

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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



23 April 2010

Mr Darren Mussell  
Great Harwood St John's Church of England Primary School  
St John's Street  
Great Harwood  
Blackburn  
Lancashire  
BB6 7ES

Dear Mr Mussell

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Great Harwood St John's  
Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 21 and 22 April 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 not be appointed.

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, the Diocese of Blackburn and the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire.

Yours sincerely

John Coleman  
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Great Harwood St John's Church of England Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 21–22 April 2010

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the Chair of Governors, the headteacher, pupils, staff and a representative from the local authority.

### Context

The school has experienced significant staff changes this year with two full-time teachers leaving their posts. Temporary staff are covering these vacancies. Support is being received from local authority consultants and advisers who are working with the school to help improve the quality of teaching and learning and the use of information and communication technology. Additionally, the school's leadership team receives mentoring and guidance from an experienced local headteacher. Membership of the governing body has seen small changes due to the expiry of the terms of office of the parent and staff governors.

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

The standards attained by pupils show early signs of rising, although the pace of this improvement varies across year groups and classes. This variation is strongly correlated to the staffing instabilities which have hindered pupils' progress this year. Evidence from the school's tracking system shows pupils making overall satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics during the current academic year. Most encouraging is the evidence from this data which demonstrates that progress is accelerating, as seen in the better rates of progress in the spring term compared with the autumn term, although progress in writing is not as strong as that found in reading and mathematics. There is a legacy of underachievement, which in some year groups continues to restrict the amount of progress being made. This is improving, but there is some way to go before all year groups make consistently good progress. The targets set by the school for the attainment of pupils in Year 6 in 2010 are challenging and observations in classrooms during the inspection show that satisfactory progress is being made towards these for most pupils. The school's assessment data suggests that the most able pupils are not on track to meet the school's set targets.

## Other relevant outcomes for pupils

In response to the low attendance of a significant number of pupils, the school has initiated a range of incentives to encourage good attendance. Pupils who spoke to the inspector said that these were working well and they quoted examples of pupils who are attending more regularly as a result. Each term, every pupil with 100% attendance receives a badge in reward of this achievement. At the end of the year all these pupils are entered into a raffle for a prize. Extra playtimes are offered to the class with the highest weekly attendance. Around the school, good attendance is promoted through lists of weekly winners. A special party or trip is also offered to the class with the best attendance at the end of each term. A systematic procedure is in place to remind parents and carers of the need to ensure that pupils attend regularly and non-attendance is followed up quickly and methodically. The outcomes of the school's efforts are improvements in the percentages of pupils attending school regularly, which have risen significantly to a current position much better than the comparable period last year, but a little below the target set by the governors. When consideration is given to the exceptional snow conditions and subsequent school closure, the figure rises above the target.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise attendance by working with low-attending pupils and their families – satisfactory.

## The effectiveness of provision

The school has worked hard to develop and improve the quality of teachers' lesson planning. With the support of local authority consultants in literacy and numeracy, the curriculum leaders have ensured that there is a consistent format to planning. This includes clear objectives for pupils' learning which take into account the differing starting points for groups of pupils. However, the assessment data used by the school is quite complex and it is only recently that a more user-friendly way of presenting information has been formulated to help teachers know the precise attainment levels for all pupils in the class. Consequently, this embryonic system is at a very early stage of having an impact on the progress which pupils make as a result. Teachers are given increasing opportunities to work together and learn from one another's practice. This process is developing satisfactorily. The leadership team, with the staff, has identified the essential features of good lessons but this has yet to be formalised in policy. The quality of teaching and learning seen during this inspection visit was mostly satisfactory with some good aspects to many lessons. This is an improved profile to that seen at the last inspection. The data held by the school about the progress made by pupils correlates accurately with the school's evaluations of the quality of teaching. This is supported further by the observations made during this inspection. In all lessons seen there were good relationships between staff and pupils, planning was well prepared, and suitable tasks and activities were organised to interest pupils. However, a principal weakness in the

teaching continues to be the proportion of time given to teachers' explanation and instruction compared with the time available for pupils to learn through the planned tasks. Not enough active learning is expected of pupils in lesson time and so their progress is not maximised sufficiently well. In some lessons too much time is taken to complete simple tasks such as lining up before the lunch break.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Increase the proportion of good teaching to ensure that pupils make good progress and attainment improves by:
  - ensuring that lessons are planned to include a range of activities that relate to the needs of all pupils – satisfactory
  - sharing the best practice in teaching more systematically – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The school's leadership team has responded satisfactorily to the issues raised at the last inspection. With the support of the local authority and under increasing scrutiny and challenge from the governing body, improvements are being made to the rigour and effectiveness of the school's monitoring and evaluation systems. The local authority's action plan has been used to inform the governors' plan to improve the school. This provides useful time-frames and outlines the actions to be taken. However, the actions are too broad and lack the precision needed to identify sharply the success of the planned intentions.

The headteacher is successfully developing an appropriate range of monitoring activities which are carried out by the senior leadership team. A programme has begun to observe lessons, scrutinise pupils' work, hold discussions with pupils and to analyse and evaluate the data from the school's tracking system for pupils' attainment and progress. The curriculum leaders for English and mathematics have an improving and accurate overview of the relative strengths and weaknesses in their subjects as a result of the monitoring activities. Evaluation of the outcomes of the leadership team's monitoring is less formalised but this is developing. A number of governors have received local authority training since the last inspection in a variety of areas such as safeguarding, child protection, recruitment and succession planning. This is raising governors' awareness and improving their knowledge and skills, which in turn is making an effective contribution to their ability to challenge the school.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Establish a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating provision and outcomes – satisfactory.
- Develop the role of the governing body in evaluation and in challenging the school to improve through additional training – satisfactory.

## External support

The local authority gives good support to the school. The action plan provides a suitable steer to the school's leadership team and is helping to direct the school's improvement planning. Advisers make regularly visits to the school and, along with consultants, hold staff training sessions and assist in monitoring the school's performance. The capacity added by the local authority amounted to approximately one and a half days per week during the spring term and there are plans for similar support in the summer term.