

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancashire Investment Centre
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email: gtunncliffe@cfbt.com



16 September 2010

Mrs J Alexander-Steele
Headteacher
Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School
Emerson Road
Preston
Lancashire
PR1 5SN

Dear Mrs Alexander-Steele

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Ribbleton Avenue Methodist Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 15 September 2010, the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please also extend my thanks to the staff, the pupils and the representative of the local authority with whom I met.

Since the last inspection there have been some changes to staffing. Three teachers left the school and four new teachers joined: one in February, one in May and two in September. One teaching assistant left the school and two have joined. A new site supervisor was appointed in February and two new governors joined the governing body in September.

As a result of the inspection on 20 and 21 January 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making:

satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

Attendance levels have improved due to effective procedures put in place by the school. The school works with external agencies well to support pupils who are absent. A first day absence system is used to make an instant check on missing pupils. The school has worked in partnership with parents to promote the benefits of regular attendance. Pupils appreciate the variety of incentives to encourage them to attend school and talk excitedly about receiving certificates and awards. The

attendance leader has introduced SAM (school attendance matters), a toy dog. A class with 100% attendance for the week is allowed to look after Sam; this approach has introduced a healthy competitiveness. Several pupils commented on their own improved attendance and punctuality over the last few months.

The provisional data of the most recent statutory assessments showed that attainment in English and mathematics improved from the levels in 2009. Results in English at the expected Level 4 improved from 56% to 62%. There was a slight improvement in results in this subject at the higher Level 5. Attainment in mathematics improved significantly at Level 4 from 33% to 53% and showed improvement at Level 5. Teacher assessments in science were not so positive, with a decline from 2009. However, rates of progress for these pupils accelerated over the year, enabling previous gaps in their knowledge and skills to be tackled.

This acceleration is due to an improvement in the quality of teaching especially in literacy and numeracy. Rigorous monitoring activities undertaken by local authority consultants and senior leaders identified aspects of teachers' practice which needed developing. As a result the good quality professional training provided by the local authority has been embraced by staff. For example, the whole-school training in assessing pupils' work has enabled a more consistent approach to be adopted by teachers and teaching assistants. One-to-one planning surgeries provided by local authority consultants have enabled teachers to improve planned activities and to match these to the needs of the pupils better. Teachers provide pupils with appropriate feedback through regular marking which affirms pupils' efforts. In the best examples, pupils are given clear advice about how to improve their work and an opportunity to respond to the teachers' comments. There were examples of teachers encouraging pupils to use 'talking partners' and 'peer assessment' strategies to check their own progress and that of their classmates. However, these approaches are not yet consistent throughout the school.

An effective approach to checking pupils' progress has been introduced in reading, writing and mathematics at half termly intervals, which contributes to more effective planning. Teachers' planning is regularly checked by senior leaders and staff receive feedback about how it can be adapted to meet the needs of their pupils further. This information, together with information from lesson observations, is used at regular 'pupil progress meetings' where teachers are held to account for the progress of the pupils in their classes. Since the inspection there has been a significant change in the staffing structure and senior leaders recognise the need to maintain the momentum of improving the quality of teaching.

Pupils commented on the positive improvements in the school. For example, one said, 'It's (the school) refreshed' and 'It's better organised, so we know where to go and where to put our things.' Pupils remarked on improved activities during lesson time, especially the practical science investigations. Together with the local authority, all staff have worked hard to establish a curriculum which covers the requirements of the National Curriculum and offers opportunities for application of

basic skills across subjects. The new curriculum has been introduced from September so it is too early to evaluate the effectiveness on pupil achievement.

The local authority's statement of action was evaluated and met requirements. It is a comprehensive plan providing clear support and challenge for the school. The local authority has provided very good support, well-planned training and expert guidance through a range of consultants. The school has effectively kept parents informed of changes within the school and developments through newsletters. School morale has improved and senior leaders, staff and governors are determined to move even further as improvements become embedded into the school.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Eileen M Mulgrew
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in January 2010.

- Raise attendance to at least the national average by increasing the rigour with which systems for promoting good attendance and monitoring absence are applied.
- Raise pupils' attainment, particularly in English, mathematics and science by accelerating, securing and monitoring rates of pupils' progress throughout the year and from one class to the next.
- Strengthen teaching by ensuring that teachers make more effective use of assessment information to match tasks to pupils' needs and ensure that challenge is appropriate, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Improve pupils' punctuality and develop better opportunities for pupils to apply their basic skills across all areas of learning, in order to enhance their future economic well-being.