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29 November 2013

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

Dear Mrs Peters

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Moorpark Junior School**

Following my visit to your school on 28 November 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 most recent monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged as having serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in December 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 designation.

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 Stoke-On-Trent.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2012**

- Improve the quality of teaching across the school, but particularly in Years 3 to 5, so that all pupils make at least good progress and achieve higher standards in mathematics and writing by:
  - setting higher and more challenging targets for pupils to achieve
  - raising teachers' and pupils' understanding of the importance of correct spellings, punctuation, and handwriting across all subjects and ensuring these skills are taught well
  - ensuring each lesson is planned with the correct level of challenge for pupils of different abilities in order that pupils are interested in and remain focused in their learning
  - ensuring teaching assistants are clear on how they are to support pupils' learning effectively
  - ensuring the curriculum provides pupils, particularly boys, with the opportunities they need to develop their writing skills
  - developing a wide range of interesting topics to inspire pupils' imagination in their writing
  - ensuring teachers regularly check on the progress pupils are making in lessons, particularly on how well pupils are developing their skills in writing
  - ensuring that teachers' marking and other feedback consistently and effectively inform pupils how to improve their work further
  - focusing the recently improved systems by which leaders check on the quality of teaching and learning still more sharply on raising standards in Years 3 to 5.
  
- Improve behaviour so that it is at least consistently good in lessons and at morning break times by:
  - keeping a close check on standards of behaviour and making pupils aware that good behaviour is expected of them at all times, for example, when they are not with their usual class teachers
  - providing an appropriate range of play equipment at break times and ensure that all pupils know how to play purposefully without resorting to boisterous behaviour.
  
- Strengthen the effectiveness of the governing body to hold the leaders to account for the school's improvement by:
  - rapidly improving governors' understanding and use of sources of information to check on the quality of teaching, assess how well funding is making a difference to pupils' achievement and hold all staff to account for their performance
  - ensuring governance is subject to a detailed external review in order to assess how this aspect of leadership may be improved
  - improving the attendance of some governors at governing body meetings, so that they know what is going on in the school, are regularly informed of the school's work and can ensure that school leaders take the necessary actions to make improvements.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 28 November 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspector met with the headteacher, the Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body, a representative from the local authority and the National Leader of Education (NLE) supporting the school. This inspection evaluated the improvements made in the quality of teaching and learning, leadership and management and pupils' behaviour since the first visit. Time was spent in all classes observing teaching and learning.

### **Context**

Since the last visit, three teachers have left the school. Three full-time teachers have been appointed and two have returned from maternity leave. The number of support staff has trebled and are employed to perform roles such as one-to-one teaching for individual pupils, targeted intervention and to provide nurture support. There is a full complement of governors; three community, one parent and two staff governors are new to the role.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

All school leaders and staff are committed to securing the necessary improvements. The whole-school focus on teaching and learning is paying dividends. Leaders have concentrated on improving teaching quality with the support of the link school. Productive networks have been established with other schools, including the feeder secondary school. As a result, leaders can pinpoint considerable improvements and successes since September 2013. A range of monitoring and evaluation activities, such as classroom observations, work scrutinies and pupil progress meetings have been implemented. A consistent approach to the implementation of strategies, such as sharing learning objectives and success criteria, matching work to the needs of pupils, improved marking and the introduction of assessment for learning systems have led to significant improvements in teaching and greater consistency throughout the school. Support staff, subject and senior leaders have had specific training and support to increase and develop an understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

Unvalidated data shows that pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013 was significantly below average in all subjects and was much lower than the previous year. Pupils made inadequate progress from their starting points. Too many groups, including White British, boys, low and middle attaining pupils, those known to be eligible for free school meals and some pupils with disabilities and special educational needs made insufficient progress. However, the school met the government's current floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics. The school's current data shows a much better picture. The proportion of pupils making or exceeding expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics now compares favourably with national figures in most classes. The school's data show that good progress is being made by most groups, such as those supported at school action, school action plus, those known to be eligible for free school meals and those in the early stages of learning English. Slower progress has been made by a minority of boys in reading and writing. Strategies such as 'Talk for Writing', and a sharper focus on guided reading are beginning to have an impact and close the gap. A scrutiny of literacy and numeracy books

shows that most pupils have made good progress since the beginning of this academic year. Pupils' presentation and spelling has improved considerably but further improvements are still required.

The governing body is now playing a much more active role in the school. Governors have a better understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are finding out things for themselves, for example, by undertaking monitoring visits to discuss aspects of the school with subject leaders. New governors have undertaken governor induction training provided by an external consultant. This has increased their understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors are asking more challenging questions of leaders and managers because they have a better understanding of the issues. Governors know how the pupil premium funding is spent and can identify how this is beginning to have an impact on the group of pupils eligible for such funding. The school's development plan has been refined with clear targets, success criteria and milestones. Outcomes of evaluations are colour coded. This enables staff and governors to assess whether or not school leaders are on track to achieve their targets. This document is being used by the governing body to hold school leaders to account for standards and quality.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement**

- The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. During this visit, the majority of teaching jointly observed with the headteacher was good. The remainder requires improvement.
- Lessons were generally well planned and matched to the needs of the pupils. Most teachers had good subject knowledge and used appropriate subject vocabulary. Teaching assistants supported pupils' learning well.
- Pupils were cooperative and motivated in their lessons. They worked well together and were keen to share their ideas and suggestions with adults and each other. They were eager to participate in lessons and respond to their teachers' questions.
- A good range of assessment for learning strategies is employed by staff, such as peer and self-assessment. In the main, marking is thorough across the school and next steps for learning are clearly identified for pupils. These ensure pupils know how well they have done and what they need to do next to improve.
- Behaviour overall is improving. There are one or two challenging pupils but they are well managed by school staff. Playtimes and lunchtimes are much more harmonious. The staggering of playtimes and the use of play zones has considerably reduced the incidents of poor behaviour. Training for lunchtime supervisors, play leaders and peer mediators supports positive play activities. Rights and responsibilities, class charters and golden rules have been revised. These have increased pupils' awareness and understanding of the school's high expectations of acceptable behaviour. Most pupils have responded to these positively.
- The learning environment is much improved. The school is brighter and more attractive following a range of cosmetic building changes that have enhanced learning in the school.
- A recent school survey shows that the overwhelming majority of parents recognise the improvements made by the school.

## **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

■ In a small number of lessons, pupils' understanding of what they were expected to do was not made sufficiently clear by the teacher. For instance, some pupils did not fully understand the calculation method to solve a mathematical problem. This was because they were not provided with a clear explanation and sufficient guidance.

■ Higher-attaining pupils are not always suitably challenged in lessons. Occasionally, they completed activities and did not have suitable extension work available. Also, they sat through explanations for other groups when they could have been more productively getting on with a task with appropriate challenge.

■ Good inroads have been made in improving the consistency and quality of presentation and spelling. However, some pupils do not take sufficient care with their work. There are gaps in some pupils' knowledge and understanding of the spelling of common words in their extended written activities.

## **External support**

Good support has been provided by the National Leader of Education (NLE) and her school staff. They have worked alongside several teachers and provided good quality support which has secured the necessary improvements in practice. The NLE has worked closely with the headteacher to develop systems and processes in the school. The local authority has maintained a close eye on improvements in recent times and monitored the impact of the work undertaken between the NLE and the school.