

Tribal Group  
1–4 Portland  
Square  
Bristol  
BS2 8RR

T 08456 40 40 40  
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

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Miss S Warby and Mr S Bailey  
Moorlands Junior School  
Chantry Mead Road  
Bath  
BA2 2DE

Dear Miss S Warby and Mr S Bailey

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Moorlands Junior School

Following my visit with Lorna Brackstone HMI to your school from 8 December 2009 to 9 December 2009 I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in July 2009. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

No further Newly Qualified Teachers may be appointed at present.

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

I am sending copies of this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the local authority and the inspection team, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Bath and North East Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts

Her Majesty's Inspector



## Special measures: monitoring of Moorlands Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on from 8 December 2009 to 9 December 2009

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and tracking and met with the joint headteachers, staff and pupils, as well as school councillors, the Chair of the Governing Body with one other governor and a representative from the local authority. They spoke with the school improvement partner by telephone.

### Context

Since the last inspection the school has appointed a new interim headteacher and a new interim deputy headteacher. They also appointed a newly qualified teacher (following Ofsted approval). These staff will commence their appointments in January 2010 but the handover process has already begun. One senior member of staff is on long-term sick leave. The local authority also has meetings planned with governors at both the infant and junior school to discuss future developments.

### Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

In the 2009 tests, standards dipped in English, mathematics and science as predicted by the school. They were significantly below the national average. This was because lessons had been variable and insufficiently focused on rapid improvement for all groups of pupils. Observations of current classes and scrutiny of pupils' work show that standards of attainment are beginning to improve rapidly in mathematics and more steadily in science and English. The gap between pupils' attainment and their age-related expectations is also narrowing according to the school's own data which are based on teacher's assessment. In Year 6, pupils' overall standards remain below the national average. However, checks on work show that they are now making at least satisfactory progress in their learning.

Improvement in standards is due to targeted one-to-one intervention and other strategies that are steadily tackling past underachievement. The school has made sure pupils are clear about their targets and they have set aside regular time for pupils to review these with staff. This is helping everyone to focus on exactly what needs to be done to accelerate progress. The classes are more balanced in gender terms this year. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught in ability groups for English and mathematics and this is having a good impact. Pupils said they like this because there is more time for teachers to explain things in ways they can understand.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the progress of pupils, particularly in mathematics and science, to ensure that no group is underachieving – satisfactory.

#### Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour continues to be good for the vast majority of pupils. Pupils are confident that rules are fair and applied consistently. They have strong views on what is right and wrong and generally get on well with each other. Attendance rates are above the national average and exclusions, although used this term, have only been used where absolutely necessary. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that adults help them to maintain a good level of physical activity including in their sports clubs. The school council ensures all pupils have a say in developments. Positions on the council were keenly contested. Pupils have not yet had a chance to develop skills as peer mediators or as activity leaders but enjoy their buddy system whereby they help very young children at playtime. Pupils have met with other school councillors from local schools to see what they have achieved. They are involved in local carol concerts and events with the wider community including the recent Christmas Fair. Despite basic skill levels remaining too low, pupils are prepared for their future appropriately by the good use made of information and communication technology throughout the classes.

#### Effectiveness of provision

Teaching is increasingly more consistent. Almost all is at least satisfactory with some good lessons developing. Teachers are clear what is to be taught in each lesson. They make the purpose of the lesson obvious so pupils understand what they are learning. Activities are beginning to be more closely tailored to pupils' needs. Assessment techniques show improvement. Generally, teaching assistants provide good guidance, especially for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Interactive whiteboards are used competently and the new gadget that projects pupils' work up onto them leads to some good pupil discussions about what has been learned.

Pupils understand the school's marking system and feel it supports them well. Nevertheless, it is still not consistently applied in all classes and is more effective with older pupils. The systems for assessing and tracking progress have been upgraded. However, it has not yet been fully embedded across the school. Pupils know their targets but are less clear about what level they have achieved compared to other pupils of their age nationally.

The curriculum is increasingly adapted to meet pupils' needs. There are good cross-curricular links, for example, between the Victorians and the literature of the period. This makes lessons interesting and often linked to an appropriate educational visit



which pupils thoroughly enjoy; such as the recent work on World War 2. Topics which motivate the pupils also include links to mathematics and this has had a positive impact on pupils' confidence; for example, they worked out the rate at which land girls planted potatoes. The Year 5 curriculum linked to key skills is a good move forward.

Good quality pastoral support ensures pupils are well cared for and attendance has remained above average since the last inspection.

Progress on the areas for improvement:

- Improve teaching, the assessment of pupils' learning and the curriculum by ensuring consistency of good practice throughout the school – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The leadership team has set about improving the school steadily and systematically. They have successfully ensured that lessons are consistently appropriately planned and that the pupils are aware of the success criteria in each lesson. Teachers have become more accustomed to being monitored and they understand that small steps will help steadily improve the pace of learning. The leadership team have developed an appropriate school development plan but have left scope for the new team to adapt it in due course. This plan has appropriate success criteria but has not been accepted and acted on by all staff. Consequently, middle management is not yet secure in all subjects. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the performance of the school, especially in terms of pupils' progress, are more effective. Staff have begun to adopt a more consistent approach to assessment but there is still much more to be done before this is embedded; with middle managers monitoring their subjects thoroughly.

The governors are playing a useful role in beginning to challenge the school more about each area for improvement. They have willingly undertaken extra training. The governors have ensured that new leaders have been appointed who can meet the specific needs of the school.

- Improve leadership and management at all levels – satisfactory.
- Develop a concise set of agreed priorities for action with clear success criteria - Good
- Take rapid and decisive action in order to implement the actions consistently – satisfactory.
- Carry out robust and ongoing monitoring and evaluation so that all are clear about the difference that their actions make to the pupils' academic progress – satisfactory.



## External support

The school benefits from good support provided by the local authority which has worked closely with the outgoing leadership team to ensure that the first steps of progress have been solidly constructed, based mostly on the local authority plan of action. The work with the school improvement partner has also had a positive impact.