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17 November 2010

Mrs Katherine Schofield  
Interim Headteacher  
Moorlands Junior School  
Chantry Mead Road  
Bath  
BA2 2DE

Dear Mrs Schofield

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Moorlands Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 9–10 November 2010, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in July 2009. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – **good**

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 and the Director of Children's Services for Bath and North East Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009**

- Improve the progress of pupils, particularly in mathematics and science, to ensure that no group is underachieving.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels so that leaders and managers: Develop a concise set of agreed priorities for action with clear success criteria related to pupils' progress; Take rapid and decisive action in order to implement the actions consistently; Carry out robust and ongoing monitoring and evaluation so that all are clear about the difference that their actions make to the pupils' academic progress.
- Improve teaching, the assessment of pupils' learning and the curriculum by ensuring consistency of good practice throughout the school.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Moorlands Junior School**

### **Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 9–10 November 2010**

#### **Evidence**

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher and the substantive headteacher designate (from January 1 2011), groups of pupils, some parents, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

An orderly transition took place between the first interim headteacher and the second. The second interim headteacher and new temporary deputy headteacher have been in post since September 1 2010. One staff redundancy has occurred and one teacher is taking early retirement at the end of October on the advice of human resources. The substantive headteacher designate is in school half a day a week to prepare for the Federation on January 1 2011 with Moorlands Infant School. The election and appointment of the Federation Governors has begun. There are increased staff links/meetings between the two schools. One teacher is on maternity leave and one teacher is currently absent.

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

Overall, the legacy of pupil underachievement is being steadily tackled. The school's detailed analysis of pupils' progress during September and October shows the overall pace is picking up. It also highlights new concerns for specific groups. Those known to be eligible for free school meals and the progress of some of the girls in mathematics have rightly become a new focus of attention. The extensive programme of individual tuition to support pupils who are in danger of falling behind, especially in writing, is clearly helping pupils to build up their skills and confidence. The still patchy picture of pupil assessment in science is delaying the drive to further improve pupils' standards in this subject. Older pupils sometimes have problems, such as in a lesson on forces because they lack or have forgotten some basic knowledge that should have been covered in previous years. They therefore struggled to apply it well to an interesting set of questions linked to the work they are doing on Victorian mining. The enthusiasm for science is more evident in younger classes; in one, they enjoyed physically representing what happens to molecules in various liquids, solids and gases. The active physical approach to learning also appealed to pupils in a mathematics lesson reinforcing multiplication number facts and developing measuring skills. Progress in mathematics and art has been strongly supported by the focused 'Marts' week held recently. This also involved parents and carers in pupils' learning. An outstanding lesson on part singing was observed. The pupils clearly enjoy the breadth and excitement within the

curriculum, while at the same time striving for better progress and standards in their writing, mathematics and science.

### Judgement

Progress since the last monitoring inspection:

- Improve the progress of pupils, particularly in mathematics and science, to ensure that no group is underachieving – satisfactory.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Behaviour continues to be good. There has been one half day exclusion during this term. Attendance is satisfactory, although a few pupils are not punctual. Occasionally, younger pupils are prone to fidget and fuss as they are still getting used to the demands of being in the junior school. School clubs are numerous and are well attended. The numbers having musical tuition are high, although there are no brass instrument lessons. Pupils on the Eco committee have been active in getting the school community to consider its electricity consumption and they have plans to revive the school allotments. This shows economic understanding developing appropriately as well as increased awareness about sustainability issues. Good work on healthy eating was displayed. Lunchtime was orderly, although play space was too dominated by football. Fallen autumn leaves led to some fun and physical activity. Sporting activities are well supported. The Harvest celebrations and the 'Marts' week involved the junior and infant pupils in some much enjoyed joint activities. Year 5 put on a successful performance for their parents about Greek myths and then entertained them to coffee; this demonstrated their cultural and social development. Other pupils were excited about setting out on their residential experience aimed at broadening their understanding of the wider world.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The school's monitoring of teaching and learning shows attention to detail and good clear points for development which are then acted on promptly in almost all cases. Teaching continues to improve and now ranges from outstanding to satisfactory. New and part-time teachers are settling well and the whole staff team is clear what still needs to be done. Pupil assessment is generally well used and lesson planning is more consistent, with the needs of various groups appropriately addressed. The main purpose of the lesson was clear in all lessons observed and pupils helped evaluate their learning at the end of each one. They mostly knew their targets when asked and are given time to respond to the guidance in the improved teacher marking. Teaching support is more focused and encouraging work was seen, in cooperation with the teacher, when a group of boys discussing techniques to manage feelings of anger. Pupils with statements of educational needs are well supported in class. The curriculum stimulates pupils, including those with special educational needs, and pupils reported taking part in a wider variety of activities recently. The good quality of care for pupils has been maintained.

### Judgement

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve teaching, the assessment of pupils' learning and the curriculum by ensuring consistency of good practice throughout the school – good.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The interim headteacher and deputy have been able to keep up the pace of improvement due to a smooth transition from the previous interim headteacher as well as by implementing the well-constructed one-term development plan. The outgoing management team, the chair of governors, as well as the local authority adviser, successfully ensured the plan was tightly focused, transparent and manageable. The governors continue to offer good support to the transition management and the school as a whole. The deputy headteacher has taken a good lead on the analysis of assessment data so new trends and issues are being highlighted in a timely manner. Together, the senior management team ensure that all teachers are held accountable for their pupils' performance. Teacher confidence in using data effectively is increasing. The vision for the future of the school is becoming clearer with the imminent Federation and the increased links between the two schools. The Federation Head divides her time between the two schools on the day she is present each week; this is a good strategy to develop the planned Federation. The new middle managers are beginning to monitor English and mathematics and are honing the action plans which include more links with the Key Stage 1 teachers. A recent vacancy has occurred for the role of science coordinator. In the meantime, the deputy will now temporarily take the lead on assessment in science as this is an area that has lagged behind the other core subjects. The interim headteacher is updating the school's self-evaluation as a springboard for the incoming headteacher. The capacity to improve is now better as it is based on a secure timeline and widely shared expectations for future development.

### Judgement

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- concise set of agreed priorities – Good
- rapid and decisive action – Good
- robust and ongoing monitoring and evaluation so that all are clear about the difference that their actions make to the pupils' academic progress – Good.

### **External support**

The local authority has supported the school appropriately. The adviser, who is also the School Improvement Partner, has successfully aided a continuity of purpose and helped ensure the school development plan is specific and time measured so that no slippage in progress has occurred despite the change in both the headteacher and

the deputy. External support for addressing the budget deficit has been helpful but has resulted in many staff on short-term contracts which potentially limit staffing stability. This includes a middle manager.