

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

T 0300 1231231  
Text Phone: 0161 6188524  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566862  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct** email:  
rcowley@cfbt.com



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Mr D Loomes  
Headteacher  
Easington Colliery Primary School  
Whickham Street  
Easington Colliery  
Peterlee  
County Durham  
SR8 3DJ

Dear Mr Loomes

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools with an additional focus on behaviour:  
Easington Colliery Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 March 2012, for the time you gave to talk to me and the information that you provided during the inspection. Please convey my thanks to your staff and pupils, and the Chair of the Governing Body for finding time to talk with me during this visit.

Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. Five staff have left the school and four new teachers, two of whom are newly-qualified teachers, have joined. Two permanent members of staff are currently on long-term sick leave and are being covered by long-term supply teachers. Leadership and management roles and responsibilities for middle leaders have been restructured. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body and two new parent governors have been appointed.

As a result of the inspection in June 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 has made satisfactory progress in making improvements and the effectiveness of the school in improving pupils' behaviour is satisfactory.

The school had made steady progress since the previous inspection, with the pupils' attainment reaching broadly average levels at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2011 for the first time in three years. This rate of progress is being maintained this year, with the current Year 6 on target to improve marginally upon last year's results. This means that the school is well placed to meet the government floor standards for the third successive year. This satisfactory progress is reflected in the lessons observed during the visit. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of different learning content, with senior leaders and managers aware that even greater focus is now



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

needed to ensure that this pace more adequately reflects the known abilities of all the pupils.

The quality of teaching has progressed satisfactorily since the previous inspection. Planning is very detailed and contains relevant information of what teachers will cover in their lessons. All teachers are now regularly identifying key objectives that underpin the pupils' work in their lessons and these are well matched to the range of activities planned. In the best planning, however, there is a good balance between teacher intentions and expected pupils' learning. When these are linked to different ability groups, pupils make good progress; where these are less well matched, progress is still satisfactory but is occasionally too slow for the higher ability pupils. Teachers are clearly progressing their understanding of how to use lesson time to maximise pupils' learning, although some teachers still tend to talk for extended periods, which limits the opportunities for pupils' individual or independent work. Teachers' marking has also improved. The pupils' work is consistently marked and teachers always offer some form of praise to help motivate the pupils to improve. While this represents good progress since the previous inspection, there are still some missed opportunities to identify the next steps in learning for the pupils. Unlike at the time of the previous inspection, the pupils are now engaging in some form of written self-evaluation of their work. This self-evaluation is best when it also uses the teachers' comments to guide future learning.

All staff have continued to give a high priority to the behaviour of the pupils. As a result, the school has maintained pupils' general behaviour towards staff and peers throughout the school at a good level. Improvements in the quality of teaching have made a positive contribution to this, particularly in the greater use of different work settings in lessons, whereby the pupils work individually, in small groups and as a whole class. However, the behavioural traits that encourage and nurture more effective learning from the pupils, especially the ability to work more independently of the teacher and take greater responsibility for some aspects of their learning, is no better than satisfactory. This is because teachers focus less on developing these personal attributes than on completing lessons tasks within the allotted time. As a result, pupils do not consistently show some of the more developed aspects of their learning, which includes enquiry, inquisitiveness and self-motivation to move their learning beyond that which has been targeted by the teacher.

Senior leaders and managers have focused well on the improvement areas from the previous inspection. There is now a greater rigour to monitoring and evaluating the work of the school, especially the quality of teaching and learning. Planning for improvement is secure and is focused well on those improvement areas identified in the previous inspection. The new senior leaders and managers have quickly identified the strengths and areas for development and are pushing on at a pace to make the necessary improvements. Some, but not all middle leaders are now involved in work scrutiny and regularly assessing pupils' progress. The detailed programme of lesson observations of all teachers is helping the collective staff gain a greater appreciation and understanding of the vision for future improvements. The governing body is developing its monitoring role satisfactorily and the



recent designation of named governors to particular subjects in the school has added greater clarity to this part of their role.

Ongoing support from the school's previous School Improvement Partner is providing a helpful external overview of the progress it is making. Senior leaders and managers appreciate this support and the linked work is helping to maintain the impetus on raising standards and improving the overall quality of teaching.

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

Brian Blake

**Her Majesty's Inspector**



## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2010**

- Ensure that all teaching is good or better to accelerate pupils' progress by:
  - increasing the level of expectation and challenging lessons, particularly of the most able pupils
  - introducing basic literacy and numeracy skills into as many lessons as possible
  - providing clear success criteria so that the learning of individual pupils can be checked easily
  - involving pupils more in assessing how well they are doing so that they can always tell if they are doing 'a good job'.
  
- Further raise attainment through more rigorous and effective monitoring and evaluation, which:
  - examines the effectiveness of middle leaders
  - is a more systematic method of following up on areas for development in the quality of teaching.

