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Mr Pierre Coiffait  
Headteacher  
Moorside Primary School  
Market Street  
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Dear Mr Coiffait

Ofsted monitoring of schools with a notice to improve

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 27 November 2009 and for the information which you provided during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the governors, staff and pupils I met. I hope the Christmas Fayre, later that day, went well.

There have been several significant changes to staffing since the school was inspected in March 2009. The deputy headteacher has left the school and an assistant headteacher has taken on this role in a temporary capacity; a second assistant headteacher has taken sick leave. Two other teachers and a small number of support staff have also left the school.

As a result of the inspection on 24 and 25 March 2009, the school was asked to:

- improve the standards reached in English, mathematics and science in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly for the more able pupils
- improve the achievement of boys in all key stages by ensuring that the curriculum is relevant to their needs and that the work set in lessons provides sufficient challenge
- improve the quality of teaching to ensure that more lessons are of at least good quality, providing work that is well matched to pupils' abilities and clear guidance to pupils about how to improve their work
- ensure that all school leaders and managers are held accountable for the progress and achievement of pupils.



Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making satisfactory progress in addressing the issues for improvement and in raising the pupils' achievement.

In the national tests and assessments for eleven and seven-year-olds in Summer 2009, the standards reached by pupils were broadly average. This is an improvement upon the position in previous years. In Key Stage 2, the proportions of pupils gaining the Level 4 thresholds in English, mathematics and science were above the national figure for the first time ever, although the numbers gaining the higher Level 5 remain low. The results attained by boys, pupils in receipt of free school meals and girls in mathematics remain areas of concern. In Key Stage 1, the three year decline in performance was halted with results that were much closer to the national figures, including an increase in the proportion of pupils gaining the higher level. However, boys and pupils in receipt of free school meals did less well than their classmates and their peers nationally.

A number of factors contributed to the improvements in attainment in 2009. At a strategic level, changes to the senior leadership team and the governing body and to the systems and procedures for monitoring the school's work have significantly strengthened the accountability of teachers for pupils' progress. Governors, with the support of the local authority, have not been afraid to make difficult staffing decisions to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching and support services. The school's finances are now on a more stable footing due to the work of the school bursar and local authority officers. Performance management procedures are more closely linked to pupils' progress and work continues to be done on improving the overall quality of lesson planning, assessment and the tracking of pupils' progress. However, the changes in staffing at middle management mean that there has been limited progress at this level. Although there has been an increase in the range and frequency of monitoring activities, such as more regular examination of pupils' books and teachers' marking, there remain weaknesses in aspects of provision and curriculum that middle managers should be overseeing, for example, the allocation of additional time in some classes for guided reading, which is not always well used to promote pupils' progress in reading. Attendance has improved. Governors have taken robust steps to send a clear message to parents about poor attendance and to support those pupils most at risk of persistent absence.

Overall, the quality of teaching and learning remains variable: on this visit, some inadequate teaching was observed. The stronger teaching was observed in upper Key Stage 2. This reflects the headteacher's assessment of the profile of teaching across the school. Evidence from upper Key Stage 2 pupils' books showed that pupils are generally working at broadly national average levels. In the lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress and some made good progress. The progress pupils make is directly related to the level of challenge in the lessons and the match of work to pupils' abilities. In contrast, teaching and pupils' progress are weaker in Key Stage 1 and Year 3. The teaching of reading, for example, in one lesson observed was not as well organised as it should have been and the use of a



carousel system of activities in a mathematics lesson did not match pupils' knowledge and understanding.

This monitoring visit included a check on the school's recruitment and vetting procedures and found them to be secure and meeting current requirements.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose: it makes clear how support provided when the school was given a notice to improve will be continued. Local authority officers, notably finance and personnel officers, have provided particularly good support to governors and the headteacher. As well as support from the local authority School Improvement Officer and consultants, the local authority has brokered support for the school from Greater Manchester Challenge. Overall, the good support from the local authority has been instrumental in enabling the school to make satisfactory progress to date.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington  
Her Majesty's Inspector