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11 October 2012

Mrs Janet Taylor  
Headteacher  
Morningside Primary School  
Chatham Place  
Hackney  
London  
E9 6LL

Dear Mrs Taylor

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Morningside Primary school**

Following my visit with Maria Coles, Additional inspector, to your school on 9–10 October 2012, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 30 April to 1 May 2012. 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.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Hackney and as below.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in May 2012**

- Raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics so that it is at least in line with national averages at the end of each key stage, by ensuring that:
  - underperforming pupils throughout the school are given the support and interventions they need to help them catch up
  - teachers give clear feedback from assessments during lessons and through marking so that pupils understand exactly what to do to improve their work.
  
- Improve teaching overall, and especially in English, by:
  - ensuring that lesson content is interesting and staff are not wholly reliant on published schemes of work
  - developing the expertise of staff in the teaching of reading and writing
  - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation of work and the quality of any writing done in lessons
  - ensuring that assessment information is used to plan work that is well matched to pupils' ages and abilities
  - ensuring teachers maintain good records of pupils' progress, including their progress in reading.
  
- Improve behaviour and safety by:
  - developing the skills of staff in managing pupils' behaviour
  - ensuring that all staff are vigilant in following up any concerns that pupils have about bullying
  - securing children's safety in the playground.
  
- Strengthen the capacity of the leadership and management at all levels, including governance, by:
  - distributing more widely leadership responsibilities and accountability for improving teaching and pupils' progress
  - ensuring that all staff are deployed effectively to maximise their impact on pupils' learning
  - rigorously, regularly and incisively monitoring and evaluating the impact of teaching and the curriculum on pupils' day-to-day learning and progress
  - teachers ensuring improvement plans focus on the most important areas and include precise deadlines and succinct criteria for measuring success.

## **Report on the first monitoring inspection on 9–10 October 2012**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, parents and carers, the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and the executive headteacher from the partner school. Inspectors also heard six of the lowest-ability pupils in Year 2 and 6 read.

### **Context**

The acting headteacher was formally appointed at the end of September 2012. The interim executive board was created in July 2012. There is a partnership with a local school which supports the school on many aspects of its work including headteacher support. In July, the headteacher was also given assistance in her acting role from a national leader of education from a local federated school. In September, the local authority appointed two part-time associate deputy headteachers to strengthen the capacity of the senior leadership team. A head of Early Years Foundation Stage was also appointed at this time. Since the last inspection, over half of the teachers have left the school; only four of the required 10 full-time appointments have been made. The school has made five temporary teacher appointments using agency staff. Posts have been advertised for a full-time deputy and an assistant headteacher. These appointments will commence in January 2013.

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

In the last academic year, pupils attained standards in English and mathematics that were broadly in line with the previous year's results, which were low. In this year, pupils made below expected progress in both subjects. The school leaders have made good progress by working quickly to develop reliable data systems which accurately identify pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 and 2. This accurate assessment has enabled timely interventions to be implemented at the start of the new term. The checking of children's starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Nursery and for those who enter the Reception Stage other than at the start of term is slow. Many strong strategies have improved pupils' levels of reading across the school, especially in Years 1 and 2. Lower-ability pupils in Year 5 and 6 demonstrate good techniques to assist them to read, but pupils' achievement over time remains inadequate. However, there is a marked improvement in the progress pupils make in Year 6. For example, there are good developments in how pupils in Year 6 understand how well they are attaining in core subjects, although this understanding is not commonplace across other years. The reduction in class sizes in Year 6 for English and mathematics is appreciated by pupils and is having a positive impact on their progress in these subjects. They say: 'Teachers have a lot more time to help us when we are stuck,' The use of talk partners is starting to have a sound impact on

pupils' development of oracy skills, but there are missed opportunities for them to socially interact with other pupils through discussion or group work.

### **The quality of teaching**

The significant turnover of teachers has hampered the progress to improve the quality of teaching. Much of the teaching over time is inadequate. There has been a focus on improving the weakest teaching by providing coaching, mentoring and other support, although this has not yet had a significant impact on the quality of teaching overall. Some revisions have been made to the curriculum as it is not providing pupils with good learning opportunities. For example, schemes of work for reading, writing and mathematics have been rewritten and the new materials are contributing well to the improvements in reading. Training to improve phonics (the sounds that letters make) has been planned for. Teachers have been supported to improve their teaching of reading. However, many teachers have low expectations of what pupils can achieve and the lack of detailed planning for the different needs of pupils results in lessons that lack challenge. Teachers are not using the accurate pupil performance tracking data to plan so that the most able are challenged and stretched and those less able can complete tasks. Typically, teachers do not inject any urgency into lessons; therefore, the pace is generally too slow. They settle for the minimum amount of work from pupils in some subjects, including writing, which is often of poor quality. Learning objectives are sometimes unclear, resulting in pupils struggling to understand what is required of them. Teaching is strongest in Year 6 and the Nursery Stage. In a good Year 6 mathematics lesson, the teacher successfully used scaffolding techniques to deepen pupils' understanding of number patterns. They rushed around the classroom completing number problems while the complexities of the tasks were successfully increased. Overall, lessons do not hold their interest and, as a consequence, they are often off-task and poorly behaved. Marking is not providing pupils with guidance to improve their work. Some good marking was seen where the teacher gave pupils time to reflect on their work and to practise their areas of weakness. Generally, marking lacks appropriate detail or next steps so that pupils do not always know precisely how to improve their performance. Teaching assistants do not routinely contribute effectively in lessons, spending too much time with one or two individuals, rather than supporting the needs of the whole class.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils say that behaviour in the playground and around the school has improved. The playground is a much calmer place. There has been no fixed-term or permanent exclusions since September, which represents an improvement compared to the previous year. Attendance has improved and currently reflects an above-average rate. Pupils know who to turn to if they have concerns including peer disputes. The newly introduced role of Year 6 monitors gives older pupils a sense of responsibility and is contributing well to the positive developments at play and lunchtimes. They

take these roles seriously and they are having a good impact on modelling good behaviour. Much staff training has taken place since the last inspection provided by the local authority and the partner school. The 'Stay on Green' scheme, which sets out the minimum expectation of behaviour, is well known by staff and pupils. Training to strengthen the way in which teaching assistants manage behaviour has taken place, resulting in a raised awareness that improving behaviour is every member of staff's responsibility. Punitive measures have been removed and replaced by rewards for good behaviour and appropriate sanctions when behaviour is poor. These improved guidelines have raised pupils' understanding of how they are expected to behave. However, pupils say that lessons are disrupted and naughty behaviour is not always improved by the measures the school has implemented. Pupils are not engaging with the classroom-devised charters setting out their agreement of how to behave. There are improvements in the recording of poor behaviour which is now routinely undertaken. Anger management groups or parental involvement are used when pupils are not responding to school measures, but there are still inconsistencies in how staff manage behaviour, especially in lessons.

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

Despite the challenges of securing appropriate teachers, the headteacher and her seconded senior leadership team have made sound progress in tackling some of the issues of the last inspection. Information on pupils' progress for Key Stage 1 and 2 is robust and is aiding teachers' understanding of children's/pupils' needs in lessons. It has provided the platform for leaders to identify appropriate support and interventions for pupils. Self-evaluation of the school's current performance and what actions are required to raise attainment is broadly accurate. Strategies to improve weaker teaching including coaching, mentoring and learning walks are giving leaders a clearer understanding of where further support is needed. However, due to the current inability to recruit permanent staff, there is little improvement in the quality of teaching. In addition, the role of teaching assistants and their contribution to school improvement is not clear. The interim executive board have ratified the new organisation structure for the school which identifies clear lines of responsibility and accountability. Middle leaders have been appointed for English, mathematics and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Appropriate support for these middle leaders is enabling them to satisfactorily contribute to school improvement. Raising attainment is a key priority for all leaders and managers, although some actions lack speed or measureable outcomes. For example, the initial assessment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not yet completed, so leaders are unclear of the starting points of children in the Nursery. Some quality assurance processes to check the effectiveness of the initiatives taken in English and mathematics have not been implemented. Work on redesigning the curriculum is planned and there have been revisions to teaching plans for mathematics and English. The small interim executive board is well qualified to support leaders of the school and is effectively scrutinising the school's work.

## **External support**

The high level of support provided by the local authority has been instrumental in strengthening the capacity of the senior and middle leadership and providing support for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The statement of action is accurate and contributes to school improvement effectively. Partnership arrangements are working well. The support from the partnership school has been significant in aiding the improvements in the English and mathematics curriculum and supporting the weakest teaching.