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Mrs Karen Peters
Headteacher
Moorpark Junior School
Park Road
Burslem
Stoke-on-Trent
Staffordshire
ST6 1EL

Dear Mrs Peters

Serious weaknesses first monitoring inspection of Moorpark Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 14 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 December 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During this inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and assistant headteacher, Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, a representative of the local authority and a National Leader of Education (NLE) who is supporting the school. The local authority's statement of action, the NLE action plan and the school improvement plans were evaluated. The inspector also visited all the classes in the school and observed playtime accompanied by the headteacher, and shared lunch with pupils.

Context

There have been significant staffing changes in the school since December 2012. Two teachers have retired, one has resigned and two teachers are taking maternity

leave. Three teachers have been appointed temporarily. An assistant headteacher, appointed before the last inspection, started working at the school in January 2013 with leadership responsibility for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. There have been a number of changes to the membership of the governing body. Three community governors have been replaced. A new parent governor has been appointed to replace a parent governor who resigned. One community governor vacancy remains.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

Senior leaders and governors have responded swiftly and positively to the judgement of the recent inspection. Working with the local authority and the NLE, they have created an improvement plan grounded firmly on better outcomes for pupils. The local authority plan, NLE plan and the school improvement plan link well together to provide a clear vision of how to move the school to good. The school's plan however needs to identify more clearly strategies that governors can employ to enable them to find out things for themselves.

The NLE has established a positive and constructive relationship with the headteacher and is providing good leadership guidance. Effective links have been established with staff from both St Wilfrid's and St Peter's Catholic Primary Schools. As a result all staff at Moorpark have a better understanding of what constitutes good teaching following a programme of training and support. Teachers now plan lessons that meet the needs of most pupils although further work is required to ensure consistency across the school. Assessment of pupils' work and learning is improving following the introduction of a range of assessment for learning strategies and better marking.

Parents' understanding of what their children are doing in school is also increasing following the introduction of pupil 'passports', parent workshops and the sharing of targets. Pupils' behaviour in the playground at playtime has shown a marked improvement following the introduction of peer mediation, play leaders and a wide range of games and activities which engage pupils purposefully. Links with the infant school are developing well as a result of activities such as moderation meetings. This is helping to support better transfer and transition.

The governing body is committed to the school. Several positive changes have been made since the last inspection. A number of new governors have been appointed; most governors attended the most recent meeting. Governors have undertaken training to increase their understanding of roles and responsibilities. They have also attended a variety of school-based training sessions such as those on moderation and special educational needs. Training to increase governors' understanding of data and safeguarding are scheduled over the next few months. Safeguarding arrangements checked during this visit meet current requirements.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The school's action plans are 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, the Director of Children's Services for Stoke-on-Trent City Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston
Her Majesty's Inspector