

Cambridge Education
Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 01223 578500
Direct F 01223 578501
risp.inspections@camb-ed.com



10th February 2009

Mr Mark Gallacher
Headteacher
Morton Trentside Primary School
Crooked Billett Street
Morton
Gainsborough
Lincolnshire
DN21 3AH

Dear Mr Gallacher,

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Morton Trentside Primary School

Following my visit with Ann Taylor, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27 – 28 January 2009, 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 July 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 Education for Lincolnshire.

Yours sincerely

Ian Nelson
Additional Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Morton Trentside Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 27 – 28 January 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the senior leadership, the interim headteacher from the autumn term, the chair of governors, the school improvement partner, two representatives from the local authority (LA) and some Year 6 children.

Context

Since the inspection the LA has appointed a full-time interim headteacher to replace the part time cover provided throughout the autumn by the headteacher from a neighbouring school. The new interim headteacher took up the post shortly before this monitoring visit. A new deputy headteacher took up his post in January 2009 having been seconded to the school for three days a week as a mathematics consultant for the autumn term. Three teachers have left the school and been replaced. Two of the new teachers are newly qualified. They are being mentored by the new Year 6 teacher who is also the new literacy subject leader. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is being taught as a job share by two teachers, one of whom is new to the leadership role. The headteacher remains absent on sick leave. The local authority appointed two extra governors but three governors, including the chair of governors, resigned just before this monitoring visit leaving the governing body with several vacancies. A new chair was appointed shortly before this monitoring visit.

Achievement and standards

The school's provisional results in 2008 national tests show that children who took the Year 6 tests gained average results. These children were above average when in Year 2, indicating significant underachievement at Key Stage 2 as the last inspection pointed out. Key Stage 1 assessments in 2008 were broadly average. However, the proportion gaining the higher level 3 in the tests was below average because the more able were not being challenged to do as well as they can.

The standards seen in lessons during the monitoring visit were broadly average throughout the school. The targets for 2009 at Year 6 suggest the school is aiming again for average results. Lesson observations show that children are currently on track to achieve at that level. If achieved, this would reflect improved progress for these children from their Key Stage 1 test results compared to the previous Year 6. Although the school has set more challenging targets for 2010 in order to reach above average standards, the current satisfactory quality of teaching is not good enough to promote the good progress required to achieve these. The inspection report pointed to significant underachievement of girls in 2007 but currently there is little difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The staff have worked hard

and successfully with LA support to improve achievement and standards in mathematics to address the concerns raised in the inspection report. However, there is still some way to go to ensure that more able are fully challenged in all year groups. Within this picture of children's improving progress and achievement since the inspection, there are inconsistencies. At upper Key Stage 2 there is consistently good teaching as noted in the last inspection and this leads to good progress and achievement. However, the teaching in most other classes is no better than satisfactory and occasionally still inadequate so that achievement varies between age groups. Too often there is still a lack of challenge for the most able children although the school is increasingly trying to identify where underachievement exists and to provide additional support.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards, particularly in mathematics and increase rates of progress throughout the school - *satisfactory*
- Improve girls' achievement at Key Stage 2 – *satisfactory*

Personal development and well-being

Children behave well most of the time and there have been no exclusions. There are occasions when low level disruption from a very small minority prevents others from learning. Attendance is good. Children's attitudes to learning are satisfactory but better in some classes than in others. In lessons where they are fully involved and where activities really challenge them to think hard, they are bright, sparky and eager to learn. They contribute fully, confidently volunteering to come to the front of the class and explain their work. In less successful lessons which they do not find so interesting, children are inclined to fuss unnecessarily, which wastes time. Here, they are slow to settle and there is an undercurrent of restlessness and lack of concentration.

Quality of provision

Teaching is improving but too much remains satisfactory, and occasionally inadequate, leading to children not moving on fast enough in their learning. There are more examples of good teaching now and this is starting to accelerate progress for older children. Here, they are fully involved in a range of interesting activities which are carefully planned to meet their needs. Lessons move on at a good pace and much is achieved in a short time. Good encouragement is given for children to learn by themselves, such as researching facts about Henry VIII. Interactive whiteboards are used well and help to engage children's interest. Some Year 6 children commented on how much they enjoyed the lessons when they had practical activities to do and how much more interesting lessons are now as a consequence. Older children are aware of their targets much more now.

Less successful lessons focus on reminding children about how not to behave rather than praising those who are setting a good example. Children's attitudes deteriorate when teachers talk too much instead of letting them get on with their tasks. In some lessons, children still spend too long on the carpet passively listening rather than being actively engaged in their learning. Not enough use is made of teachers' knowledge of how well children are doing, especially in planning the right level of activity to take all children's learning forward. In too many classes, children are all given a common learning objective whatever their different abilities. Staff then provide extra support or independence, or different tasks in order to help children reach that objective. This does not take enough account of the different starting points of groups within the class based upon how well they understood previous lessons. Consequently there is still a lack of real challenge for those of higher ability. Often, children do not know if they have been successful in their learning, because they have nothing to measure against. In lessons where, encouragingly, children discuss how they will know if they have been successful, the criteria they agree are confusing. Teaching assistants make a satisfactory contribution but sometimes they could be used more, especially at the beginnings of lessons.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the quality of teaching so that all groups of pupils, particularly the more able, make better progress and achieve challenging targets – *satisfactory*

Leadership and management

Senior staff have checked the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and identified where there is strong teaching and where support is needed. They have also enlisted the help of LA advisory staff to support teachers where this has been needed. There is a clear programme of support for the newly qualified teachers as they gain experience throughout their first year in the profession. Eradicating the remaining inadequate teaching remains a priority for the school along with raising the quality elsewhere from satisfactory to good to accelerate children's achievement and provide examples of good practice for less experienced teachers to aspire to.

The school has a lot of information on how well children are doing, based on assessments of their work. This information has been thoroughly analysed but the presentation of that analysis is over complex and too detailed so that not all staff have a clear enough overview to guide the school's improvement work. While the amount and depth of analysis is commendable it needs to be condensed into a workable summary that can be understood easily by all staff and governors and used to inform school improvement planning. The school's action plan contains clear targets and timescales and sets out what actions staff will take to achieve them. However, some of the targets lack the necessary ambition to improve children's progress quickly enough. For example, the current plan aims for 97% of children to make at least satisfactory progress over Key Stage 2 by gaining three National

Curriculum points a year by 2009. This would mean the majority of children making the expected rates of progress and achieving satisfactorily rather than making the good progress needed to eradicate underachievement and sustain improvements. Neither is the school's record of how well it thinks it is doing sharply enough focussed in identifying strengths and areas for development. For example, planned actions to improve teaching quality are not based on a rigorous analysis of teaching strengths and weaknesses throughout the school.

The governing body has a number of vacancies but has also been strengthened by the addition of two new governors appointed by the LA. They have significant educational experience to offer the school. The new chair of governors is keen and committed and learning fast what the role entails. He has a determination to support the school while also holding the leadership to account for its performance. The new interim headteacher is very experienced with a strong track record of supporting schools causing concern. These positive additions to the school's leadership are committed to building on the work started in the autumn term by the previous interim headteachers. Even so, with considerable staffing and governing body changes having occurred since the last inspection, a key priority now is to stabilise the school's leadership and direction. Checks on arrangements for safeguarding children meet current requirements.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve leadership and management so that monitoring and evaluation at all levels are rigorous and action to remedy shortcomings is urgent and effective – *satisfactory*

External support

The LA initiated a school review before the inspection once it had identified the school as giving cause for concern. It provided support to overcome the difficulties and continues to do so. This has included providing interim headteachers to cover for the absence of the substantive headteacher, appointing two extra experienced governors, releasing the new deputy headteacher from his LA duties to take up his appointment a term early, and support from advisory teachers and consultants. The local authority's statement of action was found to be inadequate when evaluated by the local managing inspector. It has been amended in the light of the weaknesses identified and now provides a sound basis for supporting the school. The LA's support has been beneficial in helping the school to improve the quality of teaching and learning, though more still needs to be done in this respect.

Priorities for further improvement

- Continue to develop teaching where it is weak, particularly in increasing the pace of lessons, reducing the amount of teacher talk and in planning to meet the needs of all abilities
- Simplify the presentation of assessment information so that it can be easily understood by all staff and governors and used to set work at a challenging level for all children, particularly the more able.