

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

T 0300 123 1231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
[enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01695 566930  
Direct F 01695 729320  
Direct email: [gtunncliffe@cfbt.com](mailto:gtunncliffe@cfbt.com)



16 September 2010

Mr Simon Kidwell  
Headteacher  
Darnhall Primary School  
Sandyhill Road  
Winsford  
Cheshire  
CW7 1JL

Dear Mr Kidwell

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Darnhall Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 13 September 2010, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. During my visit, I scrutinised school documentation, including pupils' progress and attainment data, looked at pupils' exercise books, met with staff and pupils and observed eight lessons. Since the last inspection, three teachers have left the school and these are replaced by new staff.

As a result of the inspection on 9 and 10 March 2009, 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 has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Since the last inspection, you and your deputy headteacher have secured improved levels of attainment by pupils in mathematics, English and science at the end of Key Stage 2. The majority of pupils leaving Year 6 in 2010 attained in line with or above the national average for 11 year olds. They made rapid progress in the upper part of the school and this cohort of pupils achieved well. However, the school's own data show that there is still a significant level of underachievement. This is because of consistently low attainment in Key Stage 1, where standards in reading, writing and mathematics remain well below those expected nationally for seven-year-olds.



Pupils in Key Stage 1 are working well below their capabilities. Some staff expectations of what pupils can achieve remain low. Consequently, the work set in lessons lacks challenge and does not accurately match pupils' abilities. Pupils are generally well behaved, but where teaching is inadequate, they lack attention and fail to learn new skills and concepts. As a result, pupils' learning habits in Year 1 and 2 remain poor. However, consistently good and better teaching in Year 2 is ensuring that these pupils are now making rapid progress, particularly in mathematics, reading and handwriting.

The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has a clear understanding of what Darnhall children need to learn in order to prepare them well for Key Stage 1. The new outdoor provision is well suited to this purpose. Staff plan daily learning activities which cover a range of children's skills and abilities. However, these do not link closely enough to the individual assessment information held by the school. Teaching time is not always used effectively and consequently, staff miss some opportunities to ensure that children make better than expected progress, particularly in their speaking and listening skills.

You and your senior leadership team hold an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. With the support of the governing body and local authority, it has secured improved outcomes for pupils, particularly in the upper part of the school. Consequently, the school continues to demonstrate a satisfactory capacity to sustain improvement.

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

Gill Jones  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2009

- Raise standards in English, especially handwriting and spelling, and in mathematics and science.
- More consistently match work to the needs of pupils in Key Stage 1 and for those who are more able.
- Improve outdoor provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage to enhance children's development in all areas of their learning.