

CfBT Inspection Services  
Suite 22  
West Lancashire Investment Centre  
Maple View  
White Moss Business Park  
Skelmersdale, WN8 9TG

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Direct T 01695 566939  
Direct F 01695 729320  
glaw@cfbt.com



4 February 2010

Mr D Copley  
Headteacher  
St Francis Catholic Primary School  
Myers Lane  
Bradford  
West Yorkshire  
BD2 4ES

Dear Mr Copley

Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Francis Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with James Kidd Additional Inspector, to your school on 2 and 3 February 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in May 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed subject to the agreement of the lead inspector.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, the Director of Children's Services for Bradford, Education Bradford and the Diocese of Leeds.

Yours sincerely

Katrina Gueli

Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of St Francis Catholic Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 February 2010

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and pupils' work in lessons and met with the headteacher, members of senior leadership team, class teachers, support staff, the chair of governors, the School Improvement Partner and groups of pupils.

### Context

Since the time of the last monitoring inspection in October 2009, a further teacher is absent due to illness, bringing the total number of long term teacher absences to three. The deputy headteacher at the time of the inspection started her maternity leave in late November 2009 and has subsequently chosen to relinquish her deputy headship responsibilities. Four teachers on temporary contracts are covering these staff absences. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed and will take up her post in mid-March 2010.

### Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

The school's own monitoring and inspection findings confirm that pupils' learning in lessons and their progress over time is improving. Consequently, pupils' previous underachievement is beginning to be addressed and standards are rising. Recent teacher assessment data shows that increasing numbers of pupils are making at least the expected levels of progress and a minority are making accelerated progress. Learners of all abilities are being more effectively challenged because teachers' expectations of what pupils' can achieve have increased. Improvements in teaching have resulted in higher levels of pupil engagement and pupils' greater enthusiasm to be actively involved in their learning. Pupils are increasingly keen to talk about their ideas or demonstrate their knowledge and understanding during interactive activities and are beginning to take responsibility for improving their own work.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards and improve achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly of the more-able pupils – satisfactory

### The effectiveness of provision

The quality of teaching is improving as a result of the rigorous approach to developing the skills and expertise of all staff and the strong commitment of all staff to raising pupils' attainment. Lessons observed during the monitoring inspection ranged from outstanding to satisfactory with no inadequate teaching seen. Moreover, the proportion of lessons where teaching was judged to be good or better has improved significantly. While teachers' effectiveness still varies, there is much greater consistency in the use of a wide range of strategies to engage and challenge learners. For example, brisk lesson starters often set the scene well and the use of techniques, such as 'talk partners' are providing more regular opportunities for pupils to act as resources to support their classmates' learning. Teaching assistants are being deployed more effectively by teachers to support learning and pupils who sometimes find the work difficult benefit from the additional guidance and targeted support provided. Teachers are making better use of displays in classrooms and on the corridors as a tool to support pupils' learning. For example, pupils are keen to explain how the 'working walls' and learning targets are making them much more aware of the levels at which they are working and motivating them to reach higher standards. However, the school is aware that, on occasions, there is still too much 'teacher talk' in lessons and that the pace of learning slows as a consequence. There is also variability in the quality and extent of opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on their learning. In addition, pupils are not always fully attentive at the end of lessons when teachers attempt to gauge how well pupils have progressed towards the learning objectives. Progress in this respect, and in widely embedding some other aspects of good practice seen, has been slowed in part due to further recent changes to staffing in some classes.

A robust system to track pupils' progress is now in place and the school is better placed to identify underperformance of individuals and groups. Consequently, pupils who need additional support to get back on track are now identified and helped more quickly. The accuracy of teachers' assessment is improving as a result of external and in-house support to develop staff skills and confidence in this area. Some teachers are now making good use of assessment information to inform their planning and teaching, but this aspect of assessment is not fully developed in all classrooms. Work to improve the quality of marking and written feedback is becoming embedded. Pupils recognise the contribution this is beginning to make to their understanding of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good and has the necessary rigour, pace and challenge in all classes – satisfactory
- improve the accuracy of assessment and use assessment information systematically to build on what pupils already know and to show pupils clearly how they can improve their work further – satisfactory

## The effectiveness of leadership and management

The pace of improvement has accelerated significantly since the last monitoring inspection. This has been successfully driven by the clear vision and relentless determination of the headteacher and the developing capacity of other leaders in the school to bring about improvement. The increasing consistency and quality of provision has been underpinned by further clarification of the roles, responsibilities and expectations of all staff and the well-planned professional development of middle leaders, both permanent and temporary teachers and support staff. Staff meetings are being used increasingly well to promote and embed improvement activity, and as a vehicle to share best practice. Teachers and support staff feel valued and well supported, despite the urgent need to develop practice and improve pupils' outcomes. Consequently, staff morale has risen and they share the collective responsibility for ensuring that pupils achieve more highly. The headteacher's view of the school's current strengths and remaining weaknesses is very accurate and based on secure evidence. Regular reviews involving all partners in evaluating the impact of the raising attainment plan is proving very effective in providing a shared understanding of the school's progress and next steps. The headteacher has a strong working relationship with the School Improvement Partner and together they are ensuring that support is well matched to the needs of the school and responsive to emerging priorities or personnel changes. Governors are providing a greater degree of support and challenge for the school and are regularly involved in reviewing progress. New appointments to the governing body have brought additional expertise which is helping governors to be more proactive in shaping the strategic direction of the school.

- ensure that leaders take swift and effective action to address the weaknesses and to improve the school's performance, and that they plan and measure the impact of their actions against clear criteria – good

## External support

The effectiveness and impact of external support has developed well since the last monitoring inspection. The increased coherence in providing targeted support, successfully brokered via the School Improvement Partner has accelerated the progress in addressing the school's areas for development. There is a good balance between the challenge and support being offered. Robust external monitoring and evaluation is effective in confirming the school's view of progress made and in identifying aspects of provision that require further improvement. Continued support from the local authority, human resource colleagues is helping the school move forward to address staffing instability.