

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

Direct Tel: 01695 566930
Direct Fax: 01695 729320
Email – inspectionsservices@cfbt.com
www.ofsted.gov.uk



14 July 2006

Mr Rob Freeth
Westminster C of E Primary School
Westminster Road
Bradford
West Yorkshire
BD3 0HW

Dear Mr Freeth

FRESH START: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WESTMINSTER C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Peter Jones Additional Inspector to your school on 12 and 13 July 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school opened in September 2005.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior staff, the chair of governors, a community governor and a representative from Education Bradford (EB). Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils. An assembly and quiet reflection time were also observed.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit, additional teaching assistants have been appointed and another teacher has been employed on a part time basis. These additional members of staff have recently joined the school. A member of the senior management team is absent and is due to return to school in January 2007.

Pupil numbers are stable; 330 pupils attend and represent the wide mix of cultural and heritage backgrounds of the local community. A larger than average proportion of the pupils on roll, 68%, have English as an additional language or are new to English.

Achievement and standards

Standards in school remain low; this is reflected in the results of the 2006 national tests taken by pupils in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils' underachievement reflects the legacy of the past. However, tracking of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics shows that pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress. This is evident particularly in the Foundation Stage and in Year 1.

Pupils are beginning to make better progress in lessons. This is as a result of the school's increased focus on improving the quality of teaching. Teachers are working hard to make better use of assessment information to meet the different needs of pupils in lessons. Where this was done effectively, pupils made good progress. Pupils made inadequate progress when time was not used well enough to promote sufficient learning and when pupils' individual needs were not met. Weaknesses in basic literacy skills remain as a barrier for many pupils.

Personal development and well-being

Behaviour has continued to improve since the last visit. Pupils report that behaviour in the playground is much better. This is largely the result of the school improving the quality of playground supervision and the variety of activities and equipment available to pupils. Behaviour in lessons was never less than satisfactory and was usually good. It was always good in lessons that provided appropriate and interesting work for pupils. Pupils' independent and collaborative learning skills have improved. This is because expectations of their efforts and behaviour are clearer and are becoming more consistent in lessons. Pupils are being encouraged to take responsibility. The fledgling School Council takes its role seriously and is contributing appropriately to improvements in school routines and to the school site.

Attendance has improved since the last visit and stands at 91.1% for the year. This is still well below the national average. Illness has been a factor, as have the number of extended visits abroad. The school's procedures for monitoring absence are satisfactory.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is improving; pupils say that lessons are better than they were. During the visit, teaching assistants were used well to aid pupils' learning and more good lessons were observed than at the time of the previous monitoring visit. This reflects the school's focus on improving teachers' confidence and expertise. Most teachers try hard to make learning fun, for example, in the Foundation Stage, when children enjoyed identifying rhyming words. Features of good teaching include effective questioning that helps to promote pupils' thinking and pushes their learning on; also paired discussion that develops pupils' confidence and contributes effectively to speaking and listening skills. In a good English lesson in Year 6, excellent relationships provided a good climate for pupils to learn. Work was well matched to groups and individual pupils' needs and so they made good progress as they considered the attributes or otherwise of 'persuasive' texts.

Although improvement is being made, some inadequate teaching remains. In these cases, the timing of the lesson was not well planned and pupils spent too long on tasks that did not promote learning. Similarly, whilst there is an increased focus on using assessment information to meet the needs of all pupils in lessons, this is not consistent throughout school. The school recognises that more work is required to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, specifically those who have English as an additional language and those pupils who are more able.

Working in consultation with the local authority, the school has begun trialling a curriculum model in Years 3 and 4 aimed at improving the balance of the curriculum. The curriculum model personalises what is provided to meet the needs of the school whilst ensuring that all statutory requirements are met. This approach is planned to ensure that all subjects receive their correct allocation within a themed approach. It has been received enthusiastically by pupils and staff and the arrangement will be extended across the school from September 2006.

The school's suite for information and communication technology (ICT) was newly installed prior to the last monitoring visit. Since that time a number of technical problems have occurred that have impacted adversely on the school's plans to develop pupils' ICT skills and to embed the use of ICT across the curriculum. Although the ICT suite is not used as effectively as it could be, the use of interactive whiteboards has improved. Teachers show

greater skill and confidence in their application and this has resulted in more imaginative and effective teaching.

The co-ordinator for special educational needs is now operating much more confidently and effectively. An up-to-date register of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is now in place along with a whole school policy. These pupils all have individual education plans that are regularly reviewed. The number of teaching assistants to support pupils' learning has been increased and their training needs have been identified and addressed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have been given access to a wider range of intervention strategies to assist their progress.

Some progress has been made to develop secure procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils with English as an additional language. All staff have received training to increase their expertise in this area although this remains an area for further development. There are more qualified teaching assistants in post than previously, and the school has prioritised about 4% of its pupils for support. However, given the large proportion of pupils who have English as an additional language, much remains to be done to ensure that the support they all receive is effective.

Judgement

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in February 2006:

- Improve the use of assessment to ensure that planning is better, all pupils' individual needs are met and their progress is accelerated – satisfactory progress
- Develop a curriculum that is appropriate for the needs of all pupils – satisfactory progress
- Develop secure procedures for the care, guidance and support of pupils with English as an additional language and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

The headteacher has worked hard to ensure that Westminster C of E Primary School has a secure staff team and one where every member is valued highly; in this he has been successful. This team, however, is relatively inexperienced; many are new to teaching or in the early stages of their career. A significant amount of external support has been provided for the

staff to improve their expertise and build their confidence. They have benefited from training received and as a result, teaching has improved. Similarly, training has been provided for the English, mathematics, science and ICT coordinators. They are beginning to gain an overview of their subjects so that they can aid their colleagues effectively. Although they are in the early stages of their development they have a clear vision for the future and are committed to the process of change in order to raise standards. However, there is still much to do particularly to monitor and evaluate provision effectively to ensure the needs of all pupils are met well.

The quality of teaching is monitored and, with the support of the school's improvement officer, senior managers have gained a more accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses within teaching. The tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress in mathematics and English is taking place, however, the data obtained is not rigorously analysed and evaluated. As a result, this information is not used well enough to ensure that all pupils are provided with challenging targets that will help raise standards. Similarly the lack of an effective evaluation is not supporting the accurate identification of pupils' needs so that they are guided effectively in their learning. In particular, this is an issue for specific groups of pupils, for example, those who have English as an additional language or who are more able. Tracking of pupils' progress in science has yet to be established.

School improvement planning is satisfactory. During the school's first year there has been a clear focus on teaching and improvement is being seen. However, planning now requires greater rigour to ensure that the gains made in teaching impact significantly on learning and on raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics and science.

The new governing body continues to work with (EB) to develop its understanding of how to hold the school to account. They are appreciative of the support and guidance offered. Much has been achieved. However, procedures and action to monitor and evaluate the work of the school are not securely established to enable governors to act effectively as a critical friend.

Judgement

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the monitoring inspection in February 2006:

- Develop the capacity of subject co-ordinators to lead and support their colleagues – satisfactory progress

External support

Education Bradford continues to provide an effective level of support to tackle the identified areas for development. The school improvement officer has a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses. She is aware that more needs to be done in respect to the inclusion agenda; also, that the school needs to focus sharply on raising standards. Planned support for the next academic year will reflect these needs, for example, with the school's involvement in the Intensifying Support programme.

Westminster Primary School continues to benefit from its informal partnership with Peel Park Primary School, another local Fresh Start School. The Deputy headteacher from Peel Park, as community governor, also provides effective support and guidance that is appreciated by the school.

Main Judgements

The school's overall progress: satisfactory

Priorities for further improvement

- With a clear focus on raising standards, improve the rigour of school improvement planning and the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work.
- Continue to develop the use of assessment information to track progress, identify underachievement, set challenging targets and support effective learning.
- Improve provision for pupils with English as an additional language and for those pupils who are more able.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Education for Bradford, the Managing Director of Education Bradford and the Director of Education for the Diocese of Bradford.

Yours sincerely

Elisabeth Linley
H M Inspector