

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

T 0300 123 1231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566930
Direct F 01695 729320
e-mail gtunncliffe@cfbt.com



25 June 2010

Mr D Copley
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 to your school on 23–24 June 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 third 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 – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

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 the Governing Body, 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 third monitoring inspection on 23 and 24 June 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work; scrutinised documents, including pupils' work; and met with senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of Education Bradford, a group of pupils and a group of staff.

Context

Since the time of the last monitoring inspection a new deputy headteacher has taken up post. Three members of staff who were on long-term absence due to ill health have now left the school. A newly qualified teacher has been appointed and is already teaching in school. An experienced teacher has also been appointed and will take up post in September.

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

In the majority of classes, especially where staffing has been more stable, there is clear evidence that pupils are now making better progress. The best progress is seen in mathematics and writing, reflecting the success of the school's development work in these areas. Pupils' accelerating progress is well supported by their regular attendance, good behaviour and their increasing levels of motivation and commitment to doing their best work. At Key Stage 1, externally moderated end of key stage assessments demonstrate that more pupils are reaching the level expected for their age. In particular, there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching Level 3, confirming the impact of the school's work to ensure that higher-attaining pupils make the progress that they should. At Key Stage 2 there is a similar picture of improving attainment for most pupils and the gaps between pupils' current and expected attainment are continuing to close. However, despite the best efforts of the school, there has been too little time for the significant previous underperformance of pupils currently in upper Key Stage 2 to have been fully addressed. Consequently, the school's own assessments indicate that the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is still well below expectations given their starting points.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

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

The effectiveness of provision

The overall quality of teaching seen was similar to the quality at the time of the last monitoring inspection. Lesson planning is being refined to meet pupils' learning needs better and activities that successfully challenge higher-attaining pupils are more frequently incorporated. Teachers are also increasingly contextualising pupils' learning and extending the range of teaching strategies used. Increased investment in new technologies, including easy-to-use video cameras, is allowing teachers to be more creative in their approach. Pupils appreciate these developments in teaching, saying that they are enjoying their learning much more. However, in a small minority of lessons seen, planned activities did not support the intended learning as effectively as they might and teachers missed opportunities to model effective learning strategies. The school has rightly identified that more embedding of the extensive work to improve the quality of teaching is needed to ensure consistently good progress for all pupils.

There has been significant improvement in the accuracy of teachers' assessments, particularly in mathematics and writing, as a result of effective in-house professional development combined with both internal and external moderation. These improved assessments are allowing teachers to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding more sharply so that action to address underperformance is more accurately targeted. A whole-school approach to marking and written feedback is being implemented well. Some teachers are already excellent role models in the use of this assessment strategy and are actively supporting other colleagues in developing their skills. In a discussion group pupils talked with enthusiasm about how they were informed through marking of their success in meeting learning objectives and personal targets. They also described how they are making increasingly good use of targets to take responsibility for improving their own work.

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 – good.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership team is continuing its determined drive to bring about the improvement that the school requires. Leaders have ensured that all staff are aware of what needs to be done and that they understand their role in contributing to raising pupils' attainment and accelerating their progress. Despite the challenges of special measures, staff's morale is good and there is a shared commitment to improving outcomes for pupils. The capacity of the senior leadership team has been boosted by the expertise and experience of the new deputy headteacher and the continued development of the new members of the senior team appointed in the

autumn term. The school is clearly becoming less reliant on external support as this internal capacity develops. For example, expertise within the school's Early Years Foundation Stage is being used to support developments at Key Stage 1.

Monitoring by all leaders is more rigorous and this is ensuring that evaluation is more incisive and underpinned by stronger evidence. Consequently, leaders are pinpointing with increased accuracy where inconsistency and underperformance still need to be tackled. The introduction of regular meetings about pupils' progress is helping to ensure that the strategies and interventions that result in pupils' good progress are used more widely and that pupils who are not making the expected progress are quickly identified. Class teachers confirm that this has increased their accountability for securing pupils' good progress. Nevertheless, they feel well supported by all leaders in helping pupils who are not making the expected progress to get back on track. Governance continues to develop as governors' expertise is increasingly well utilised to support the school's improvement. Governors' visits into school combined with detailed reporting by the headteacher are ensuring that governors are better placed to hold the school to account and support the school's strategic development.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- 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

Support from Education Bradford continues to be effective because it is responsive to the increasing capacity of the school to drive its own improvement. For example, there has been a shift in focus for the School Improvement Partner from leading and initiating improvement activity to carrying out quality assurance of the impact and effectiveness of the school's own actions. Nevertheless, the school recognises the benefits of the bespoke external support it receives, such as targeted input from an advanced skills teacher, in contributing to the school's improvement.