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26 February 2016

Mr Paul Rust
Headteacher
Morley Place Junior School
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South Yorkshire
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Dear Mr Rust

Special measures monitoring inspection of Morley Place Junior School

Following my visit to your school with Mary Lanovy-Taylor, Ofsted Inspector, on 16 and 17 February 2016, 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 third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2015. 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:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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 Chair of the Governing Body, the Regional Schools Commissioner and the Director of Children's Services for Doncaster.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Lesley Butcher
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2015.

- Urgently improve the school's work to keep pupils safe by:
 - ensuring that all documents associated with safeguarding are updated regularly
 - making certain the single central record is always up to date and is accurate
 - making sure governors are fully supported to undertake their safeguarding work through regular, appropriate training.
- Improve the quality of teaching with a robust focus on securing good or better progress for all pupils including boys, the most able and disadvantaged pupils, particularly in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - accurate information about pupils' attainment and progress is used to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils
 - further support and challenge is provided for those pupils who find learning difficult, including those with special educational needs, and that harder work is provided for those who find learning easy, in order to help secure their full engagement in their learning
 - pupils have better opportunities to act upon comments made in teachers' marking and so improve their work
 - pupils are encouraged to spell correctly, use grammar and punctuate appropriately and write legibly
 - all teachers have a good subject knowledge in mathematics and pupils are given opportunities to solve interesting mathematical problems.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management including governance by:
 - ensuring the headteacher and other leaders, including subject leaders, have a more accurate view about what needs to improve and have clearer plans as to how improvements will be achieved
 - making certain the monitoring of teaching is rigorous, including undertaking robust scrutiny of pupils' books and of their learning
 - making sure procedures are in place to better monitor and evaluate the impact of the use of the pupil premium to improve the achievement of disadvantaged pupils
 - ensuring the governing body holds the school to account more robustly.
- Support pupils to develop more positive attitudes to their learning by ensuring:
 - lessons engage and motivate pupils
 - pupils, especially boys, are encouraged to be fully involved, enquiring and ambitious in their learning
 - pupils are encouraged to be on time for school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Report on the third monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 February 2016

Evidence

Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 12 parts of lessons, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, a representative of the local authority and members of the governing body. Meetings were held with pupils and teaching staff. The views of 70 parents were taken into account through Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also spoke with pupils during playtimes and lunchtimes.

Context

There have been no changes in staffing since the last monitoring visit. The school has continued to work closely with Saltersgate Junior School to improve assessment and to support senior and middle leaders in their leadership roles.

Consultation and due processes have taken place to enable Morley Place to become a sponsored academy with Wakefield City Academy Trust (WCAT). The trust has already begun to provide support to the school.

Outcomes for pupils

Leaders and teachers have had considerable impact on improving the progress pupils are now making. More pupils are now making at least expected progress and some pupils are making more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The progress of pupils with special educational needs or disability is encouraging, with almost all making more than expected progress. Disadvantaged pupils are making similarly strong progress. There is little difference between the rates of progress of boys and girls. The good news story continues for the most-able pupils, the vast majority of whom are making more than expected progress and are already working at end-of-year expectations. This represents a strong improvement in outcomes for pupils since the last monitoring visit.

However, because pupils were starting at levels below those seen nationally, very few pupils in Year 3 are working at age-appropriate levels in reading, writing and mathematics. Around one third of pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are working at levels below those expected for their age. Despite making more than expected progress, disadvantaged pupils are attaining levels below other pupils and in some classes or subjects the gap is large. Boys are achieving better levels than girls in mathematics, but are lagging behind girls in reading and writing.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Leaders and teachers have looked in depth at how they teach English and mathematics. As a result, teachers' subject knowledge is growing and they are planning activities to stretch all groups of pupils within a lesson. However, particularly in mathematics, some teachers have not paid enough attention to what pupils know already, or have not anticipated how much support pupils will need, in order to ensure they fully understand what they are being taught. This is leading to confusion on the part of some pupils and hindering them from making rapid progress.

Teachers have raised their expectations of the amount and quality of work that pupils will do and pupils are beginning to rise to this challenge. Pupils' work is presented well and, in most cases, pupils are using neat, joined handwriting. Pupils' work seen in books shows that they are covering more ground, writing more and working through more challenges. However, in some classes, pupils are working through too many sums or exercises of the same kind, missing out on opportunities to apply their skills to problems of a different kind to deepen their understanding.

Teachers' determination to improve feedback is leading to greater improvement in pupils' understanding of how to further improve their work. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 are becoming adept at responding to feedback and this is helping them to understand how well they are doing, particularly in writing. The most-able pupils, in particular, are benefiting from these challenges. Less-able pupils and pupils in Year 3 and 4 are not as clear about how to improve their work and are unsure about how well they are doing.

Further improvements can be seen in pupils' application of spelling and punctuation. Teachers are systematically checking these aspects of writing and promoting better understanding through basic skills lessons. However, improvement in pupils' use of grammar is being hindered by lack of planned opportunities to speak aloud and to articulate learning prior to writing. Some staff are continuing to speak incorrectly, further compounding pupils' difficulties in emulating correct speech and grammar.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Leaders and teachers have shown determination to help pupils develop more positive attitudes to their learning and have created a safe, happy environment with a greater focus on achievement. Pupils move about school in a calm and quiet fashion and there are now far fewer incidences of low-level disruption in lessons. All staff consistently apply the school behaviour policy and pupils are clear about the rewards they will receive if they exhibit good social skills or expected learning behaviours. Pupils talk excitedly about prizes or trips they can earn if they collect enough points. Pupils are well able to articulate the 'red and yellow card' system used by staff to deal with poor or disruptive behaviour. During the inspection it was

not necessary for any teacher to use the sanctions system, demonstrating just how far the school has come in encouraging good behaviour and attitudes to learning. However, some pupils become distracted, and some boys are not always confident enough to give learning their 'best shot', preferring to be quiet and let others answer questions, thus restricting their pace of learning, particularly in reading and writing.

Despite some parents raising concerns through Parent View, there is evidence that staff, well supported by the parent support adviser, deal effectively with instances of bullying when they arise. Older pupils do not feel bullying is an issue, but some younger pupils say that bullying does happen, but when it occurs it is dealt with. Records kept by the school are comprehensive and clearly show what actions have been followed and how incidents have been resolved.

The parent support adviser rigorously follows up the attendance of pupils who do not turn up to school. Pupils are rewarded for punctual arrival at school and for full attendance. Although there is some improvement in the numbers of pupils arriving to school on time, at the time of this inspection attendance was still below national averages.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The headteacher is providing effective leadership and commands respect from pupils and staff. Some staff feel he has 'worked miracles' during his short tenure as headteacher. The academy trust and local authority share this confidence in the headteacher to lead the school into a new partnership with Wakefield City Academy Trust.

Middle leaders are beginning to grow into their roles, as a result of support from the local leader of education. They are poised to have greater impact, developing in confidence and subject knowledge. The leader for special educational needs is working alongside teaching assistants to ensure their work with less-able pupils is effective in helping them to learn well. The newly appointed leader for literacy has an accurate view of what needs to improve and is starting her work in developing teachers' subject knowledge. All leaders are involved in the regular scrutiny of pupils' work and have an accurate view of pupils' learning. Leaders' attempts to ensure pupils receive an inspiring curriculum have been less successful and all are aware of the need to further stimulate pupils' imagination so pupils are more enthused and keen to learn.

Leaders' work to ensure pupils are safe has been effective in urgently addressing issues previously raised by inspectors. Safeguarding documents continue to be up to date and provide an accurate record of all adults working or volunteering at Morley Place Junior School. Alongside the headteacher, the governor responsible for safeguarding has played an important role in ensuring this aspect of the school's work is much improved. The headteacher and parent support adviser have attended

an impressive number of safeguarding training events and are able to deliver 'Prevent' training (to support with the identification of and risks associated with radicalisation) to other schools. Through the 'anti-bullying alliance' staff and pupils working together have placed a big emphasis on spotting and dealing with bullying. The school has achieved an award in recognition of successes in this work.

A review of the school's use of pupil premium took place in June 2015. As a consequence of recommendations made, the leader for special educational needs took on responsibility for disadvantaged pupils and carefully tracks their progress and attainment. Consequently, provision is more carefully tailored and the progress of this group of pupils is now better than expected.

The Chair of the Governing Body has a background in education and has provided appropriate support and challenge to the headteacher. The governor responsible for safeguarding is similarly well qualified and challenges school practice. However, minutes of meetings do not reflect challenge from any other member of the governing body, suggesting an over-reliance on information provided by school staff. An external review of governance has not taken place due to the impending transfer of the school to academy status. At the point of the school joining the academy trust, governance will be reviewed.

External support

Leaders have been receiving support from a number of sources, including Wakefield City Academy Trust, a local leader of education and the local authority. The academy trust has been quick off the mark to support the headteacher in evaluating where teaching is fit for purpose and where staff are in need of support. A teacher from the trust is working alongside teachers in Year 6 each week to improve provision for pupils in their final year. The local leader of education has effectively supported the headteacher to reflect on leadership of teaching at Morley Place, to support with developing accurate assessment and to help subject leaders and the deputy headteacher to improve their support to teachers. The representative of the local authority has regularly checked the work of the school through termly monitoring of teaching and learning. She knows the school well and has helped the headteacher to work systematically to address issues raised at the last inspection.