

CfBT Inspection Services
Suite 22
West Lancs Investment Centre
Maple View
Skelmersdale
WN8 9TG

T 0300 1231231
Text Phone: 0161 6188524
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01695 566862
Direct F 01695 729320
Direct email:
rcowley@cfbt.com



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Mrs S Smith
Executive Headteacher
Easington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School
High Street
Easington
Hull
HU12 0TS

Dear Mrs Smith

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Easington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 7 December 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection.

Over the past year and a half the school has had a series of temporary headteachers. This has been resolved by your appointment in September 2011 as the executive headteacher of both this school and Patrington Church of England Primary School. Another teacher joined the staff at the same time. There are now three mixed-age classes and the number of pupils on roll has slightly increased.

As a result of the inspection on 20 April 2010, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made inadequate progress in making improvements and inadequate progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

Pupils' achievement by the time they leave school has so far shown no improvement. The attainment of Year 6 pupils in national tests in 2011 was broadly in line with the latest published national figures in English. It dipped far below in mathematics. This represented inadequate progress from the broadly average levels most pupils had reached when in Year 2. The progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities remained satisfactory.

There are some very recent signs of improvement in achievement. The school has begun to moderate teachers' assessments with other schools and to track pupils' progress more systematically. The first assessments this autumn indicate that the majority of pupils across the age range are on track to reach suitably challenging targets. The school is cautiously predicting better outcomes next summer. The quality of a sample of pupils' current work in

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

English and mathematics is broadly in line with the school's assessments. Attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 has been sustained at a broadly average level. Some writing by pupils in Year 2 indicates that more-able pupils are beginning to reach higher levels than in the past. However, spelling and punctuation are in general no better than average among the older pupils in the school, and, as the school's assessments indicate, gaps remain to be filled in pupils' basic arithmetical skills.

Improvements in the quality of provision and pupils' learning are patchy. There has been limited improvement in fostering children's independence and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children are enthusiastic about exploring the resources available to them, but adults miss opportunities to engage them in making thoughtful choices or encourage them to talk about their experiences and discoveries. Teaching about two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes was quite clear and engagingly practical, but some children became restless because they were not given enough to do. Their understanding was not effectively assessed and developed during the session. The opportunities they had to explore these concepts lacked clear purpose or the right level of challenge for different children and did not engage them for long.

Teachers' use of assessment to match work to pupils' different needs has improved, as was demonstrated in the teaching of mathematics, English and science in the class of year 2, 3 and 4 pupils. This made clear to pupils at different levels how they could move forward, and activities and resources were carefully selected to help them do so. Their understanding was assessed during the lesson and teaching was adapted to their rate of progress. In response, pupils felt challenged but knew how to do well. They tackled their tasks independently, with care and sustained concentration. Their work generally showed progress over the term.

Marking shows signs of increasing usefulness across the key stages. Since the start of the autumn term, it has gradually become more specific about what each the pupil has achieved and what could be better. Mistakes are being pointed out. However, it does not always make clear how the pupil should respond or what is the next step they are expected to try.

Teachers' plans and pupils' work show that time is being given to learning about and practising spelling, punctuation and mental mathematical calculation, but the impact is mixed. Particularly in mathematics, the school has lacked its own policy clearly setting out expectations of good teaching. This is now being addressed by the appointment of subject leaders who are about to start work with local authority consultants and subject leaders in the collaborating school. It is, however, too soon to see impact.

The track record of leaders and managers in bringing about improvement since the previous inspection is weak overall, due to discontinuity and the effect of difficulties in recruiting. Although the local authority provided support during this period through a consultant headteacher, the pace of improvement was slow. However, there is now a full complement of staff and pupils are benefitting from better continuity in teaching. The positive effect of recent innovations and collaborations is beginning to be evident. The governing body is

communicating higher ambitions for the school and setting suitable targets for achievement, although these have yet to be met. Through recent moderation meetings with other schools, teachers are gaining a clearer idea of what is needed to reach higher levels. Pupils' assessments have been probed to work out where the gaps in their knowledge and skills lie, and teachers are being guided to fill these gaps. New systems to track pupils' progress are in place and the first meetings have been held with teachers to check their plans to deal with any slow progress. The quality of teaching and learning is being monitored, with the assistance of the local authority, and suitable plans to support improvement are about to be rolled out. While this is all very recent, it is inspiring the loyal staff with the confidence to aim higher. What remains to be done is to embed more consistently the use of assessment and responsive, effective teaching which promotes high aspirations and independence in learning.

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

Susan Bowles
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 2010

- Raise standards in literacy and numeracy, particularly in the early stages of Key Stage 2 by establishing rigorous teaching of the basics of spelling, punctuation and mental mathematics.
- Improve the use of assessment in teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that the needs of all pupils are identified through accurate assessment of their progress in lessons
 - setting tasks that are appropriate to the needs of all pupils
 - providing pupils with clear short-term steps for improvement
 - helping pupils understand how well they are achieving their targets.
- Improve progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - providing more creative and challenging activities, especially for the most able
 - encouraging children to be less dependent on adults for simple routines and activity choices.