

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

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01695 566934  
Direct F 01695 729320  
e-mail [gtunncliffe@cfbt.com](mailto:gtunncliffe@cfbt.com)



21 April 2010

Mr M Barcroft  
Meade Hill School  
Chain Road  
Higher Blackely  
Manchester  
M9 6GN

Dear Mr Barcroft

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which your staff gave when my colleague and I inspected your school on 20 April 2010, for the time given to our phone discussions and for the information provided before and during our visit. Please extend particular thanks to your acting deputy headteacher for assisting in your absence. We would also like to thank the principal and members of the executive board for the discussions we had, and the pupils we met.

The school has experienced considerable upheaval since the inspection two years ago. In addition to several staff changes, an acting deputy head teacher joined the school in October 2009, and a new principal and new headteacher took up post a couple of months ago. In response to the concerns of the local authority, the governing body was disbanded and an interim executive board appointed in its place. In addition to the changes in key personnel, pupils in Key Stage 3 relocated to purpose-built accommodation three months ago. All pupils in Key Stage 4 are now educated alongside their peers from the other federation schools in a second new building on a site four miles away. Recognising that the current arrangements within the federation are not sufficient to serve the future needs of pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties, the local authority has well-advanced plans for reorganisation. This has resulted in a high proportion of staff being employed on temporary or fixed term contracts.

As a result of the inspection on 13–14 May 2008, the school was asked to;

Develop assessment procedures which will enable the school to track the progress of individuals and groups of pupils over time

September 2009



Improve the quality of teaching so that more of it is good and none is inadequate

Provide pupils with the skills to enable them to be engaged as active partners in their own learning and to develop skills in self-assessment

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

inadequate progress in making improvements.

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

The school has not made the expected improvement since the inspection because the new leadership team has had too much to do in a very short time. Following the inspection, the school went into a decline with the result that by the end of Year 11 in 2009, standards were exceptionally low and pupils were not achieving as well as they should. Too many pupils left the school without nationally recognised awards. Behaviour deteriorated, the exclusion rate rocketed and absence rates were at an all time low. On arrival, the new principal quickly recognised that safeguarding of pupils, the teaching, and pupils' learning and progress were areas of great concern. Some difficult staffing decisions were made. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving though remains inadequate in a very small minority of lessons. The school now meets requirements for safeguarding pupils. The curriculum is better tailored to meet the needs of individuals, so pupils have a more positive attitude to school and to their work, although some examples of inappropriate language and defiance continue to disrupt learning where teaching is less effective. Attendance rates have risen sharply from 41% at the start of the year to 72%. Similarly, the percentage of persistent absentees has reduced. Leaders know this is still not good enough and have introduced a number of strategies, especially for pupils in Key Stage 4. The number of days lost through exclusion has dropped from 19 days in the first half of the autumn term to seven days in the second half of the spring term. Furthermore, leaders have successfully relocated the school to two new premises with minimum disruption to pupils' learning. While leaders acknowledge there is still a long way to go, they have the capacity and ability to bring about and sustain the necessary changes.

Leaders and the local authority have provided training for staff which has been effective in managing behaviour and in improving their subject knowledge. As a consequence, the quality of teaching is getting better, but there is still too much inconsistency which is reflected in pupils' learning. Planning has improved. At Key Stage 4 teachers are using a common format and are clear about what each pupil will learn. This is not always the case at Key Stage 3 where teachers use their own format and planning sometimes notes the topic to be covered rather than the

knowledge and skills to be acquired. Leaders have identified that the match of tasks to pupils' capabilities is too variable. Where teaching is good, work is carefully matched to pupils' abilities, but too often the same activity is provided for all pupils so the most able become bored and the least able frustrated because the work is beyond them.

Systems to record pupils' achievements and to track the progress of individuals are being gradually introduced. While a computerised system has been set up to record attainment, this is not used to best effect. In the recent past, teachers were not accurate in their assessment of pupils' achievements. A more rigorous system has been introduced for reading, writing and mathematics and, following training, teachers are more accurate in pinpointing pupils' levels of attainment. While this identifies the progress of individual pupils and gaps in their learning, it has yet to be extended to check the progress of different groups. In other subjects, teachers have devised their own systems, but there is no coherent whole school method. This creates difficulties when comparing pupils' performance in different subjects.

Pupils are beginning to take more responsibility for their learning and self assessment. They understand their behaviour targets and this is helping them to manage and improve their attitude and behaviour. In the best lessons, adults and pupils discuss the grades for how well each individual has behaved and the learning that has taken place, but in too many lessons, these judgements are made by staff without consulting the pupils concerned. Teachers have set targets to help pupils increase their rate of progress in English and mathematics, but these are not always given to pupils. Similarly, while work in books is marked regularly and the positive comments boost pupils' confidence, there is little evidence of pupils assessing their own work, or being given guidance towards the next steps in their learning.

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

Katharine Halifax  
Lead inspector