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21 March 2013

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

Dear Mrs Taylor

Special measures monitoring inspection of Morningside Primary School

Following my visit with Fatiha Maitland, additional inspector, to your school on 19–20 March 2013, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in April 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.

Two newly qualified teachers may be appointed in Year 4 and Year 5 only.

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 Interim Executive Board and the Director of Children's Services for Hackney.

Yours sincerely

Samantha Morgan-Price
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in April 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 second monitoring inspection on 19–20 March 2013

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, staff, groups of pupils, parents, members of the Interim Executive Board, the Director of Children's Services and the leadership and management consultant from the local authority, a national leader of education from the Primary Advantage and the headteacher from the local partner school.

Context

Since the last inspection, ten teachers have left and 13 new teachers have been appointed. New appointments include two assistant and a deputy headteacher. In May, a new coordinator for pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs will take up his post. The partnership with a local school continues. In addition to this since November 2012, the school has been supported by the Primary Advantage, which is a local federation of five schools. The federation is providing support for two schools in challenging circumstances. It has been commissioned by the local authority to provide training for newly qualified teachers in the borough. The federation works in partnership with the Institute of Education.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The rate of pupils' progress has improved in all years. The progress that pupils make in Year 5 has resulted in attainment levels that are in line with pupils' nationally. However, some pupils are still below age-expected attainment levels in Year 6 and Year 2, but they are catching up quickly. The legacy of underachievement in Year 6 means that although pupils are making the fastest progress in the school, there is a large attainment gap to close. The proportion of pupils achieving Level 5 in all subjects has also improved. Those who are eligible for free school meals in Years 2 and 4 make stronger progress in mathematics and reading than their peers. Pupils from Turkish, Kurdish and Cypriot backgrounds make very strong progress throughout the school, while Black Caribbean pupils make progress at a slower rate than their peers. The well-thought-through reading initiatives have meant that pupils make the most significant progress in this subject. The lowest-ability readers in Years 2 and 6 use good techniques to read and understand text. Closer attention is required by leaders to increase pupils' achievement in mathematics and writing. The realistic and effective assessment by leaders and managers is the result of better pupil tracking systems. Timely actions have been implemented for pupils who require more attention and support. In most lessons, talk partners are used well in both English and mathematics. Pupils are effectively using their partners to develop their speaking skills and check their understanding of their work. They are given

their National Curriculum targets, but are often unsure of what they need to do to improve their performance.

The quality of teaching

The standard of teaching is improving. The headteacher has worked effectively to eradicate the weakest teaching. Nearly two thirds of the teaching staff are new. Although there is significantly better teaching, a large proportion requires improvement. In the better lessons, the good relationships that teachers develop promote pupils' good attitudes to learning. This results in learning that flows with minimal interruptions. Generally, teachers manage poor behaviour well. Even in the weaker lessons, the focused professional development has contributed to teachers successfully sharing lessons objectives with pupils.

Pupils generally have a good understanding of how they will achieve their tasks. In the strongest lessons, teachers assess pupils' achievement well, to provide tasks that stretch and challenge them. In some lessons, good links are made to reading and writing. Where lessons are not so successful, teachers' failure to assess pupils' needs accurately results in poor lesson planning. Also, the level of work does not match the needs of all pupils, especially the more able. In these lessons, the pace of learning slows because teachers pitch the work incorrectly. As a consequence, pupils lose interest and some off-task behaviour occurs. Pupils say English and topic lessons are becoming more interesting; however, the work in lessons does not always encourage pupils to do their best. Too little time is allowed for pupils to practise their skills in writing and mathematics, as teachers talk for long periods of time. Closed questions stop teachers from gaining an understanding of how well pupils are learning.

The presentation of pupils' work is improving, although there is variation in the quality within lessons and across the school. Marking varies across subjects and classes. Marking is better in English than in mathematics. The few instances of very careful marking provide pupils with a thorough understanding of their next steps to improve their performance. However, most work is not marked to a level of detail that is helpful to pupils to move them on in their learning.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The improved strategies to manage behaviour are working well. The school has maintained a zero rate of fixed and permanent exclusions since the start of term. Playground and classroom disruptions have reduced considerably since the last inspection. Pupils understand and appreciate the highly promoted school values which are received in the form of 'Morningside Messages'. School leaders have raised expectations of how pupils should behave with their peers and other members of the school. The 'Stay on Green' scheme has been clearly communicated to pupils. The consequences of poor behaviour and rewards for good behaviour are working well.

Pupils and most parents say that bullying has reduced and there is an increased sense of safety in the playground and around the school. Pupils report that staff are more vigilant during play and lunchtimes. Attendance is improving as school leaders take firmer actions with non-attenders. There is good support from external agencies to address poor attendance, and parental involvement has increased.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The effective actions by the headteacher have resulted in the improved achievement and behaviour of pupils. With the new teaching staff in place, the quality of teaching has started to improve. However, the proportion of good or outstanding teaching is low. School leaders are working hard to ensure the remaining temporary posts are filled with permanent teachers. Distributed leadership is taking place with the arrival of new senior staff. The revised school development plan focuses well on improving pupils' outcomes and senior leaders are monitoring their work well. The new leadership team have 'hit the ground running'. The deputy headteacher has made a positive contribution to the improved monitoring of pupils' progress. The relatively new pupil progress meetings enable teachers to address the performance of the poorest achievers in their class. Good actions have resulted from this, although this process now needs to be extended to all pupils.

Teachers responsible for a subject are improving their contribution to school improvements. They are clear how their roles impact on pupils' achievement. However, their plans to improve their subjects lack rigour, specific actions or timeframes. Some middle leaders are highly dependent on guidance from senior staff or school partners. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage lacks precision. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are not always provided with the best environment in which to learn well. A more meticulous process is required to confirm the validity of attainment data in this stage. Small steps have been taken to improve the curriculum. The recent changes are evident in the improved topic work. There are also some tangible examples in English, especially reading, and staff have been well supported by the Primary Advantage to improve the mathematics curriculum. A more cohesive approach needs to be taken across subjects so that pupils levels of interest and enjoyment increases. In addition to this, further opportunities for pupils to practise their English and mathematics skills are also required.

The highly effective members of the Interim Executive board are monitoring and supporting the school very well. They have been instrumental in the appointment of senior teachers and have effectively sought support to improve areas of the school. Members have worked well to make arrangements for permanent governance; this has enabled the headteacher to focus on the task of improving the school.

External support

The leadership and management consultant from the local authority is robust in her challenges to the school. Overall, the local authority has provided excellent support and meticulous monitoring of the school's work. In its relentless pursuit for rapid improvement, strong partnerships have been developed. The more recent partnership of the Primary Advantage has resulted in the successful professional development for staff to devise lesson objectives and success criteria. The strengthened curriculum in mathematics has advanced teachers' skills to teach this subject.

The excellent mentoring support from the headteacher of the partner school has resulted in building the capacity and expertise of the headteacher at Morningside. There have been many strands of support from the partner school, all of which have been successful in improving aspects of the schools work. For example, middle leaders have been mentored well to undertake their roles and some teachers have been coached to improve aspects of their teaching. There is a clear plan that provides for a diminishing level of support up until July 2013.