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01 April 2009

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

Dear Mrs Sweet,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Morley CE Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 24 and 25 March, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

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

Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Morley CE Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 24 and 25 March 2009

## Evidence

HMI observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, staff, pupils, parents, the Chair of the Governing Body, and conducted a telephone interview with a local authority representative.

## Context

In January 2009, an extra Key Stage 1 class was created in order to reduce the number of pupils in the infant classes. Thus, there are now three classes with single age-groups in each. Two new teachers were appointed to teach the Reception and Year 2 classes and a new teaching assistant was also appointed. The teacher who previously taught Reception and Year 1 pupils now teaches in Year 1. The Year 3 /4 class is currently being taught in the hall, pending the arrival of a new mobile classroom.

## Achievement and standards

Children in the Reception class are making at least satisfactory progress and often good progress in all areas of learning. With the arrival of a new teacher in January, they were re-assessed at the beginning of term and they continue to be monitored carefully. Assessment is now accurate and reliable. Very good records are maintained of each child's progress and attainment against the early learning goals. The children's strongest skills lie in number work and in counting, and in their disposition and attitudes to learning. Their calculation skills and linking letters and sounds are weaker. Since January, they have made particularly good progress in their creative development from a low starting point. If they maintain the same rate of progress, they will be working securely within the early learning goals by the end of the year.

Pupils' progress and attainment during the year and from year-to-year is now being tracked using the local authority's recommended data package. However, the system is yet to be fully embedded in practice and, due to a legacy of inaccurate assessment in the past, the data needs to be interpreted carefully. The current records show that too many pupils of all abilities are making inadequate progress throughout the school in mathematics. However, this finding is not entirely borne out in the mathematics lessons observed during the inspection where middle attaining pupils were generally making satisfactory progress. It was the higher and lower attaining pupils who did not always make as much progress as they could. No English lessons were observed during this visit but a scrutiny of pupils' work, together with the school's own records, indicates that pupils' progress in English is more consistent across the ability range.

Since the last inspection visit, the school has received the full national data on the performance of Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in the 2008 statutory assessment tasks. The data confirms the findings recorded in the last monitoring letter, namely that although standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 were close to the national average, fewer pupils attained higher levels for mathematics. Similarly, in Key Stage 2, the data confirms the steady decline in pupils' performance in English, mathematics and science over the last five years from well above the national average to below. In particular, only just over a half of Year 6 pupils made the expected progress in mathematics between the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 6 whereas nearly four fifths made the expected progress in English. Their science scores were particularly weak.

The evidence obtained during this inspection visit further highlights the fact that pupils' progress and attainment in mathematics remains an area for development throughout the school.

### Personal development and well-being

Personal development and well-being continue to be good. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour are also good. Pupils are keen to talk about school and to show their parents their work, especially on Tuesdays after school when parents are invited into classrooms. They take a pride in explaining what they have been doing and what they enjoy.

Most pupils' social skills are well developed for their age. Pupils also enjoy taking part in cultural and sporting events. The Year 6 pupils, in particular, spoke very enthusiastically about their recent participation in a Norfolk schools' concert in St Andrew's Hall, Norwich. Attendance, however, is below the national average because, despite the school's best efforts, there are a few pupils whose attendance is persistently poor.

### Quality of provision

All pupils, from Year 1 to Year 6, were observed being taught mathematics on this visit. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning was mostly satisfactory with the best teaching in Year 6. However, there is insufficient consistently good teaching throughout the school to accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics.

Planning has improved with a common format being adopted and most teachers are setting clear objectives for each section of the lesson. Teachers are also devising different tasks for different groups of pupils. However, the tasks are not always well matched to meet the needs of each group. For example, in one class, lower and middle attaining pupils were given different exercises but the tasks were basically the same. In another class, the middle attaining pupils were set a more difficult task than the higher attaining pupils. Teachers lack secure subject knowledge in some areas of the mathematical curriculum and this is holding back pupils, particularly the

more able and the less able pupils. Often, their questioning fails to extend the thinking of the higher attaining pupils or address the misconceptions of the less able pupils. Some teachers spend too long on the same activity.

Provision for children in the Reception class is good. Teaching is well focused upon providing the right experiences to help children make progress towards meeting the early learning goals. There is a good balance between planned adult-led activities and child-initiated activities. Relationships are very good. The curriculum is well planned and is underpinned by the Reception teacher's very good knowledge and understanding of each child's progress and development. The classroom is bright and welcoming. Increasing use is made of the outdoor area to promote learning although there is room for further development.

Teachers are assessing pupils more regularly and becoming more confident in assessing accurately. They are beginning to collect more evidence to support their judgements but more secure evidence is needed, particularly in Key Stage 1. In some pupils' books, objectives have been signed off as being met when the evidence does not fully support the judgements. A positive development is the pupils' awareness of their curricular targets and the attention teachers pay to encouraging pupils to self assess their work. Teachers' marking has also improved and so has the presentation of pupils' work. New, good quality books have contributed to pupils taking a greater pride in their work.

The quality of assessment and recording of children's progress in the Reception class is exemplary. Staff observe children at work and at play, and maintain very good records of their observations. Individual portfolios of work show very clearly how much progress each child is making. There is scope for sharing this good practice with all teachers.

The school is aware that class timetables lack variety and plans are well advanced to address the issue in the summer term. Currently, the timetable for pupils in most classes is not well balanced. Literacy lessons are too long for pupils in Year 1 and in both Key Stage 1 classes, further literacy-based activities take up too much of the day to the exclusion of other subjects. Teachers are, however, paying more attention to setting problem solving activities in mathematics. No science teaching was observed but on scrutinising pupils' work, there appears to be variable coverage of the science curriculum and not much emphasis on investigative science in some classes. A good development is the reduction in the number of worksheets which lack challenge. Teachers are devising their own worksheets which are more appropriate.

At present, the school hall is a classroom and, therefore, opportunities for indoor physical education for the whole school are restricted. Provision for information and communication technology is inadequate at present but, with the imminent arrival of interactive whiteboards for each class, staff are confident that the issues will be addressed next term. The use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning will be reported on during the next visit.

Pastoral support and care of pupils are good. The inclusion concerns expressed in the last monitoring letter have been addressed. Academic guidance for pupils with additional learning needs, however, is not always as effective as it could be. In lessons, pupils with statements of special educational needs receive good one-to-one support but pupils with other additional learning needs are not always so well supported. There is scope for involving teaching assistants more in lesson planning so that pupils receive consistency of support from all adults working with them. Issues regarding special needs provision have arisen since the inspection in June 2008 with some parents expressing concern about the diagnosis of their children's learning difficulties. This aspect will be followed up further during the next visit.

Progress since the last inspection visit 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

The acting headteacher provides clear direction and is working hard with governors and the numeracy and literacy subject leaders to manage the changes necessary to bring the school out of special measures. Subject leaders' roles are better defined. The literacy and numeracy subject leaders are playing a key part in helping staff to set curricular targets for all pupils. They have taken a strong lead in analysing the outcomes of the end-of-year statutory and non-statutory assessments, and in reporting their findings to the rest of the staff. Currently, however, they are not monitoring teachers' planning. This is a key priority for development.

Governance is good with governors playing a full part in monitoring provision. Recently, two governors conducted a thorough audit of the effectiveness of pupils' curricular targets and produced a helpful report. The raising attainment plan provides the driving force for raising standards and accelerating pupils' progress. It is being monitored regularly; frank reports are presented to governors and the project board.

Several key staff appointments have been made recently although, of necessity, contracts are temporary until the staffing structure for September is finalised. Governors possess a good strategic overview of the school's priorities and are adopting a well measured approach to planning for the future. A good example of this is the appointment of a curriculum manager next term to lead curriculum development in response to an identified need.

The professional development of all staff has a high profile. Teachers and teaching assistants have attended training sessions led by local authority consultants and a full programme is planned for the summer term. However, monitoring the impact of these training sessions is not well established. As yet, the impact of the mathematics sessions has not been fully evident in increasing the staff's confidence to support pupils' learning.

The physical appearance of the school has improved significantly with new carpeting and more colourful and well presented displays of pupils' work. In addition, pupils previously housed in the poorest mobile classroom have moved into the main school temporarily. These features are raising morale. Plans are already underway to improve resources in the library and a new mobile classroom is due at the end of this term. Communication with parents has improved with weekly newsletters from the headteacher and a governors' newsletter. Parents now have the opportunity to look at their children's work and they appreciate this.

Progress since the last visit 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 continues to provide well-targeted support to help the school move forward. Consultants and advisers have delivered mathematics training to all staff, and they visit the school regularly to evaluate the impact of the raising attainment plan and to monitor the quality of teaching. An advanced skills teacher also visits to support practice in Key Stage 1. Since the last visit and the comments on poor accommodation, the local authority and the diocese have reacted and condemned one of the mobile classrooms. The local authority is arranging for a replacement mobile to be fully operational by the beginning of next term. Other mobile accommodation, however, still needs further attention.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Increasing the proportion of good teaching, particularly in mathematics, in order to accelerate progress and raise standards.
- The monitoring of teachers' planning to ensure that tasks are well matched to all ability groups within a class.