

# PROTECT-INSPECTION

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Mrs Helen Templeton  
Headteacher  
Moorside Primary School  
Chester Road  
Moorside  
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County Durham  
DH8 8EQ

Dear Mrs Templeton

## **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Moorside Primary School, Durham**

Following my visit to your school on 5 February 2014, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in October 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:

- ensure that any challenging questions asked by governors are fully recorded in the minutes of governing body meetings
- ensure that new leaders have the opportunity to lead pupil progress meetings
- include teaching assistants in pupil progress meetings so that they are also held to account for the progress pupils make.

## **Evidence**

During my visit, I held meetings with you, other senior and subject leaders, a group of pupils, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also held a telephone conversation with a local leader of education from Thornhill Primary School who is supporting the school. I evaluated the school improvement plan and looked at a range of documents including the outcomes of monitoring activities, minutes of governing body meetings, information on pupils' progress and samples of pupils' work. You accompanied me on a tour of the school where we observed work in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).

## **Context**

Since the inspection in October 2013, two school leaders have been on long-term sickness absence and one supply teacher has been appointed to cover a Key Stage 2 class. Two new temporary leaders took up their posts eight weeks ago to cover for the absence of the two leaders. There has been a re-organisation of classes, creating two mixed-age classes in Key Stage 2. The Reception and Nursery Classes have been re-organised to form an Early Years Foundation Stage Unit.

## **Main findings**

Since the inspection, you, together with other leaders and governors have responded positively in beginning to address the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection report. You have revised the school improvement plan to include these areas for improvement. The plan now contains clear milestones and targets by which success can be measured.

You have planned and implemented a rigorous programme for checking and evaluating the quality of teaching and learning across the school. The two new leaders have received specific training on checking the work in the subjects or aspects for which they are responsible. Although this is at an early stage, they are beginning to develop their skills in this aspect of their work. As yet, they have not been involved in leading pupil progress meetings but are holding staff to account through scrutiny of pupils' work and reviewing teachers' planning. They have also conducted joint lesson observations and learning walks with the headteacher and Education Development Advisers and are developing their skills, for example in giving feedback to teachers on the quality of their teaching. Teaching assistants are developing their roles such as becoming key workers in the Early Years Foundation Stage and taking more responsibility for working with groups of pupils. As yet, they are not involved in pupil progress meetings and are not held to account for the outcomes for the pupils they support.

Teachers now have higher expectations of what pupils can achieve because of opportunities to compare their pupils' work with that of pupils from other schools. As leaders, you are keeping detailed records of each pupil's progress and staff are able to identify more precisely where each pupil needs additional help. This help is promptly provided and pupils' work and data in the school's tracking system show that rates of pupils' progress are beginning to increase. Leaders have carefully assessed pupils' attainment in phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) and pupils have been grouped according to ability. This arrangement is providing better targeted provision and is helping these pupils to progress more quickly. Daily sessions on phonics and spelling are held in all classes and school records show that gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in these areas are showing promising improvement. Pupils' work shows that they now have more opportunities to explore ideas and solve problems in mathematics and to write at length in English lessons.

Governors now have a greater understanding of their roles and responsibilities through support received from a National Leader of Governance following the review of governance which took place in December 2013 and January 2014. Governors are now visiting the

school on a regular basis to check on aspects of the school's work. Consequently, they are finding out for themselves how well pupils are learning, for example, by hearing pupils read and when they conduct learning walks with school leaders. Reports from these visits are shared with the full governing body. This is providing all governors with a greater insight into the impact of the actions being taken by the school. Although governors receive school achievement data and say they are beginning to ask challenging questions about how groups of pupils are progressing, their questions and leaders' responses are not always recorded in the minutes of governing body meetings.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided more intensive support since the inspection. The Education Development Partner has increased the number of visits to the school and has brokered support from a local leader of education from Thornhill Primary School. She and Education Development Advisers have provided support to help new leaders to develop their skills in checking and evaluating the work in their areas of responsibility. Although in the early stages, it is clear from the monitoring records that they are developing their skills in this area.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Inkster  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**