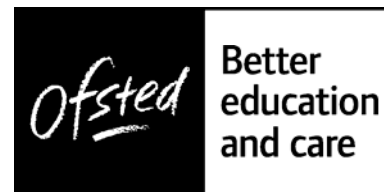


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Mr R G Lee  
Headteacher  
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Crossley Street  
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OL16 4DR

Dear Mr Lee

### **Implementation of Moorhouse Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Mr J S Hardwick HMI to your school on 24 and 25 May 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school has made reasonable progress since the last monitoring inspection and reasonable progress overall since being subject to special measures.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors, and the Director of Education for Rochdale. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF MOORHOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit 12 parts of lessons and an assembly were inspected and pupils' conduct was observed around the school and at lunchtime. Discussions were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and representatives from the LEA. A range of documentation was examined. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, and representatives from the LEA and governing body.

Overall the standards in lessons again showed improvement when compared with those observed on the previous monitoring inspection. The general standard was around the level expected for the pupils' ages in two thirds of the lessons, and just below this level in the remainder. The higher standards were represented by the writing in Year 1, Year 5 pupils who could replicate the rhythm and scheme of poems in their own work, and Year 6 pupils who determined a formula from patterns of numbers; while lower standards were reflected in Year 4 pupils who struggled with basic punctuation.

The school's predictions for results in the recently taken national tests at Key Stage 2 suggest that scores should be similar to those for 2004, which were a considerable improvement on the previous year.

The progress that pupils made in lessons was brisker than in February. Strategies that supported good gains included a demanding start to the day, regular reminders about basic skills such as the punctuation that was necessary, prompts on cards, mnemonics and well-rehearsed routines.

The quality of teaching has also improved. It was very good in two lessons, good in four, satisfactory in five and unsatisfactory in one.

The basic qualities of the lessons, referred to in previous notes of inspection findings, have been sustained. Thus, for example, they were all underpinned by good planning, preparation and clear objectives that were shared with the pupils. Additional strengths included checking that the pupils remembered previous learning before moving forward, efficient routines, and ensuring that most pupils were contributing and listening when the class was being taught as a whole. Classroom assistants were also better involved at this point.

The stronger lessons were marked out by high demands over the quantity and quality of work, particular care to set work or provide materials at different levels according to the needs of different groups, and relentless focus on the key learning points. Weaknesses in individual lessons were concerned with hasty and unclear explanations and too little attention given to remedying the misconceptions that were manifest in the pupils' answers. The unsatisfactory teaching resulted from

weak organisation that meant that too few of the pupils received the amount of help they needed to meet the lesson's objectives.

The pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good in four lessons, good in four, and satisfactory in four. Again this is an improved picture, and one that is more consistent from class to class. In general, the pupils were interested, settled quickly to tasks and were more willing to offer answers and ideas than previously. They also took care over the presentation of their work, although the outcome in this respect depended on the clarity of the teacher's instructions. The behaviour of the pupils in a class that has proved difficult to handle was much better than in February. These pupils did as they were told and, although some were reluctant to begin individual work, there was no longer the frequent disruption to learning. Behaviour around the school was settled and that on the playground was more purposeful. The firm and determined approach, stemming from the headteacher, is proving successful, with misbehaviour being tackled on several fronts and, where necessary, involving outside agencies such as the police, as well as parents. The need to take a strict line over what is tolerated has continued to result in a high rate of exclusions: this has amounted to more than 30 days in both the first two terms of the year, and one boy has been excluded permanently.

In this context, there are valuable initiatives to broaden what is offered by the school. While the emphasis rightly remains on literacy and numeracy, a 'festival week' is being organised in June, bringing in entertainers and workshops related to the arts.

Important work has been completed on assessment. The programme for checking and tracking the pupils' progress is providing valuable information, for example on relative strengths and weaknesses in the core subjects and on groups of pupils. Valuable links are also being made with the provision for special educational needs, to point up how well these pupils are faring.

The headteacher is providing the leadership and management necessary to take the school forward. He is using his experience and determination to work through the backlog of issues that threaten progress, such as the lack of policies, a lapse in performance management, uncertainty about contracts and the need to reduce spending. The school's overarching plans have been rationalised and drawn together, and responsibilities are being clarified, in part to allow for the role of the newly appointed deputy headteacher. The senior staff are working well as a team, sharing the drive for improvement, though they are not yet involved in the key task of observing teaching. The policy for monitoring needs fleshing out in this regard and the programme needs to be set in more detail. Overall, morale appears good and there is a shared sense of purpose within the school.

The LEA has fulfilled its responsibilities to the school, for example through the help from consultants and officers. Two matters, however, merit more urgent treatment, enabling the school's two senior staff to direct their efforts elsewhere: these relate to outstanding issues over the statementing of pupils with special

educational needs, and concerns over contracts, the budget and remodelling the workforce.

## **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

### **1: raise achievement, and thus standards, in English, mathematics, science and ICT**

A planner is to be provided for all pupils for September to regularise the approach to homework. A new policy for assessment has been written and the system for tracking the pupils' progress is now well established. Various national strategies are being followed to aid those pupils who are not making appropriate gains and some staff are providing booster classes after school. Overall standards are discussed above; progress remains reasonable.

### **2: raise the quality of all of the teaching to that of the best**

There has been a further round of lesson observations, as well as a survey of literacy. A revised approach to planning is being trialled and teachers have received support through the Intensifying Support Programme. The quality of teaching is discussed above; progress is reasonable.

### **3: improve the leadership and management**

The governors are maintaining their higher profile in the school's affairs, for instance almost all have hosted the weekly awards assembly. Following the promotion of one of the teachers to the post of deputy headteacher, a new staffing structure is to be introduced. Job descriptions have been prepared accordingly, as well as guidelines for the role of co-ordinator. A start has been made on the backlog of policies that need to be revised or introduced. The headteacher rightly sees improving behaviour as a priority and, although a behaviour support plan has begun to be implemented, he believes that standards in this regard should be higher. Much remains to be done, but recent progress on this area for improvement has been good.

### **4: improve the provision for pupils with special educational needs**

The thorough systems for managing the programme for special educational needs are being maintained. The school is concerned to gain a swifter response from external agencies, but progress remains good.

### **5: continue the work started to improve attendance**

Attendance for the autumn and spring terms was 93.3 per cent, similar to previous figures, but the proportion of unauthorised absence has been reduced. The measures being taken to improve attendance are appropriate: they include sending letters to the parents of pupils whose attendance is poor, fortnightly meeting with

the educational welfare officer, a newly introduced class trophy for the highest attendance, and phone calls to check on the reasons for absence. This action represents reasonable progress at this stage.