

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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Mr John Murray
Headteacher
Bay Primary School
St Alban Road
Bridlington
YO16 7SZ

Dear Mr Murray

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 December 2009, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit.

Since the last inspection two members of staff have left and have been replaced in the Foundation Stage and in Year 6. Three additional support staff and a learning mentor have been appointed and the school population is more settled with fewer pupils transferring in and out of the school.

As a result of the inspection on 10 and 11 January 2008, the school was asked to

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially at Key Stage 1 and across the school in the use of information and communication technology (ICT).
- Strengthen the links between self-evaluation procedures and development planning.
- Give pupils clearer academic guidance through assessment and a better understanding of what to do to improve their work

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.

Since the last inspection children have continued to achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils' attainment dipped in 2008 in both key stages although the above average attainment of girls at Key Stage 1 was maintained. The impact of actions to tackle the poor behaviour of a minority of pupils combined with local authority training and classroom support to improve the quality of teaching is beginning to be reflected in pupils' assessments and tests in 2009. Results at the end of Key Stage 1 have risen significantly and reflect a step change in standards and progress in pupils reading, writing and mathematics. Unvalidated 2009 data show standards are above average and the gap in attainment between boys and girls has narrowed considerably.

Pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 also improved in 2009. Pupils' progress in reading and writing at Level 4 improved considerably in English. However this is not yet sustained across all subjects for all groups of pupils and their attainment and progress was significantly below the schools expectations.

The quality of teaching and learning is improving steadily. Systems for managing pupils' behaviour are taking effect and the number of incidents of misbehaviour has consistently and significantly reduced in the last eighteen months. There is a calm and focussed atmosphere in lessons and most pupils are keen to learn. Systems to check on pupils learning and progress have improved. Regular meetings to discuss every pupil's progress help to make teachers more aware of the impact their teaching is having and enable the headteacher to hold them to greater account.

Well founded decisions to increase the number of support staff, to introduce computerised diagnostic assessment and the creation of a nurture group have improved the school's capacity to meet the learning needs of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and learning difficulties. These groups of pupils are responding well to the tailored support and learning now taking place. For example in support sessions pupils are building good relationships with staff, developing confidence and gaining familiarity with resources and learning methods which are well chosen to meet their learning needs. In the sessions observed pupils made small steps in progress to improve speech, learn number facts and the basic structure of writing. Although pupils are making progress the impact of intervention and support on their progress over a longer period has yet to be formally assessed by the school. Plans to do so are in hand.

School self evaluation shows that there is much work to do to ensure that pupils in the middle years of Key Stage 2 make good progress from their starting points and for all pupils to be clear about how well they are doing. Expectations of what good progress means in terms of sub levels and assessment processes are shared by staff and pupils. Some teachers have taught pupils to confidently identify good and weaker features in their own and others work. This good practice is not yet shared across the school.

The schools considerable investment in computer hardware and software resources is improving provision for ICT and this is beginning to be put to effective use across the curriculum. In displays and lessons pupils are learning to develop data handling skills. Some pupils have quickly learnt how to use voice and video files and have created an excellent multimedia presentation entitled 'the one show'.

The school takes safeguarding seriously and appropriate checks are made and recorded when staff are recruited to the school. Records are monitored effectively and good practice is followed in regularly updating checks.

There have been positive developments since the last inspection in the school's capacity for sustained improvement. Regular self evaluation is more embedded within the school and middle leaders have settled well to new responsibilities. The training and support of local authority consultants has accelerated their development so that they are able to take an active role in evaluating pupils' progress and achievement. Action plans are clearly focussed on priorities and identify the impact they are intended to have to teaching. However the introduction of interim targets and a greater focus on the difference actions are intended to have on the progress of different groups of pupils would aid governors in monitoring the implementation of plans.

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

Gina White
Her Majesty's Inspector