

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

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

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320

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Miss Elaine Standring
Headteacher
St John's CofE Primary School
Johnson Street
Radcliffe
Manchester
M26 1AW

Dear Miss Standring

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 11 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to the pupils, chair of governors and your School Improvement Partner who attended meetings at very short notice.

The school has appointed two teachers in September 2009. One is a newly qualified teacher and the other more experienced. Another part time teacher was appointed through the Greater Manchester Challenge grant in November 2009.

As a result of the inspection on 11 and 12 December 2008, the school was asked to:

- improve achievement and standards in mathematics, particularly in Key Stage 2
- ensure greater consistency in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 so that pupils learn more effectively
- enhance the monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, including rigorously checking the progress of different groups of pupils and the impact of intervention strategies
- make certain that all pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

satisfactory progress in making improvements
and
satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Achievement is now improving throughout the school in English, mathematics and science. Pupils start school with skills and knowledge that are well below those found typically. In the 2009 end of Key Stage 2 tests, pupils attained standards that were significantly below average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2009 was also significantly below average. However, evidence from lesson observations, pupils' workbooks and data held by the school shows that progress is improving and standards, although low, are rising.

The school is ensuring greater consistency in the quality of teaching across all key stages to impact positively on pupils' learning and their rates of progress. Teachers have implemented an intensive support programme to raise standards quickly through good quality teaching. An effective approach to assessing pupils' progress has been introduced in reading which has improved standards. This approach is planned for implementation during the spring term in mathematics and writing. Intervention groups for writing, reading, mathematics and speech and language therapy are also improving progress for pupils identified as underachieving. These factors, coupled with stronger teaching in classes are having a positive impact on pupils' progress; however, this has not yet had time to show in end of key stage assessments. Targets set for pupils for the end of the academic year look likely to be met or surpassed based on the progress in learning seen during lessons.

Teachers now ensure that all pupils' needs are met in lessons through interesting and appropriately challenging activities. Pupils are highly motivated by engaging activities that keep them interested for sustained periods. Teachers provide pupils with good quality feedback and, consequently, they are clear about how to improve their work in lessons. Teachers address pupils' misconceptions well and modify their explanations accordingly. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory overall and managed very well by teachers. Teaching assistants work effectively with small groups of pupils to explain ideas and support learning through a variety of programmes. Pupils in these groups make good progress and respond well to the clear and precise teaching and interesting activities offered. However, during lessons when the whole class is being taught together, the role of the teaching assistant is currently underdeveloped and not clearly identified in teachers' planning. Some teachers' marking in pupils' workbooks is of very high quality and is helpful to pupils. The quality of marking has improved recently but this is not consistent throughout the school and is recognised by senior leaders as an area to address next term.

Monitoring of pupils' achievement has recently improved through the adoption of clear and systematic tracking and assessment procedures. Teachers are now held to account for the progress of pupils in their classes. Good quality plans are in place and leaders at all levels audit the school's provision to inform school self-evaluation and development planning. Information for all pupils is collected and analysed regularly to check that they are making good progress and to review the school's provision. The system requires further development to quickly and effectively summarise findings from assessments of different groups of pupils to

precisely inform future plans for teachers and leaders. The school has made good use of available support and relevant training opportunities that are contributing well to the improving progress pupils make.

The school has made certain that pupils attend regularly and that they arrive on time. Good procedures are now in place to check on pupils' safety and well-being if they are absent and to challenge low attendance. Good attendance and punctuality are celebrated and rewarded regularly. Attendance in 2008/09 improved and was broadly average.

This monitoring visit included a check on the school's safeguarding procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Liam Trippier
Her Majesty's Inspector