

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs 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 566937

Direct F 01695 729320

Direct email: jsimmons@cfbt.com



4 March 2015

Mr Richard Blackburn
Acting Headteacher
Whalley Church of England Primary School
Church Lane
Whalley
Clitheroe
Lancashire
BB7 9SY

Dear Mr Blackburn

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Whalley Church of England Primary School, Lancashire

Following my visit to your school on 6 March 2015, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in November 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- ensure steps taken to strengthen teaching quality are reviewed in a more timely fashion to inform leaders where improvements have been made or where further support and challenge are required.

Evidence

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the acting deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher and the staff member responsible for the co-ordination of special educational needs provision. Further meetings were held with a representative of the local authority and five members of the governing body, including the Chair. Actions taken since the last inspection were discussed and the

school's action plans were evaluated. I toured the school and looked at a sample of pupils' work in books. Fifty eight responses to Parent View were also taken into account.

Context

The organisation of Years 5 and 6, formerly in mixed-aged groups, has changed. Pupils in Year 6 are now taught in a discrete age group.

The process for appointing a substantive headteacher is underway. To help strengthen leadership capacity within the school, an acting deputy headteacher has been appointed until the end of the summer term. In addition, an associate headteacher, a recently retired headteacher, has been assigned to the school for two days a week up to Easter in the first instance.

Main findings

Leaders and governors accepted fully the findings of the November 2014 inspection. As a result, they have acted with determination to bring about improvement. Already, pupils are taking greater strides in their learning although this improvement is not consistent across the school. Where progress is best, it is because teaching quality is improving.

Leaders have ensured teachers are better focused on the needs of their pupils than in the past. Regular pupil progress meetings, for example, highlight well where pupils are doing well and where there is the potential of ground being lost. A range of strategies is in place to ensure that pupils in danger of not making expected progress are supported, including mathematics boosters and the use of the learning mentor for example. Furthermore, the review of pupil premium funding has enabled leaders to identify more clearly the strengths and needs of disadvantaged pupils.

Pupils' writing is showing signs of improvement. Sentences and paragraphs are interesting and pupils use, for example, the first and third person increasingly appropriately. Spelling, grammar and punctuation are also improving, not least because teachers are more adept at identifying errors and getting pupils to correct them. On occasions, though, some corrections made by pupils are not checked for accuracy. Pupils are clearly enjoying using their purple pens to respond to comments and challenges made by teachers. This is helping them to make progress in their learning, including solving problems in mathematics.

While teaching quality is improving, it is not doing so consistently across the school. While leaders' records of teaching quality and work in pupils' books identify the right strengths and weaknesses, the rigour in which steps are taken to bring about improvements is not always as strong as in the best cases. On occasions too much time is given for improvements to be made without checking to see whether or not the intended outcomes are emerging.

The review of governance has rightly highlighted that governors are committed, proactive and dedicated - as leaders are - to ensuring high quality outcomes for pupils. Governors know the school well. They carry out learning walks, are linking themselves to classes, undertake book scrutinies, and analyse data. They are supportive and challenging in equal measure.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has supported and challenged the school very well. Its brokering of acting deputy headteacher and associate headteacher support is strengthening leadership capacity well. Its regular checking of the school's progress with leaders and governors, through audits of teaching and learning for example, mean officers have an excellent understanding of the school's strengths and needs.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Lancashire and to the Anglican Diocese of Blackburn.

Yours sincerely

Mark Williams

Her Majesty's Inspector

The letter should be copied to the following:

- Chair of the Governing Body
- Lancashire local authority
- Diocese of Blackburn