

Suite 22 West Lancs
Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524 Direct T 01695 566930
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk Direct F 01695 729320
www.ofsted.gov.uk Direct email: gtunnicliffe@cfbt.com

22 September 2010

Mr Les McAnaney
Headteacher
Grangetown Primary School
Spelter Works Road
Grangetown
Sunderland
Tyne and Wear
SR2 8PX

Dear Mr McAnaney

Notice to improve: monitoring inspection of Grangetown Primary School

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 September, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please also thank the School Improvement Partner, teachers and pupils who gave up their time to talk to me.

Since the inspection there have been major staff changes. Three teachers on temporary contracts have left the school and four new teachers have been appointed, including a newly qualified teacher. The deputy headteacher is currently on long-term absence and the assistant headteacher has stepped into this role. During the visit the Year 5 class were attending the Stadium of Light for a writing development workshop.

As a result of the inspection on 04–05 February 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 pupils' achievement.

The school has responded positively to the issues identified at its inspection in February 2010. Staffing is now stable in all classes and the members of a newly formed leadership team are working well together to embed new systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. Through regular and rigorous checking of teaching and learning in classrooms, pupils' progress against age-related expectations and the work in pupils' books, progress is accelerating in reading, writing and mathematics in most classes for the majority of pupils. The new systems

are well embedded into practice and understood by all staff, who say they feel effectively supported and challenged. The morale of staff and pupils is high.

Senior leaders have improved the confidence of, and communication with, parents and carers and the local community, resulting in increasing the intake of pupils into this year's Reception class by almost one half. Relationships in and around the school have improved significantly and, as a consequence, behaviour, attendance and pupils' attitudes to learning have all improved.

During the visit a higher proportion of good teaching was seen. Teachers are planning lessons which are a close match to pupils' abilities. The good data that teachers are collecting, through accurate assessment of what pupils can do and good marking of pupils' work, are helping them to identify which pupils need extra support or challenge. This is leading to targeted intervention and extra support from experienced and knowledgeable teachers and teaching assistants. The progress pupils have made since the inspection in some year groups is impressive. However, this has not had time to have a full impact on the years of underachievement in most year groups; or the end of 2010 unvalidated Key Stage 2 test results, which dipped in English and mathematics. In the end of Key Stage 1 assessments in 2010 though, attainment rose in reading, writing and mathematics and the gap between attainment in reading and writing is closing.

In lessons observed pupils were eager to learn and take part. There were more planned opportunities for pupils to reason, solve problems and explain their thinking. Pupils worked diligently on the tasks set for them and they were eager to do their best. There was good use of interactive whiteboards to motivate, engage and excite pupils, which made learning enjoyable and challenging. However, in some lessons there were missed opportunities to challenge the most able pupils even further. Pupils say that they are making improved progress in their lessons and they take a pride in their work and in their presentation in books.

There has been slower progress in setting targets for individual pupils so that they know what specifically they need to do to improve their work, as the school is in the process of developing this. A new marking policy, which includes self-assessment at the end of every lesson, has improved feedback to pupils about their work and this is used consistently across the school. A revised curriculum map is making more links between different subject areas and this has improved pupils' enjoyment in lessons. There are more opportunities for pupils to learn about different beliefs and cultures and the school is developing links with a school in China; but further work needs to be done to develop this area of the school's work.

The governing body has formed a monitoring committee, the members of which have received training about how to challenge the school. They visit the school regularly and hold half-termly 'challenge meetings' with the headteacher to monitor the progress the school is making against the areas for improvement. They are knowledgeable about pupils' progress and regularly ask the headteacher searching

questions about current data and pupils' achievement which are fed back to the whole governing body.

The school is working very closely with the local authority, which has provided robust support and intervention. The local authority's statement of action was judged to need more timed milestones. It has since been regularly updated, closely aligned with the school's own action plans and most of the milestones set have been achieved. The School Improvement Partner has brokered appropriate support for the school and has robustly monitored its progress. The local authority continues to offer a high level of support to the school because of the number of new staff who joined the school in September.

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

Joy Frost
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

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

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress and raise their attainment in Years 1 to 6 by:
 - raising the expectations of all staff of what pupils can achieve
 - making certain that all activities are enjoyable and challenging
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to consider, reason, speculate and explain their thinking.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning, support and intervention by:
 - ensuring that all learning has a clear focus on how different pupils learn and how their achievement can be boosted
 - making certain that assessment information informs the planning of lessons
 - further developing target setting to ensure that all pupils are aware of what they need to do next.
- Broaden the range of curriculum opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the diversity of beliefs and cultures both nationally and globally.