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Briony Brammer
Executive headteacher
Morden Mount Primary School
Lewisham Road
London
SE13 7QP

Dear Ms Brammer

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Morden Mount Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 March 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and 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 most recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior staff, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority. The local authority's statement of action, the school improvement plan, the teaching profile and the headteacher's report to governors were evaluated.

Context

Since the last inspection, the substantive headteacher appointed in September 2012 has resigned. In January, the local authority appointed a National Leader of Education who leads an outstanding local primary school to lead the school. A strong partnership arrangement has been established with the outstanding school. The two deputy headteachers oversee the day-to-day running of the school. Plans to restructure the senior leadership team have been developed and governors are currently in the process of agreeing the proposal.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The executive headteacher has created a great sense of urgency to secure rapid improvement. There is a coherent and consistent approach to developing teaching and leadership and management. The executive headteacher's authoritative and incisive approach has led to the deputy headteachers being very supportive. Together, they have drawn up a comprehensive plan of action to drive improvement. Planning is thorough and designed to challenge all staff to raise their game. The school improvement plan appropriately identifies the weaknesses in pupils' achievement, teaching and leadership and management. The plan provides a very clear outline of the strategies needed to bring about improvement by the spring term 2014. Expectations are very clear and leave staff in no doubt about their responsibility in ensuring that the school achieves the ambitious targets. Steps have therefore been taken to ensure that staff are equipped with the skills to meet their responsibilities and sustain improvement. The strong partnership work with the outstanding school and good support from the local authority consultants, working with staff in lessons, are contributing to the school developing and embedding good practice.

Within a very short time, teaching skills have been strengthened through coaching and modelling, particularly as staff are provided with opportunities to observe and tailor good practice to meet the needs of pupils. Clarity of direction, lack of compromise and the emphasis on using assessment information more rigorously have contributed to staff improving their understanding of raising achievement.

Governors are well informed about the progress of the school and know the strengths and weaknesses. However, at this stage, they are aware that tailored training linked to needs is required. Further work is planned to develop their skills to ask challenging questions and interrogate achievement data. As part of their plans for improvement, they have taken steps to form an executive governing body with the outstanding school so that they can build up their expertise. At this stage, they have not had a direct input into the school improvement plan but plans are in place to involve them and the wider staff.

The local authority's statement of action identifies a range of support for the school to drive improvement. The plan is a working document and covers two terms in the first instance. Procedures for monitoring and evaluating the targets are robust; however, there is not enough emphasis on the success criteria for achievement.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's improvement/action plan is fit for purpose.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, and the Director of Children's Services for Greenwich local authority. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector