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22 March 2012

Mr E Cottle  
Headteacher  
Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) School  
Regent Street  
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Dear Mr Cottle

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) School**

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 March 2012, 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2011. 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 being subject to special measures - good

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 Wakefield.

Yours sincerely

John Rutherford

**Her Majesty's Inspector**

January 2012



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2011**

- **Raise levels of attainment and improve the rate of pupils' progress by:**
  - improving the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better
  - devising systems to monitor pupils' progress and taking prompt decisive action to identify and arrest underachievement
  - ensuring that pupils' progress does not slow when they transfer from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1.
  
- **Improve the quality of pupils' writing, especially in Key Stage 1, by:**
  - building more opportunities in the curriculum to develop pupils' writing skills
  - developing a consistent approach to correcting spellings, punctuation and grammar in all subjects
  - paying more attention to presentation and handwriting.
  
- **Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:**
  - establishing systems to monitor and improve the quality of teaching and learning
  - identifying a manageable number of key priorities and producing a detailed action plan to bring about improvements
  - introducing more rigour in the way staff evaluate the quality of the school's work
  - providing staff with opportunities to engage in professional development activities that are carefully aligned to the schools key priorities and will meet their individual development needs
  - ensuring that assessment data are reliable and staff thoroughly understand how to use them to provide work that is consistently well matched to pupils' needs and abilities.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Moorthorpe Primary (J and I) School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 20 and 21 March 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised management documents and pupils' books. He met with the interim headteacher, the deputy headteacher, middle leaders, pupils, a group of parents and carers and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Since the previous monitoring visit there have been a small number of changes to staffing.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

The school's assessment information, lesson observations and pupils' work show that pupils' achievement has improved since the previous monitoring inspection. This is because there is a greater consistency in effective teaching due to changes in staffing, the impact of well-planned training and the better use of assessment information to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. Improvements are recent in some classes, therefore, pupils' achievement has only just started to improve from its previously low level in some age groups. There is also some variation between subjects. Pupils' achievement in writing during lessons has improved considerably and this is raising standards of attainment in the subject. However, there is still a significant gap between attainment in writing and in reading and mathematics.

In writing, pupils of all age-groups have significantly improved their skills in sentence structure, choice of vocabulary and vivid description. Older pupils can adapt their style of writing depending on whether, for example, they are producing imaginative stories about dragons or presenting a balanced argument about chips in school dinners. They are confident in 'having a go' at difficult words and their attempts at these show an improving understanding of letters and their sounds. They independently produce long, fluent and interesting stories and reports, which is helped by their much-improved handwriting skills. A key feature of the overall improvement in English is pupils' improved speaking skills, which is the result of some very exciting drama activities. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrated exceptional skills in expressing emotion when acting Shakespeare's Macbeth and Year 1 pupils have worked with the police service to produce a very persuasive television programme on the safe use of mobile phones.

Since the previous monitoring inspection the proportion of pupils working at levels above those expected for their age has increased, which reflects teachers' higher expectations and the more stimulating lessons they are providing. The large majority of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making progress at a faster rate than most other

pupils because their well-planned support is provided in a way that increases their interest and enjoyment in learning. Pupils who are beginning to fall below their targets are helped to catch up quickly because teachers make better use of their assessment information to plan the extra support they need.

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

- raise levels of attainment and improve the rate of pupils' progress – satisfactory

## **The quality of teaching**

School leaders have taken effective action to remove the inadequate teaching identified in the previous inspection. As a result of this and improved practice in other classes, there are fewer dips in pupils' progress as they pass through the school. Teaching in Key Stage 1 has improved because there is a much greater consistency in planning activities appropriate to pupils' learning needs and stage of development. As a result, younger pupils can still benefit from Early Years Foundation Stage activities if this is necessary to ensure that they do not miss out on the essential building blocks for their later learning.

Across the school, teachers are better at planning lessons that do not try to cover too many different ideas. They are increasingly confident in modifying their planning based on how they assess pupils' progress during lessons. Pupils have a better understanding of their learning goals and are more motivated to achieve them because of the 'fun' ways in which their targets are displayed on 'ladders' in the classroom. The impact of teachers' marking is increasing because it provides clear guidance on how work can be improved and the pupils' response to it is carefully checked.

Teachers use very imaginative ways to extend pupils' ideas for writing and these are often further enriched by stimulating displays in a 'creative room'. This room has, for example, been turned into such exciting places as a dragon's nest and a rainforest. Teachers also base writing tasks on first-hand experiences and interesting topics that are part of the broader curriculum, for example, writing postcards from Australia, reporting practical work in science and technology and writing a diary in the style of an explorer. This work contributes significantly to pupils' improved progress.

Pupils are given plenty of time during each lesson for independent activities which help them to practise and refine their new skills. Occasionally, when the teacher is first explaining the new skills, there is too little opportunity for all pupils to be involved in discussing and answering questions. As a result, many pupils sit passively and their pace of learning is reduced. Teaching assistants make an increasingly strong contribution to the progress of the pupils to whom they provide support, both within the class and when working in a separate room. Their work away from the class is especially effective when they are teaching a programme that has been specifically designed to give their pupils the skills they need to participate fully in lessons. It is occasionally less effective when they provide activities outside lessons that are similar to those planned for the rest of the class. These pupils make



slower progress than the others in the class because they do not receive the same guidance from the teacher, nor the same opportunities to work independently.

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

- improve the quality of teaching and use of assessment so that it is consistently good or better – good
- build more opportunities in the curriculum to develop pupils' writing skills – good

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to work were strengths in the previous monitoring inspection and these continue to improve because of the more stimulating teaching they are receiving. Pupils of all abilities enjoy learning and their attendance is sustained at an above average level. Pupils' ability to take responsibility for their own behaviour, especially when working independently, makes a significant contribution to their improving achievement.

## **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are improving because of the increasingly effective work of the interim headteacher in partnership with the deputy headteacher. While taking urgent and assertive action to improve teaching, they have maintained the high morale and commitment of all staff and there is, therefore, a strong shared determination to remove the school's causes for concern. They provide a clear direction for the future improvement of the school through a recently revised development plan that has a much stronger focus on the key priorities for raising standards of attainment than was the case previously. The governing body makes an increasingly significant contribution to planning the future of the school. It also supports school leaders in ensuring that safeguarding requirements are met.

Senior leaders have a detailed and accurate view of strengths and weaknesses in teaching. On the basis of this, they provide a programme of in-school guidance and access to external training which is helping teachers to improve their work where most needed. They regularly check work in classrooms, focusing strongly on pupils' progress and attitudes, to ensure that new methods are making a positive difference. Their identification of strengths and weaknesses in the school's performance has been helped enormously by a much improved process for tracking and recording pupils' achievements. They also use this information with increasing effectiveness to help each teacher identify any barriers to learning affecting pupils and to plan the support needed to overcome these.

Senior leaders are increasing the school's capacity to continue raising standards of attainment by empowering middle leaders to make a more significant contribution to school improvement. Middle leaders already have a strong influence on the improvement of provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for children in the

Early Years Foundation Stage. The coordinators for assessment and Key Stage 1, however, are at an earlier stage in their professional development. They have introduced new, improved methods for tracking pupils' progress and planning lessons in teams and they are now beginning to develop their skills in evaluating the work of colleagues to provide guidance where required.

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

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management – good

### **External support**

The local authority closely monitors the progress of the school and has an accurate and detailed understanding of the improvements that have been made and those that are still required. They provide helpful advice to senior leaders and the Governing Body on a range of issues including the improvement of teaching, financial planning and human resources management. They recognise school leaders' growing capacity to take responsibility for future improvements and are reducing their support accordingly.