

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancs Investment  
Centre  
Maple View  
Skelmersdale  
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231

Text Phone: 0161 618 8524 **Direct T** 01695 566850

enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk **Direct F** 01695 729320

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

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



20 January 2015

Miss Anita Edwards  
Headteacher  
Partington Primary School  
Central Road  
Partington  
Urmston  
Manchester  
Lancashire  
M31 4FL

Dear Miss Edwards

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Partington Primary School, Trafford**

Following my visit to your school on 19 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 September 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 that key approaches to reading, writing, calculation etc. are applied consistently across the school
- challenge inconsistencies in teaching more rigorously and quickly to ensure that improvements in teachers' performance in the classroom are more rapid
- continue to work on developing the effective leadership of subjects. Subject leaders need to become more active in providing teachers with the resources and specific ideas which will enable them to teach all subjects in the new national curriculum with greater confidence.
- build clear targets into subject leaders' performance management linked to specific classroom improvements in their subject area.

## **Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with yourself and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and another governor as well as a group of pupils from Year 6. A meeting was also held with the local authority adviser to discuss the action taken since the last inspection and the level of support provided. The school's development plan was also evaluated. A range of additional documentation, which you provided, was also scrutinised. In addition, a learning walk with yourself focused on the learning environment in classrooms and the consistency with which reading was being applied across the school.

## **Context**

There are no significant changes since the most recent inspection.

## **Main findings**

The action plan is clear and is well focussed on the key issues for improvement. A wide range of practical strategies has been identified to improve teaching and raise standards in the classroom. Timescales are clear, costings are realistic and there are clear lines of accountability. There is also some emerging evidence to suggest that some actions are already bearing fruit. Strategies to improve attendance and punctuality are linked to specific practical actions which are having an impact. For example, 'wake up' texts are sent every morning to specific families where punctuality and poor attendance are an issue. In almost all cases, there has been an immediate impact with a marked reduction in lateness. The number of lates in November 2014 decreased by approximately 12 percentage points on the previous year and in December this improved further with a 45 percentage points decrease. Attendance, currently, is close to the national average.

Standards are also improving although slowly. For example, 50 per cent of children leave the Early Years Foundation Stage reaching the expected good level of development which, although an improvement of 5 percentage points on the previous year, remains below the national average of 60 per cent. At the end of Key Stage 1, there is an upward trend in reading, writing and mathematics although this is still below the national average. At Key Stage 2, attainment is slightly below the national average but few pupils attain the higher grades. Progress in writing is especially poor. Girls generally outperform boys and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers is only closing slowly.

Pupils who were interviewed were generally positive about the school. They felt that behaviour had improved, with few disruptions in lessons. Homework was now regular and, in their eyes, more relevant and appropriate. They particularly enjoyed the range of enrichment activities being offered during lunchtimes. They did however highlight inconsistencies across classes in 'what' is taught and 'how' it is

taught. They commented positively on the fact that subjects are now taught discreetly. They felt that the new library facilities were a good thing and were pleased that they were being encouraged to borrow books and read outside school. Equally, they did identify that checks on their reading were not regular or rigorous.

During the learning walk with yourself and your deputy we focussed on the learning environment and especially on home reading. Although pupils' reading ages are improving, too many inconsistencies remain in the rigour with which home reading is encouraged and monitored. Some classrooms are neat and well-ordered with displays which celebrate and support learning. Others are less welcoming and often cluttered. This makes it difficult for pupils to access resources readily such as dictionaries and thesauruses. These basic resources, which support improvement in writing, are not yet a regular feature of everyday classroom activities.

Staff have received, and are continuing to receive, extensive training linked to improving classroom practice. There is less evidence to show that, as yet, this is impacting sufficiently on improving classroom practice. Subject leaders have received advice and support from good practitioners from Flixton Junior School. Audits and action plans have been produced but these vary in quality. Apart from mathematics, there has not been sufficient time to show impact through improved practice.

Governors are well briefed about the school, understand the weaknesses that need to be addressed and are prepared to challenge school managers and hold them to account. They have acted promptly on the recommendations of the recent review of governance. The action plan is clearly linked to improving their own practice as well as supporting the school improvement programme. Governance has been reconstituted. The new governing body is now smaller, but 'meaner and leaner'. Governors are now more active than previously. Responsibilities have been restructured to ensure coverage of all aspects of school life. Governors are now very well positioned to evaluate and comment on the work of the school and hold school leaders and staff to account. A staffing review is currently underway. The intention is to restructure responsibilities in order to better equip the school to improve teaching and learning and overall classroom practice. Governors have also been instrumental in recommending the consultant support which has been recently recruited to help teachers to improve their teaching.

Senior leaders and governors are aware why the school requires improvement and the inspection judgement was no surprise. There is a clear desire and commitment to continue to make improvements and ensure greater consistency across the school. They also understand that weaker practice needs to be challenged more rigorously and improvements in teaching and learning need to be more rapid.

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 school has received, and continues to receive, a great deal of support from a number of schools and outside consultants. There is a strong focus on developing subject leadership and teaching and learning. Two consultants have recently been recruited to work extensively throughout the school although as yet insufficient time has elapsed to judge impact. In addition, this is well supplemented by on-going support from the local authority. Advice has been provided to improve Early Years provision as well as other aspects of teaching and learning. The local authority adviser provides regular monitoring visits to assess the progress being made. It is positive that the school is accessing such a wide range of support. However, it would be sensible to be selective and ensure that any input is embedded and having an impact before pursuing other approaches or initiatives.

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

Yours sincerely

Leszek Iwaskow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**