the extra help these pupils will need to get them back on track. Teachers' planning has been refined to ensure that gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified and dealt with in a timely fashion to enable pupils to move forward in their learning. Consequently, teachers are being held more robustly to account for the impact of their classroom practice. The school's data are showing that pupils' are continuing to make better progress in mathematics and reading but their progress in writing is lagging behind.

Senior leaders have worked with colleagues in the partner school to develop a strategy for setting pupils' targets and measuring their progress as they implement the new National Curriculum. Although the pupils I spoke with know what their targets are for literacy, they do not have them for mathematics. However, you presented me with evidence that you have this in hand, which will enable pupils to take greater responsibility for monitoring their progress in this subject.

During our tour of the school we visited every classroom. Invariably, pupils were engaged and on task demonstrating 'impeccable learning behaviours'. A mantra understood by the pupils I spoke with and an established part of school culture, contributing to a purposeful atmosphere for learning. Senior leaders' emphasis on literacy and in particular writing was evident in the prominent displays of pupils' work. These displays providing examples of what good writing looks like and raising pupils' expectations of what can be achieved.

Senior leaders' evaluation of how well the school is doing is consistent with the findings of the most recent inspection. However, although the self-evaluation accurately identifies the school's strengths and those aspects that require further development it needs to be much more sharply focussed. The sources of evidence used to support senior leaders' evaluation of impact have not been made clear

enough. For example, senior leaders have judged that pupils' attainment improved in 2014 without stating, specifically, by how much or for which groups of pupils and in what subjects.

The school improvement plan is well structured and has been written to address each of the key areas for development identified by inspectors. Individual objectives in the plan relate to the findings in the report and the actions to address them are clear. Milestones enable senior leaders and the IEB to measure the progress the school is making against each of the improvement priorities and there is an unequivocal link between the actions being taken to improve the school and pupils' outcomes. However, it is not always clear which member of staff is responsible for a particular action and therefore accountable for its impact. Time-scales lack clarity. For example, it is not always obvious when you and your colleagues will start to tackle an improvement priority and the time it will take to show its impact. Further, the targets for achievement are expressed in terms of the whole cohort and have not been broken down into groups. Consequently, it is difficult to determine how senior leaders will keep an eye on the progress of, for example, disadvantaged students. Nonetheless, the plan is providing senior leaders with an effective blue print for school improvement.

The IEB have provided effective support and challenge to senior leaders on the school's journey out of special measures and onwards to becoming good. Consequently, they are currently working with a shadow governing body establishing roles and responsibilities ready to hand over responsibility for governance of the school, to this group by the end of the academic year.

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 continues to work effectively with senior leaders to improve the school. They negotiated the successful link between Clarendon and a local school to enable colleagues in both schools to share their ideas about good practice. The local authority officer I spoke with recognises the positive impact that the senior leadership team are having on initiatives to improve the school and, as a result, is now adopting a much lighter touch approach.

The IEB have engaged the services of consultants who are working effectively with staff to improve the quality of teaching and learning in literacy and numeracy.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Salford.

Yours sincerely

Charles Lowry

**Her Majesty's Inspector**