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25 October 2013

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

Dear Ms Brammer

Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Morden Mount Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 25 October 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. 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 was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in November 2012. 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 the serious weaknesses.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. 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.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in November 2012

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by:
 - ensuring that teachers use the information they have about pupils to plan work that is at the right level, particularly for the more able
 - reducing the time wasted in lessons, using marking more effectively and
 - consistently increasing the opportunities for teachers to learn from the good practice of others.
- Improve pupils' achievement in all subjects in Key Stage 1 and in writing across the school by:
 - increasing pupils' ability to work and learn independently giving pupils more opportunities to practise their writing skills in subjects other than in English
 - ensuring that the teaching of reading, particularly sounds and letters, is of a consistently high quality, making sure enough attention is given to the most difficult writing skills for more able pupils in Key Stage 2.
- Take the next steps in developing the school's leadership and management through making sure:
 - teachers in charge of parts of the school or subjects play a greater part in raising achievement and improving teaching
 - the governing body thoroughly checks on how well the school is doing and puts pressure on leaders and managers to improve it.

Report on the second monitoring inspection on 25 October 2013

Evidence

The inspector met with the executive headteacher, other senior staff and middle leaders, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and the head of primary standards from the local authority. A range of documents were reviewed, including the school's monitoring of teaching, performance files, minutes of governors' minutes, and information on pupils' performance. The inspection looked at two aspects of the school's work: the quality of teaching and the capacity of leaders to sustain improvement. Short visits were made to eight lessons with three members of the core senior team.

Context

Since the previous monitoring inspection, three teachers, including two key post-holders, have left the school. Five members of staff, including a newly qualified teacher and four leaders with key responsibilities, have been appointed. The leadership team has been re-structured and includes phase team and curriculum leaders.¹ Each member of the leadership team has specific responsibilities. The Chair of the Governing Body, a National Leader of Governance, was appointed in the latter part of the current half-term to strengthen the governing body.

The quality of leadership and management at the school

The executive headteacher has worked relentlessly to increase the rapid pace of improvement reported in the previous monitoring letter. She has won the trust and commitment of the staff to accelerate pupils' progress. This has been possible because there is clarity about the strategic direction to improve the school. As a result, staff are motivated; school improvement values are shared particularly as they understand the priorities and targets they have to achieve within a given time. The executive headteacher's tactical approach to accelerating pupils' progress has led to increased capacity at all levels: she has carefully matched individuals' strengths to the areas for improvement and there is a clear understanding that all changes are not a one-off event. Nevertheless, senior leaders recognise the need to strengthen still further the leadership and management skills of phase and curriculum leaders.

First, much has been done to develop the quality of teaching and the skills of leaders and managers. The strong partnership with the outstanding school has been used very well to improve practices through tailored coaching, training and mentoring. Second, rigorous systems for monitoring the impact of teaching on pupils' progress are in place. These have been used decisively to move staff on and ensure every member of staff is responsive to meeting pupils' needs. Third, the rigorous use of information on pupils' progress is now central to pupils' learning. Pupils report that

work is challenging and the most able say they are 'stretched' in all subjects. Pupils also indicated that they are achieving well because they are tested often and teachers' marking helps them to improve their work. Fourth, line management is fully in place and expectations are explicit.

The recently strengthened governing body is committed to the school and draws on a wide breadth of experience in education, finance and business when holding the school to account. Governors are astute about the school's direction and use a range of approaches to monitor the school's effectiveness and verify the accuracy of internal and external reports.

Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:

- Senior leaders have maintained a sharp focus on recognising and developing good practice linked to the Teachers' Standards. As a result, the school has exceeded its target for achieving consistently good or better teaching in a short time. Teachers know what is expected and show determination and resilience to improve their practice through training and development.
- Internal analyses of pupils' progress and the 2013 national test results in English and mathematics indicate that the school has achieved its best results over the past five years. Results show that pupils' performance was above the national and local average in English and mathematics. The significant improvement in results is linked to the careful research into a range of resources and approaches to develop literacy and mathematics skills. Displays of pupils' work and observation of teaching indicate that pupils are very responsive in their learning.
- Across the school, leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, have a higher profile in leading and managing change to improve teaching and standards of achievement. Clear job descriptions and direct reporting systems, including managing and using information on pupils' achievement, mean that responsibilities are linked to performance management and support for individual members of staff.

External support

The local authority has continued to provide effective support through visits from subject advisers, the recent appointment of the Chair of the Governing Body, quality assurance and moderation. The support has been particularly successful in contributing to improving teaching and pupils' progress in less than one year. As a result, the local authority sees and uses the executive headteacher, also a National Leader of Education, as an exemplary model of good practice for local schools. The local authority recognises that the school's collegial and transparent approach have contributed to improving performance and developing future leaders. While the level of support is now 'light-touch', the local authority continues to hold the school to account through termly meetings with the Director of Children's Services and other officers at the school monitoring meeting.

ⁱ Four Phase team leaders are responsible for different year groups from Early Years Foundation Stage through to upper Key Stage 2. They also take responsibility for a key subject such as literacy and science. In contrast, the four curriculum leaders are responsible for other statutory subjects or an aspect of work such as coordinating educational visits.