

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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

**Direct T** 01695 566850  
**Direct F** 01695 729320  
**Direct email:**



12 June 2015

Mrs Christina Maddison-Muchlinski  
Headteacher  
Boundary Primary School  
Dinmore Avenue  
Blackpool  
Lancashire  
FY3 7RW

Dear Mrs Maddison-Muchlinski

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Boundary Primary School, Blackpool**

Following my visit to your school on 11 June 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 March 2015. 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:

- Sharpen the success criteria in the school's action plan, so that governors can check that leaders are achieving the desired impact at specific points across the year.
- Develop further middle leaders' roles by sharpening their focus on quality assuring the impact of actions to improve teaching and learning.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I was greeted by a number of your school prefects. They acted proudly as ambassadors as they took me on a guided tour of the school, pointing out many features of interest, including how the school is inclusive to all pupils. I met with you and your deputies, two other middle leaders, three governors

including the Chair of the Governing Body, and an officer from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I held a telephone conversation with the head of the local authority's school improvement team. I accompanied you and your deputies during visits to all classrooms to see the school in action. I evaluated the school's improvement and action plans and examined the school's single central register of the checks relating to the suitability of staff to work at the school.

### **Context**

Since the last inspection, one teacher has left the school, one teacher has returned to work following maternity leave and one has joined the school. You made me aware of a number of teaching staff changes for the forthcoming academic year and the appropriate actions you are taking to ensure that your newly-appointed teachers immediately contribute to improving the school when they take up their posts in September.

### **Main findings**

The reconstituted governing body demonstrates renewed vigour and passion to challenge and support you to improve the outcomes for the pupils. Governors have heightened their expectations of you and other leaders and now more regularly check the accuracy of the information they receive. Governors are growing in their confidence to challenge you to clarify anything they do not understand, including any use of jargon. They visit the school more frequently to see for themselves the impact of actions, for example, by attending some external moderation meetings to check the school's assessments of pupils' work. The governing body is gaining expertise because of appropriate training, while the appointment of additional governors has brought knowledge and skills in such areas as special educational needs and human resources. Consequently, governors have a clearer understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are now better equipped to support you in leading the school on its journey to become good. Governors continue to ensure the school meets statutory requirements for the safeguarding of pupils, including the checking of the suitability of staff to work in the school.

Following the last inspection, you and your governors acted quickly to identify and plan appropriate actions which are set out in a well-structured action plan. The criteria you have written by which you and your governors can evaluate the school's success are not clear enough. Consequently, governors cannot easily check that the plan is working at specific times across the year. You recognise this issue and the need for you to take actions to address it.

Middle leadership is developing, particularly in mathematics and the early years, because of the support and advice these leaders have received. Some of your middle leaders, including those responsible for mathematics and early years, are sharpening their use of data and other checks to hold teachers to account because of advice they received from a middle leader in a National Leader of Education's school. Support from the local authority is helping to secure the accuracy of assessments of

children's development in the early years. Visits to other schools to allow middle leaders and teachers to see good practice are planned. Nevertheless, further work, is still required to ensure all middle leaders continue to hone their skills in quality assuring the work of other teachers.

You have implemented a number of new initiatives, which are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching. For example, some teachers are working together to develop their practice by collaboratively studying how they plan and teach a series of lessons. Their evaluations allow them to identify how their teaching can be improved so that it has greater impact on pupils' learning. Your subject leaders for mathematics are improving the teaching of mathematics. They are working with external partners support commissioned by the school to develop 'mathematical journeys' for different mathematical topics. These 'journeys' ensure pupils' skills are developed progressively across Key Stages 1 and 2. Recent pilots of this work, focussing on how fractions were taught as a topic, have had positive impact on pupils' achievement.

You and your deputies are making better use of quality assurance processes to hold teachers to account. You meet more frequently with teachers to evaluate the quality of their work and gather the evidence needed to form a more accurate view of teaching. For example, you examine the evidence from your observations of teaching, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and check the progress of specific pupils. Additionally, your more frequent checking of teachers' planning and pupils' work in books allows you to see how well teachers plan and set work that is appropriate for pupils of different abilities, which enables you to target advice and guidance. Consequently, teachers are improving their skills in matching the difficulty of the work they set to the abilities of their pupils. Furthermore, because of your improved rigour of scrutiny you have a clearer understanding of where some teaching is not good enough. Where this is the case, you are taking robust actions to address identified issues, including the appropriate use of the school's policies and procedures relating to teachers' performance.

Teachers have profited from training to help them develop their questioning skills in order to help pupils to learn more effectively. The best impact of this training is seen when teachers regularly use probing and open questions to encourage pupils to explain their thinking.

The revised marking policy you have introduced, following a review by your middle leaders, now means pupils receive better information about how they can improve their work. Some teachers are now helping pupils to develop their own strategies to improve their work and that of others. For example, in one class the use of 'yellow edit lines' that interspace pupils' writing, allowed children to make effective edits and amendments during the writing process. In other classes, pupils are developing their understanding, because they are given regular opportunities to respond to advice or undertake additional challenges. You have also introduced to all year groups a method of developing pupils' own assessment strategies to evaluate what they

understand and to seek the appropriate levels of advice and support. This is a very popular initiative. Pupils were keen to explain how they used different coloured plastic cups to indicate how they assessed their need for support when we visited their classrooms.

Your increased use of awards to celebrate academic achievement is improving pupils' attitudes to learning. Pupils who accompanied me on a tour of the school were keen to point out the award displays and stated that these awards made coming to school more fun. You reinforce the importance of academic success and further encourage others to aspire to success by announcing the awards to the whole school at celebration assemblies, which pupils appreciate. Examples of the awards include, 'mathematicians of the week' and 'writers of the week'. Winners have their work mounted on dedicated display boards for all to see. Budding authors who are awarded 'writer of the week' also have their work posted on a specialist literacy website from which they can receive comments from pupils and teachers from around the world. This is helping to raise pupils' self-esteem and confidence in writing.

Your school's special educational needs coordinator is leading the development of new strategies to improve speech and communication skills in early years. The school's speech and language therapists are delivering training to support this initiative. It is however, too soon to see the impact of this training on pupils' achievement.

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

### **External support**

The local authority has acted appropriately, recognising the school as a high priority for support and challenge. School leaders have readily seized upon the additional support from a variety of departments, including human resources, governor services and school improvement. The school also draws well upon external support from a National Leader of Education, their school and other schools in the locality.

The external review of governance recommended following the last inspection has not yet taken place, but a date has been set and preliminary discussions with the assessor have been undertaken.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Blackpool.

Yours sincerely

John Nixon

**Her Majesty's Inspector**