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Mr Alan Littlehales
Headteacher
Morley Place Junior School
Old Road
Conisbrough
Doncaster
South Yorkshire
DN12 3LZ

Dear Mr Littlehales

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Morley Place Junior School, Doncaster

Following my visit to your school on 15 November 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- continue the work to raise standards in literacy urgently by:
 - undertaking a review of all aspects of teaching and learning in literacy: presentation; spelling, punctuation, and grammar; and marking and feedback
 - produce a detailed action plan to show how attainment and progress will be rapidly improved.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The deputy headteacher and HMI undertook joint lesson observations and documentation provided by the school was evaluated.

Context

Two new teachers, including one NQT, two learning mentors and four teaching assistants joined the school in September 2013.

At the time of this monitoring inspection the headteacher was absent from the school.

Main findings

The school improvement plan has been re-written and addresses the areas for improvement. It contains some clear and measurable success criteria linked to pupil progress. Governors have a structure by which they monitor progress and the impact of actions taken to address the areas for improvement, through monitoring visits to the school and a monthly school improvement committee. There is a monitoring and evaluation cycle in place so that school leaders can check the impact of actions for improvement.

Teaching and learning has improved. More good teaching and learning has been observed during this visit than there was in June 2013 and this judgement is supported by the school's own observations and the local authority's recent monitoring. Where teaching and learning is good, activities are matched to the levels at which pupils work and there is suitable challenge for the more able. Questioning is used effectively in some lessons to challenge pupils to explain their ideas and understanding. Marking and feedback is improving, particularly in mathematics where pupils are responding to feedback which helps them to make good progress. The improvements are not yet consistent in literacy books. Presentation has improved with pupils taking pride in their work. Presentation in mathematics books is consistently good because pupils are reminded clearly how to lay out their work by a helpful bookmark. Teaching assistants are a strength. They help pupils make good progress by asking the right questions.

Monitoring of behaviour shows that it is continuing to improve. The new learning mentors are having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and self-esteem. The impact of improved teaching and learning and behaviour is that attitudes to learning seen in all lessons are better. The behaviour policy is being used consistently with a focus on rewards.

There is an increased frequency of data collection and pupils have targets in their literacy and mathematics books. A helpful new reporting system provides parents with information about their child's progress using points scores. A range of literacy and numeracy interventions are available for those who are not making good progress.

Attainment and progress in mathematics show improvement in the Key Stage 2 tests in 2013. However attainment and progress in reading and writing remain very low. The school leaders are focussing on extended writing and improvements in teaching and learning for reading. They understand the urgency with which these issues should be addressed. A review of all aspects of literacy combined with a detailed action plan for improvement should be organised.

External support

The representative of the local authority works closely with the school. He is part of the governors' monitoring committee checking the impact of the actions for improvement and has undertaken lesson observations. The local authority will broker support for the school in evaluating and developing literacy. Four teachers are undertaking 'good to outstanding teaching' training at the local teaching school alliance. Teachers from Morley Place have observed lessons at a local academy.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

Helen Lane

Her Majesty's Inspector