

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 566 855

Direct F 01695 729 320

Direct email: gnewton@cfbt.com



14 January 2015

Mrs Sarah McBride
Headteacher
Scawthorpe Castle Hills Primary School
Jossey Lane
Scawthorpe
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN5 9ED

Dear Mrs McBride

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scawthorpe Castle Hills Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 13 January 2015, 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 May 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:

- strengthen the quality of school improvement planning by adding clear milestones that set out what needs to be in place at key points across the next year. Ensure governors use the milestones to check whether or not the school is on course to become a good school
- ensure leaders systematically evaluate the impact new policies and training are having on the quality of learning and pupil progress. In particular, evaluate the impact of actions you have taken to improve marking, the use of questions by teachers and problem-solving in mathematics. Use the findings to further strengthen the quality of teaching.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, two teachers, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. You accompanied me on a tour of the school to observe the teaching of literacy and numeracy and to gauge the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. I also talked to some pupils and sampled some of their books. The school's plans for improvement were evaluated and I scrutinised a range of documents including records of governing body meetings, information on pupil progress and checks on the quality of teaching.

Context

Since the last inspection, the executive headteacher has left the school and you have become acting headteacher. The governors intend to recruit a new permanent headteacher during the spring term 2015. One teacher left the school at the end of the summer term and a senior teacher left the school at the end of December. A number of governors have left the governing body and some new members have been recruited. Currently, there are four vacancies on the governing body.

Main findings

Despite some further changes in staffing, including the departure of the executive headteacher, the school continues to make progress. This is because you have clear plans in place and have introduced a number of policies that are leading to more consistent teaching and better progress for pupils currently at the school. You have targeted additional teaching resources at those pupils that were most adversely affected by weak teaching in the past, and, although the attainment of these pupils remains relatively low, they are making better progress and addressing gaps in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

External tests from 2014 show standards of achievement at Key Stage 2 were significantly below those seen nationally in reading, writing and mathematics. Tests also showed attainment in spelling, punctuation and grammar was also significantly below that seen nationally. These results were disappointing and were lower than you had anticipated. As a result, you have amended your school improvement plans and have placed a greater emphasis on raising achievement. You have introduced more rigorous systems to check on the accuracy of assessments and you are now confident assessments are accurate and reliable. These assessment show pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 are making good progress. You expect standards at the end of Key Stage 1 to improve significantly this summer. You have also placed much more importance on the teaching of phonics (the sounds letters groups of letters make) and you expect the proportion of pupils that attain the expected standard in the phonics check will be in line with, or above, the national average. There are also signs that pupils in Key Stage 2 are making better

progress than in the past, although standards of attainment remain below national averages. There is good support in place to help these pupils catch up.

Turbulence in staffing has had a negative impact on pupils' learning over the last year. However, staffing is now more settled and the introduction of a more structured curriculum for the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is bringing greater consistency. Teachers told me they receive good feedback from senior leaders following observations of their teaching or scrutiny of pupils' books. They also told me they welcome the more structured curriculum and are benefiting from the training opportunities provided. Nevertheless, in the pupils' books I sampled, I saw evidence that some marking does not make clear what pupils need to do to improve their work and that teachers do not ensure pupils always make corrections or improvements. It is also not yet clear what the impact of training on the use of questions or problem-solving in mathematics is having. More needs to be done to evaluate whether these approaches are improving the quality and pace of learning.

The governors have a good grasp of the issues facing the school and are setting an appropriate pace. They meet regularly to review achievement data and to challenge senior leaders. However, the school's plans for improvement do not include a clear set of milestones, so governors are not able to accurately gauge whether the school is on course to become a good school when next inspected. They have recognised more needs to be done to raise attainment in key Stage 2. Consequently, they have allocated more resources into Year 6, to help pupils address gaps in their learning. The governors will begin the process to recruit a permanent headteacher this term.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspections.

External support

The local authority adviser linked to the school continues to provide good support and contributes an accurate evaluation of the progress the school is making. External support over the last year has been helpful in developing the capacity of the school to move forward. Little further external support is now required, as leaders are clear about what needs to be done and have the necessary skills to continue to improve the school. The local authority will support and advise the governors with the process of recruiting a new headteacher.

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

Yours sincerely

Chris Smith
Her Majesty's Inspector