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19 December 2008

Mrs S Sweet  
Acting Headteacher  
Morley CE Primary School  
Deopham Road  
Morley  
Wymondham  
Norfolk  
NR18 9TS

Dear Mrs Sweet,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Morley CE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 2 and 3 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of Governors and the Director of Children's Services for Norfolk.

Yours sincerely

Tricia Pritchard  
H M Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Morley CE Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2008.

## Evidence

HMI observed mathematics lessons, scrutinised documents and pupils' work, and met with the acting headteacher, staff, pupils, the chair and vice chair of governors and two representatives from the local authority.

## Context

Currently, there are 140 pupils on roll and five classes. An acting headteacher from the local authority support service took up post on 3 November. On the same date, a new teacher was appointed to teach three days a week in the Year 3 / 4 class. The SENCO role is undertaken by a teacher working two days a week.

## Achievement and standards

According to the school's data, the vast majority of children started school in the Reception class in September below age-related expectations in all areas of learning. However, leaders have rightly questioned the reliability of the assessments since this marks a considerable fall in attainment in comparison with that of previous years. The assessment of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will be a focus for the next monitoring visit.

By the end of the EYFS, the school's data indicates that children are working well within the early learning goals. Pupils now in Year 1 achieved the highest scores for number and the lowest scores for writing at the end of their Reception year. However, pupils currently in Year 1 and Year 2 are making inadequate progress in mathematics in relation to their starting points. This is because teachers are using too many worksheets which lack challenge, are undated and which make it difficult to track progression in learning. Most pupils make better progress in writing.

Since the last inspection, national data, on the attainment of pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, has become available. It shows that pupils did better in reading, writing and mathematics in 2008 than in 2007. Their scores in all subjects were close to the national average. Nevertheless, some groups of pupils did better than others. For example, girls did better than boys in reading and writing. Fewer pupils attained higher levels in all subjects than in other schools nationally, particularly in mathematics.

In Key Stage 2, standards in English and mathematics have declined steadily since 2005 from well above the national average to below. In 2007, the school was placed in the lowest ten percent of schools nationally for the overall progress made by pupils between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2. In 2008, a similar picture emerges. The test results indicate that Year 6 pupils made inadequate

progress, especially in mathematics where, in relation to national expectations, they were over a year behind. In both mathematics and science, the drop in standards was considerable with the result that standards were well below the national average of 2007. In English, the fall in standards was not so great.

Progress and standards in mathematics are recurring issues throughout the school. Too many pupils are underachieving. This was evident in the lessons observed and in looking at pupils' work. Higher attaining pupils are not doing as well as they could. Girls continue to do better in English than boys but boys do considerably better than girls in mathematics.

### Personal development and well-being

Personal development and well being continues to be good. Attendance is in line with the national average. Pupils want to learn and they respond particularly well when lessons proceed at a brisk pace. Relationships are good between pupils and adults throughout the school. Pupils feel secure in answering questions and are not afraid if they give the wrong answer. They enjoy taking responsibility and those on the school council take their roles seriously. Members have plenty of ideas on how to improve the school environment. They express their views clearly and respect the opinions of others. Behaviour is good both in class and in the playground. Pupils say that they feel safe. They make a positive contribution to the community through a range of activities, including fund-raising events and appearing on Norfolk and Norwich Hospital radio.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching in the lessons observed ranged from inadequate to good. The best teaching was in the upper end of Key Stage 2 where pupils' thinking was challenged through problem solving activities. In all classes, teachers establish good working relationships with their pupils and they are paying more attention to planning investigative learning. Where teaching was weak, it was characterised by a lack of differentiation between the tasks set for higher, middle and lower attaining pupils, and for different age-groups within the same class. Not all teachers are confident in using the correct mathematical terminology and this also confuses pupils. These are key factors in pupils' underachievement.

Last year, there was a considerable discrepancy between teacher assessment and test results which indicates that teacher assessment was insufficiently reliable and accurate. Recently, a satisfactory start has been made on introducing systems to track pupils' progress more regularly and to record the outcomes. However, the accuracy of teacher assessment still remains an issue since not all teachers are gathering enough robust evidence to support their judgements. They are relying too heavily on what they think a child is capable of instead of firm evidence. They are also not using their judgements sufficiently to inform their planning.

All pupils are now set curricular targets and these are displayed on the classroom walls. The pupils know what their targets are. The English and mathematics subject leaders have also used the outcomes of the end-of-year tests effectively to identify pupils at risk of underachieving and to select pupils to attend intervention groups. These are all good initiatives. The marking of pupils' work is also improving and pupils are increasingly becoming involved in assessing their own work. However, many pupils do not present their work well enough. One of the reasons for this is the proliferation of worksheets which are stuck untidily into books. Another reason is the variable quality of some of the exercise books.

Although a strong and appropriate emphasis is placed on timetabling literacy and numeracy every day, class timetables are not well balanced and they lack variety. Not all teachers give sufficient time to teaching the other subjects because literacy lessons are too long. However, they are beginning to pay more attention to developing pupils' investigative skills in mathematics.

Provision for information and communication technology, especially in the outside classrooms, is inadequate because of problems with network connections. The whole learning environment in these mobile classrooms is affected by the poor standard of accommodation. Provision in the EYFS is also an area for development and particularly the planning of an activity-based curriculum for pupils in the reception class.

Pupils are well cared for pastorally but provision for those with additional learning needs and/or disabilities is inconsistent. The majority of pupils are integrated well into the school community but this is not so for all pupils. The school's policy on inclusion is not being implemented fully. Plans are in hand to address the issues discussed during the inspection.

Progress on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that pupils' progress is assessed accurately and regularly and that the data is used to inform planning, set targets and identify pupils needing extra support – satisfactory
- Ensure that National Curriculum course requirements are met fully, particularly in relation to the requirements for using and applying skills in mathematics and science - satisfactory

## Leadership and management

Many of the issues highlighted in the last inspection report related to inadequate leadership and management. Since then, the local authority has been working with the school to address these issues. An important appointment was that of an acting headteacher to lead and manage the school from November 2008. In the last month, a good start has been made on evaluating several aspects of provision. The acting headteacher is giving a clear lead and has convened a senior leadership team

consisting of the English and mathematics subject leaders. Already, the team is developing an increasing understanding of the issues facing the school, and of the scale of the task to accelerate pupils' progress and to raise standards. The two subject leaders now have time to carry out their roles. They are working well together to give a lead on assessment and have analysed the outcomes of the end-of-year assessments. In the past, staff have had insufficient opportunities to engage in professional development activities, which are well suited to their needs and to those of the school. This is changing. Staff now realise that there has been a legacy of underachievement and that pupils could do better. They are committed to developing their own practice and to seeing the school succeed. There is a good team spirit between the staff as exemplified by their joint effort to tidy up the school. There is a general consensus that the school is cleaner and that resources are better organised than previously. The pupils speak very positively about the changes and say that their school is now more colourful.

The school got off to a slow start after it was judged to require special measures. Until recently, action planning has been inadequate. In the last month, there are distinct signs of progress. The raising attainment plan now has a high profile and is the main document for driving improvement. However, the target for 'eighty percent of pupils to be working at age-related expectations or above in writing and mathematics by the end of the autumn term' is unlikely to be achieved in every class.

The governing body has been strengthened with several new appointments and a new committee structure. Governors now have a much better understanding of their role in monitoring quality and in strategic planning. Key decisions regarding staffing and class organisation are being made in order to address the high number of pupils in Key Stage 1. The governing body, project board and the leadership team are well focused upon accelerating pupils' progress and driving up standards. All are well aware of the challenges facing the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure that leadership responsibilities are effectively devolved throughout the school -satisfactory
- Set up a rigorous system for monitoring the effectiveness of provision–satisfactory

External support

The local authority acted promptly to support the school when it went into special measures. Their statement of action sets out clearly the additional resources and the nature of support that the school should expect to receive. Already, consultants and the school improvement partner have provided well targeted assistance, particularly in providing advice to subject leaders and in setting up systems to track pupils' progress. The raising attainment plan has been drawn up with considerable help

from local authority consultants too. Actions are well staged and focused upon the steps that need to be taken to drive improvement and to address the key issues from the inspection. A project board has been convened with senior representation from the local authority and the Diocese of Norwich. The board has been effective in tackling leadership and management issues, and in challenging governors to draw up action plans, which are fit for purpose and address the key issues fully. The target data for removal from special measures is a year. However, because of the slow start, it is too early to judge whether this is a realistic target.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by reducing the number of worksheets and planning tasks, which are well matched to the needs and abilities of different groups of pupils.
- Provision and planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.