

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
e-mail gtunncliffe@cfbt.com

30 April 2010

Miss Sarah Nock
Burnley Springfield Community Primary School
Oxford Road
Burnley
Lancashire
BB11 3HP

Dear Miss Nock

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 29 April 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussion and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Also, thank you to the pupils, the governors' representative and the local authority's advisers for speaking with me, which was most helpful.

Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes. Following the retirement of the previous headteacher, almost immediately after the last inspection, the school was led by two associate headteachers during the academic year of 2008–09. Your own appointment as substantive headteacher took place in September 2009. One full-time teacher left the school and another is currently absent long term for health reasons. Another teacher is seconded to an alternative post in the school for the duration of the current school year. She provides specialist reading tuition and cover for teachers engaged in planning, preparation and assessment activities. The local authority has provided and continues to provide significant support for the school through a range of consultants and advisers. The governing body has experienced several changes to the position of chair.

As a result of the inspection on 02 and 03 July 2008, the school was asked to:

- Improve the achievement and standards of pupils throughout the school, but particularly in Key Stage 2 in writing and science.
- Ensure that teachers' expectations are consistently high and that work meets the needs of all pupils effectively.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the appointment of the current headteacher there has been decisive action to eradicate inadequate teaching as well as to identify and begin to remedy underachievement by many pupils. As a result, the quality of teaching is beginning to improve, the rate of pupils' progress has started to increase and standards are beginning to rise. Although, much has yet to be done, a sound start has been made since September 2009. Nevertheless, inconsistent leadership since the last inspection has failed to address declining standards, low attendance and inadequate progress by pupils.

Overall, pupils' attainment declined following the last inspection, especially in science and English. The latest available national test results for 11-year-olds show that standards are well below average in English, mathematics and science. The percentage of pupils gaining Level 4 or better in English and mathematics is below the government's national floor targets. In Key Stage 1, the results of teachers' assessments in 2009 also show that pupils' attainment declined in reading, writing and mathematics. The overall progress made by pupils in Key Stage 2 fell in 2009 and significantly so in English. Progress measures for girls show particularly poor rates of progress in 2009. At the same time, overall absence figures increased and the percentages of persistent absentees grew. The most recent school data show that the rate of pupils' progress is slowly improving this year. For example, there are early signs of accelerated progress in writing for pupils in Year 6.

The profile of teaching seen at the last inspection was mainly satisfactory and this is largely similar at the present time. In the period since the last inspection the monitoring reports of the local authority and of the school show that the quality of teaching has ranged from inadequate to good. Due to measures taken by the current leadership team, the inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Observations of lessons during the inspection show that lessons are conducted in bright and motivating classrooms which encourage pupils to learn. Teachers' planning outlines broad learning intentions, but the detail of what each group of pupils will learn is less clear. The format used for planning varies across classes. Teaching assistants give good guidance and support to pupils, especially those with language and communication difficulties. Many of the good features of teaching noted in the last inspection report are maintained, but so too is the significant inconsistency in the expectations which teachers have of how much pupils can learn in a given time. These expectations are too low to ensure that pupils can make good progress. Too much time is spent consolidating existing learning and not enough is expected of the new learning which pupils should make. Some tasks and activities are pitched too low because not enough attention is given to what pupils already know and can do.

The local authority's support for the school is considerable and has significantly strengthened the school's leadership. The appointment of the new headteacher

has given renewed impetus to the school's programme for improvement. However, the impact of this on outcomes for pupils is at a very early stage and given the lack of overall improvement since the last inspection and the failure to address the issues, the decline in standards and the continuing need for external support, the school's capacity to improve has not been increased.

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

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector