

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

Direct T 01695 566934
Direct F 01695 729320
e-mail gtunncliffe@cfbt.com

11 March 2010

Mrs Gwynneth Bennett
Oswaldtwistle St Paul's C of E VA Primary School
Union Road
Oswaldtwistle
Accrington
Lancashire
BB5 3DD

Dear Mrs Bennett

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 10 March 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information you provided before and during my visit. Please also pass on my thanks to pupils, local authority advisers and the governor who met with me.

Since the last inspection the school has appointed a permanent teacher in Year 6 and the Early Years Foundation Stage teacher has returned from maternity leave. At the time of this inspection there were two supply teachers in Key Stage 2 covering a temporary absence and providing cover pending a permanent appointment.

As a result of the inspection on 06–07 May 2008, the school was asked to do the following.

- Raise standards in mathematics in Key Stage 2.
- Improve achievement for more-able pupils.
- Make better use of information to identify and tackle underachievement.
- Give clearer guidance to individual pupils to help them to improve.

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.

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are at levels well below those expected of children their age. Their good progress in the

Reception class and across Key Stage 1, noted in the last inspection report, continues. Pupils who have continuous education at the school are now making at least satisfactory progress across Key Stage 2 and some are making good progress. A significant number of pupils join the school at other times and many who start in the Reception class move out of the area before they complete their primary school education. Those joining the school have varied knowledge and educational experience; some are the children of Traveller families and some have moved from schools in other areas. They are supported well and most make satisfactory progress in their learning and good gains in their personal development.

Improving standards in mathematics are evident in pupils' work books and in lessons. In 2009 the percentage of pupils who made at least two levels of progress in mathematics increased considerably. The percentage of pupils attaining Level 4 and above in both English and mathematics was the highest it has been for five years and is now above floor targets. However, the average point score and the percentage of pupils attaining Level 5 in the Year 6 standardised tests was well below average in all subjects. This was partly due to a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and very high mobility in that cohort; only nine of the 18 pupils had continuous education at the school. Of those joining at other times, four did not take the tests in Year 6.

The 2009 results indicate that different groups of pupils made better progress in all subjects than they did the previous year. The last inspection highlighted good care and support for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These strengths remain and these groups continue to make good progress. A more consistent approach to tracking the progress of more-able pupils and ensuring that lessons provide sufficient challenge to extend their learning is beginning to have an impact on the achievement of this group. Pupils from Pakistani backgrounds attained standards in 2009 that are above the national average. Pupils' good behaviour and the encouraging ethos of the school make a strong contribution to improvements. Attendance has improved since the last inspection due to the positive impact of support from the learning mentor, rewards for good attendance and work with families. However, it remains lower than average, largely due to families taking extended holidays or travelling in term time.

Pupils of all ability are making better progress because teaching is more carefully matched to their specific learning needs and activities help them build on their prior knowledge. Tracking of pupils' progress has been developed and additional support or challenge is provided for individuals who are not making expected progress. A number of specific support programmes have been introduced. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support different groups. Flexible age groupings and more opportunities for problem solving are successfully engaging more-able pupils in using and applying their skills. Encouraging and supportive relationships are a positive influence in all classes. There has been a whole-school focus on setting targets for pupils and marking their work. Assessment is used to better effect in Years 1, 2 and

6. The majority of pupils who spoke with the inspector had a clear understanding of how they can improve their work.

The headteacher has a clear view of where further improvement is needed and is taking appropriate action to stabilise teaching, share best practice and strengthen the leadership team. Leaders and governors are using information more rigorously to identify underachievement and target areas more precisely for improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate although leaders recognise the need for more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the impact of initiatives. The local authority continues to provide good support to strengthen leadership and management and improve teaching. Where the school and local authority have targeted action, there is evidence of improvement, notably in improving attendance and pupils' progress in mathematics. This demonstrates that the school is building capacity in key areas.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jean Kendall
Her Majesty's Inspector