

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
WLI Centre
White Moss Business Park
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566 935
Direct F 01695 729 320
glaw@ofsted.gov.uk



30 April 2009

Mrs K Murphy
Headteacher
Springside Primary School
Springside Road
Bury
Lancashire
BL9 5JB

Dear Mrs Murphy

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 28 April 2009, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information that you provided before and during my visit. Please thank the governors, staff and pupils on my behalf for their helpful contributions to the inspection.

Since the time of the inspection in October 2008 the school has experienced some staffing changes. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has taken on the role of assistant headteacher. One member of the teaching staff has left the school and has been replaced on a temporary basis. There is an additional teacher in Key Stage 2. The school is currently in the process of recruiting two permanent teachers to start in September 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 15 and 16 October 2008, the school was asked to:

- Raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stage 2.
- Improve the quality and consistency of teaching, particularly in Years 5 and 6, to enable pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- Make better use of assessment information and marking to appropriately challenge all pupils and help them improve, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Ensure that the indicators of success in the school improvement plan enable teachers to know exactly what is expected of them in raising standards.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising pupils' achievement.

The school's most recent assessment data indicate that standards are beginning to rise in Key Stage 2. More Year 6 pupils are currently on track to reach their targets



and the expected level for their age in English, mathematics and science than in 2008. School leaders are keeping a more careful check on pupils' progress. This enables the school to identify pupils who are not doing as well as expected more effectively so that additional support can be provided. As a result, there are signs of improved rates of progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. However, the school recognises that there remains too much underachievement, particularly in reading and writing in Key Stage 1. School data and inspection evidence indicate that standards have dropped at the end of Key Stage 1. This in part reflects pupils' lower starting points, but is also a result of the lack of challenge provided in many lessons. The school is working closely with the local authority to provide additional support to accelerate pupils' progress in Key Stage 1.

School leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. The school is beginning to improve practice and remove weaker aspects of teaching. This is leading to faster rates of progress, particularly in Key Stage 2, including in Years 5 and 6. Increased opportunities to share the best teaching practice within the school, as well as to work alongside local authority consultants and staff in a variety of other schools, are improving the quality of teaching in some classes. In the more effective lessons, teachers continually review pupils' progress towards success criteria to ensure that the work is enabling them to develop new skills. In addition, an increased emphasis on practical investigations and discussion in pairs is motivating pupils to work harder and extending their thinking. Nevertheless, there is still some way to go to ensure that all teaching is of good enough quality to eradicate the prior weaknesses in pupils' learning. The pace of learning in some lessons is much slower, particularly in Key Stage 1. Pupils are not engaged enough in their learning because they spend too much time doing work that is too easy for them.

The school has a clearer picture of what each pupil knows. This information is being used more effectively to tailor activities that enable pupils to build upon their prior learning, in Key Stage 2 in particular. However, it is not used well enough to ensure more able pupils throughout the school are challenged sufficiently or to pitch work at precisely the correct level in Key Stage 1. The school has implemented a revised marking policy and clearer mathematics and science targets for pupils. Targets for improvement are now displayed in each classroom and in pupils' books, and the quality of marking has also improved. In addition in Years 5 and 6, weekly sessions that provide time for pupils to discuss their learning with their teacher have been established. As a result, Key Stage 2 pupils, in particular, have a clearer view of what they have done well in a piece of work and how they can improve further. However, inconsistencies remain throughout school in the extent to which pupils are actively involved in assessing their own learning.

Leaders have a clear view of how the school should improve further and have involved the whole staff in agreeing the steps of the 'Journey to Success'. As a result, clearer indicators of success have been agreed in the school improvement plan. The development of regular pupil progress meetings has enabled teachers and support staff to know more clearly what they have to do to raise standards. This is



because the information gained is used to move individual pupils on in their learning, to target groups of pupils who need extra support, and to highlight areas requiring further staff training and development, such as improving provision in science. There are signs of improved progress in some classes. However, it is too soon to see the full impact of the measures that have been put in place.

The local authority is contributing to school improvement through a well designed programme, providing support for the school's leaders, as well as working directly alongside teaching staff in the classrooms. The governing body is holding the school to account more effectively and has the professional expertise to do so.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Fiona Gowers
Additional Inspector