

31 March 2011

Mr A Littlehales
Headteacher
Morley Place Junior School
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Dear Mr Littlehales

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Morley Place Junior School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 30 March 2011, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please give my thanks also to the pupils and members of staff who met with me.

As a result of the inspection on 22 October 2009, 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 of 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.

The school's data indicate that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 was broadly average in 2010, although a little below the previous year. The data suggest also that attainment in Year 6 currently may be above average. There are also indications that the pupils are beginning to make better rates of progress in each year group, particularly in mathematics.

The lesson observations carried out by the inspector, the scrutiny of pupils' work and discussions with the pupils indicate that the quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. This is reflected also in the school's own monitoring. There is now a broad range of opportunities for the pupils to develop their writing skills in a variety of styles, involving many subjects and other activities across the curriculum. In mathematics, the pupils work on various types of calculations, and many pupils told the inspector that they enjoyed mathematics lessons often, frequently citing it as their favourite subject. There was less evidence of the pupils having to work on mathematical problems in a range of situations. A notable exception to this was enterprise activities, some involving pupils from Morley Place in a successful product development and marketing competition with other older pupils. The pupils involved were able to give clear, precise and lucid accounts of how

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they had used and developed mathematical knowledge in different contexts as part of the enterprise activities.

The pupils feel well supported. The teachers are aware of the pupils' different levels of prior attainment and provide groups and individuals with different tasks at an appropriate level. However, the extent varies to which the teachers' lesson plans draw explicitly upon the school's data on the pupils' attainment. The pupils are provided with much encouragement in lessons, but the inspector saw only a few examples of clear information from the teacher about what the pupils had shown they had learned. The teachers used a number of simple techniques to enable them to check the pupils' understanding, but did not always take the opportunity to reinforce the learning by questioning individuals further or calling for explanations. The inspector observed occasions during lessons when the teacher identified when something had not been learned sufficiently and adapted the lesson accordingly and when additional support was given to individuals who had indicated they were struggling. The marking of the pupils' work is done regularly. The pupils understand the marking, but it varies in quality. It is more focused and precise for literacy work than for mathematics. The pupils had a general understanding of how well they were doing and sometimes said explicitly what they needed to improve. They gave much more secure descriptions of their learning when discussing the enterprise activities, in which they had also enjoyed greater opportunities to learn independently.

The school has focused well on the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. Pupils' attainment and progress are tracked well. The school has good quality data based on regular assessments of the pupils' work. The teachers have worked with the local authority to ensure that they assess pupils' work accurately. The senior leaders use national benchmarks to support their evaluation of pupils' attainment and progress, but these are not always the most stretching. Self-evaluation is undertaken conscientiously and draws upon a range of appropriate evidence. Increasingly, the school is relating its evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning to what is evident in the data on pupils' attainment and progress. The lesson observations undertaken as part of this inspection, including some that were carried out jointly with the headteacher, indicate that the school's evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning is accurate. All teachers are involved in gathering evidence for the self-evaluation and in detailed discussions about what the evidence reveals and what action needs to be taken. The governing body requests and discusses reports from members of the school staff on various aspects of the school's work and performance, and asks some probing questions. The discussions guide further activity and have assisted the improvements at the school.

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

Yours sincerely
Mr Clive Moss
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place on 22 October 2010.

- Raise standards and improve progress in English, especially writing, across the school by ensuring pupils acquire the ability to write in a range of styles that effectively convey meaning and interest for both the writer and the reader.
- Raise standards and improve progress in mathematics by ensuring pupils have the knowledge and understanding of number to be able to solve mathematical problems in a range of situations.
- Improve the effectiveness and consistency of teaching by:
 - making greater use of information about pupils' prior learning to ensure work is closely matched to individuals' needs and that they are appropriately supported and challenged
 - providing more opportunities in lessons for pupils to consolidate their knowledge and understanding through working independently and in groups
 - ensuring pupils get regular and precise guidance on how to improve their work and reach their targets.
- Ensure leaders and governors evaluate the effectiveness of provision and its impact on pupils' learning more rigorously and use the findings to escalate the rate of school improvement.