

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

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

Direct T 01695 566930  
Direct F 01695 729320



4 March 2010

Mrs P Brogan-Hewitt  
Headteacher  
Ferney Lee Primary School  
Ferney Lee Road  
Todmorden  
Lancashire  
OL14 5NR

Dear Mrs Brogan-Hewitt

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 March, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. I am also grateful to the Chair of the Governing Body and the local authority for assistance with this visit.

As a result of the inspection on 3 and 4 April 2008, the school was asked to:

- provide more challenging work for pupils capable of higher than average attainment
- improve the use of information from assessments to pinpoint where further improvements in teaching and pupils' learning should be made
- improve pupils' understanding of what they need to do to reach the next level in their learning.

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.

Senior staff and governors have responded positively to the issues identified at the previous inspection and continue to take a range of appropriate measures to improve the school. Staff are working effectively as a team and are increasingly receptive to new ideas. For example, the school has taken every opportunity to



benefit from the effective support of the local authority in raising pupils' achievement further and in improving the quality of their learning.

Pupils' current work, as well as the test results for 2009, together with the school's own data shows that increasing numbers of pupils are catching up and making better progress than previously. More pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work. A notable success is that in mathematics pupils in Year 6 made better than expected rates of progress over the last year. This reflects the improving impact of the school's work at intervention. This is also because the school has successfully introduced a range of strategies to raise pupils' achievement, which in turn are leading to improvements in classroom practice. Tracking systems are more effective in identifying pupils who are underachieving and those that require extra challenge. There are regular reviews of how well pupils are achieving. There are clearer expectations of the progress pupils should make. As a result the school is in a better position to judge how well pupils are achieving and to plan appropriate support. Although not yet consistent in all classes, teachers are gaining confidence in judging the level of pupils' work and in judging what pupils can do and what they need to learn next. Nevertheless, the school is aware that certain activities for higher ability pupils are not demanding enough and are restricted to composing a longer piece of writing or tackling another worksheet with insufficient attention given to the higher-order thinking skills that pupils need. In addition, in some books, pupils were performing tasks that were not at the appropriate level for their ability.

Pupils generally try their best in lessons and are keen to do well. They have noticed that their lessons are more interesting and often fun although some report that certain activities are too easy.

The school has improved its systems for monitoring pupils' progress. Information generated from regular assessments is now presented in a clear and accessible way. As a result staff are able to see at a glance whether pupils are making sufficient progress. The system is also much more used as a management tool, underpinning key decisions, such as pinpointing improvements in pupils' achievement and in their teaching and learning. The school is working effectively to ensure that assessment information is accurate and therefore reliable. Senior staff are starting to use this information to better effect and have begun to identify the links between teaching, progress and standards. They are increasingly aware of the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made. Teachers are enthusiastic and generally plan well. Relationships between adults and pupils are productive. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of support. Teachers are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes. In the better lessons pupils are encouraged to use and apply their knowledge in practical situations with a variety of activities that spur and challenge them to make good progress. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils were absorbed in their work as they investigated finding a half and a quarter of different shapes and in identifying different ways to fold a hexagon.

Where teaching is less strong, teachers sometimes over-direct and pupils are not always actively involved in making decisions about how they learn or given opportunities to think of different ways of tackling their work. Pupils are not always given enough time to practise and consolidate their learning independently. In these lessons, too many worksheets are used and assessment information is not used effectively enough to plan appropriately challenging work for all groups of pupils, particularly for the more able.

Pupils have a developing understanding of where they are in their learning and what they need to do to improve. They are proud of their records of achievement and take delight in explaining how the stamps and gold stars for good work lead to a certificate. One pupil stated that he had to remember to put 'a full stop' after each sentence. Another pupil explained how she was working towards becoming a 'free reader' and knew exactly what the process for this was.

While improving, teachers' guidance to pupils through marking and feedback is variable. There are some excellent examples, particularly in Year 6 literacy, where pupils are given clear advice on how to improve their work and reach the next level. However, this effective practice is not used consistently in all classes. There are not enough examples of marking that challenge individuals or evaluate how well previous guidance has been followed. As a consequence, pupils do not always act on the points made and repeat the same errors. In some books, pupils' work is poorly presented and on occasions comments from staff are over-critical and not constructive.

The school is moving forward in the right direction. Staff are pulling together and are increasing aware of their collective responsibility for improving the school. There is clear agreement on where further improvements can be made. Senior leaders have focused on improving areas of weakness in teaching and provision and in raising pupils' achievement. As a result, and because there is a trend of improvement in key areas, despite a few remaining weaknesses, the school has made satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

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

Steve Isherwood  
Her Majesty's Inspector