

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk
Direct T 01695 566932
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email hcarnall@cfbt.com



12 May 2010

Mrs Lyn Parmenter
Acting Headteacher
Callands Primary School
Callands Road
Callands
Warrington
Cheshire
WA5 9RJ

Dear Mrs Parmenter

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Callands Primary School

Following my visit with Frank Carruthers, Additional Inspector, to your school on 10 and 11 May 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the following condition: no more than one newly qualified teacher may be employed by the school.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Warrington.

Yours sincerely

John Coleman
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Callands Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10 and 11 May 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with staff, governors, pupils and a representative of the local authority.

Context

An executive headteacher was appointed in January 2010 to support the school's leadership. In March, following the absence of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher became acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher also took up post. The executive headteacher and deputy headteacher are contracted to the school until September 2010. The local authority has longer-term plans to continue to support these roles beyond this date. The governing body has appointed several new governors and some training provided by the local authority has taken place for governors. A range of consultants and advisers are working with the school to support the school's improvement in line with the local authority's action plan.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and achievement by:
 - improving teaching by increasing the pace and expectations in lessons
 - making sure that the work set for the pupils is challenging and closely matches their abilities, particularly for the more able pupils – satisfactory

Recent improvements have been made to the planning which teachers complete in preparation for lessons. The school now has a common format for this and it ensures that the broad learning objectives are clearly identified. The plans also contain a lesson outline including approaches to teaching. There is significant variation in the quality of the plans. Some describe in detail what pupils are expected to learn from the activities and tasks. In lessons seen by inspectors these clear expectations were helping pupils make more progress in their learning. This is not consistent across the school. Other teachers' plans simply describe what pupils or staff will do in the lesson and this results in expectations which are too low and so the pace of learning and the progress which pupils make is restricted. Overall, pupils' progress seen in lessons and as evident in pupils' books shows some improvement since the last inspection but this is variable between classes and in different subjects.

Pupils who spoke to inspectors were unanimously positive about their school and the education they receive. They are proud of their school and point to several

improvements since the last inspection. For example, they are knowledgeable about the new target system on the classroom walls which illustrates their individual progress towards their curriculum targets. They are clear that more is expected of them in lessons. Many pupils spoke of the improvements to pupils' behaviour and said that others' behaviour no longer interrupts their learning.

Due to inaccuracies in the school's previous assessments and tracking systems, the data to show how much progress pupils have made since the last inspection are insecure. This is acknowledged by the school and the local authority. The systems are much improved but it is too soon to judge pupils' progress by this means. Inspectors' observations in lessons, the school's monitoring of lessons and scrutiny of pupils' work show that satisfactory progress is being made in improving the rate at which pupils learn. Standards are slowly rising, though the latest indications from the school suggest that Year 6 pupils are not on track to achieve fully the targets set for them by the school.

The effectiveness of provision

As a result of the work of the senior leadership team and the very positive attitude and desire of staff to improve, the quality of teaching and learning is beginning to improve. The executive headteacher has effectively monitored teaching in school and the outcomes of this have been used well to identify areas for improvement. The acting deputy headteacher has led staff training and modelled effective lessons from which teachers are improving their own practice. The profile of teaching seen during the inspection was predominately satisfactory with some good features to a few lessons. Improvements to teaching are very recent. There is considerable variability in the consistency and proportion of good teaching. Consequently, pupils' progress also varies and there is much to do before all pupils make consistently better progress.

Early Years Foundation Stage

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - improving the monitoring of children's progress
 - creating more opportunities for independent learning
 - ensuring that an effective Early Years Foundation Stage leader is involved in teaching the Reception children – satisfactory

The school has recently appointed a teacher in the Early Years Foundation Stage to take leadership responsibility for this key stage. Two consultants from the local authority are working closely with the school to develop this role. Regular staff training is being provided and both the school and the local authority are carefully monitoring the progress being made. It is early days but a sound start has been made.

There is considerable improvement in the number of opportunities being provided for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to engage in independent learning. During the inspection children were observed freely choosing from a range of activities. For example, some children performed a puppet show, others looked outside for minibeasts and some enjoyed riding on bicycles. However, these activities often lack sufficient guidance or structure to ensure that children's learning progresses quickly and securely. Too many tasks are unclear to children. The result is that while children enjoy playing, they are not gaining the skills and knowledge from their experiences to equip them effectively for learning in the future. Teachers' planning and assessment reflects this. Both are too broad and lack the precise detail of what children will learn or what they have already learnt.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership and management at all levels by:
 - introducing strategies to monitor rigorously the effectiveness of the school's work
 - ensuring that teachers plan and teach lessons that enable all groups of pupils to make good progress
 - ensuring that governors are provided with the training and information they need to support and challenge the school – satisfactory

The acting headteacher is successfully maintaining staff's morale while effectively implementing the action plan for the school to improve. The senior leadership team now provides clearer direction and a stronger steer for the school's improvement. In the last two months significant progress has been made to improve the quality of teaching and increase pupils' progress. A new assessment and tracking system is recently in place which is simplifying the data to be tracked and makes it more accessible for teachers to use in planning their lessons. Training for staff has been identified through a planned programme of lesson observations which has picked out the areas for improvement. Teachers with responsibility for middle leadership speak positively about the improvements which have been made to enable them to monitor the progress of pupils in different subjects better. Changes to the format used for teachers' planning have ensured greater consistency, though there is work to be done to ensure that all plans rigorously identify the outcomes expected for pupils' learning.

Members of the governing body have reviewed and revised their committee structure so that governors are better able to provide effective strategic management for the school. An action group has been established comprising governors, senior leaders and local authority advisers. The group meets regularly and monitors the progress of the plan for improving the school. Training has been undertaken by some governors to help them interpret the school's data about pupils' attainment and progress. Communication between the school's leaders, the

governing body and the local authority is much improved after a very slow start in the spring term. Overall, the ability of the school's leaders to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of its provision accurately is improved. Better systems for the monitoring of practice have been introduced but it is too early to evaluate the success of this. Performance management of staff is appropriately tied to raising standards. However, further embedding is needed to ensure that a full, rigorous and secure view is reached.

External support

External support for the school from the local authority is good. The action plan devised in response to the last inspection provides a suitable outline of the timescales for improvement and the measures by which its success will be evaluated. Consultants and advisers, including the School Improvement Partner, provide support and challenge to the school's leaders. Despite significant changes to the responsibilities of staff and to the governing body's membership, the impact of the external support has been to increase the skills and experience of all the school's leaders and to develop the quality of the school's provision for pupils steadily.