

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 566937

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jsimmons@cfbt.com



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Mrs Linda Pickles
Headteacher
Scawsby Rosedale Primary School
Emley Drive
Scawsby
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN5 8RL

Dear Mrs Pickles

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Scawsby Rosedale Primary School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 27 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 third monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in May 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. A second visit took place in May 2014 to assist in the school's improvement and this letter was not published.

This visit was prompted by concerns about governance and continuing low achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014.

Senior leaders, governors and the local authority are not taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection. The school should take immediate action to:

- improve the speed and effectiveness of decisions and actions by the Governing Body
- improve governors' understanding and use of data to challenge leaders and accelerate the pace of improvement

- establish good communication and engagement between the Governing Body and the local authority
- ensure that the local authority quickly establishes a secure link with another school to support improvements in leadership and management and the quality of teaching
- improve the local authority procedures for pupils with special educational needs in the Additional Resource Centre to return to their mainstream school in the agreed timescales
- ensure that senior leaders' judgements about the quality of teaching are linked more securely to evaluations of pupil progress.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, six governors, and a representative of the local authority, to discuss the action taken since the last inspection visit.

Context

The local authority issued a pre-warning letter to the Governing Body in October 2014 and a formal warning notice in January 2015. Immediately following this monitoring visit, the Governing Body decided to apply to the Secretary of State to become a sponsored academy.

The headteacher resigned in December 2013 and the deputy headteacher was appointed as headteacher in April 2014. In September 2014, the acting deputy headteacher was made permanent. A teacher and newly qualified teacher also started. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader became an acting assistant headteacher and subsequently the inclusion manager in January 2015. At this date, the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher was also promoted to manager.

Main findings

The Governing Body was too slow to act on the recommendation for an external review of governance. The review took place in July 2014 following the Ofsted recommendation in September 2013. The action plan was too slow to be drawn up and was not shared promptly with the local authority as requested in the pre-warning letter. The chair and vice-chair were not able to attend a local authority meeting in December to discuss the governors' action plan, although another governor represented the governing body. Following the formal warning notice, the Chair of the Governing Body resigned in January 2015.

Governors have been slow to act, have communicated poorly and have allowed issues of governance to distract you and your senior leaders from school improvement. The school remains below the government floor standard for the second year running. The Governing Body made a senior appointment without the rigour of an external advertisement. Governors have begun to develop their expertise in data analysis and have correctly set a priority to use data more effectively to challenge leaders.

The local authority has not been successful enough in engaging with the governing body. The Governing Body has been reluctant to work with the local authority. However, both parties have declared a commitment to working together more effectively. The recent action plan drawn up by the Governing Body in response to the external review and warning notice demonstrates a practical commitment to quickly improving the way it works. The local authority plans to strengthen its relationship with the Governing Body by working more closely with it. The local authority will propose an interim executive board to replace the Governing Body if this does not succeed within a short timescale.

For two years running, the school has been below the government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress. In 2014, at Key Stage 2, the proportion gaining Level 5 or above increased in mathematics and writing. Attainment in spelling, grammar and punctuation improved. However, attainment in reading did not increase. Overall, measures of progress did not improve. This was partly due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in Year 6, and the relatively high proportion who only arrived in Years 5 and 6, some of whom faced obstacles to their learning.

In the current Year 6, pupils are demonstrating better progress from their starting points at Key Stage 1. The school is predicting improved attainment at Key Stage 1 and better outcomes in the national screening test of letters and sounds in Year 1. The proportion of children leaving the Early Years Foundation Stage at a good level of development increased sharply in 2014. Lack of progress in reading remains a key issue at Key Stage 2. Action has been taken to improve the organisation and teaching of guided reading and leaders report that some pupils are beginning to develop better skills in comprehension.

Senior leaders have started to make unannounced visits to lessons to check the quality of teaching. Teachers have started to work together to evaluate teaching and learning and identify improvements. Evaluations of the quality of teaching are not linked securely enough to evaluations of the progress made by pupils.

An external review of pupil premium funding by Lapage Primary School and Nursery in Bradford enabled leaders to draw up a more robust finance and action plan and a pupil premium champion has been appointed to keep a closer track of its impact on pupils.

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

In September 2014, the local authority increased the level of support to the school as part of an authority-wide increase in funding for bespoke support. You welcomed the additional support for observing teaching and evaluating pupils' work. Plans are in place to extend this work.

A link with another school came to a logical end when the previous headteacher left in December 2013. A promising link was proposed by the local authority in the autumn term 2014, but, despite your efforts, the link has not been established. The local authority has not succeeded in providing a secure link with another school to support the development of new leaders and improve the quality of teaching.

Planned improvements in the local authority's arrangements for transition between the Additional Resource Centre and mainstream schools have not made sufficient progress. As a result, the young pupils with special educational needs do not leave the centre to return to their mainstream school in the planned timescales.

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

Yours sincerely

Bernard Campbell

Her Majesty's Inspector