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Mr D Knollys
Moorlands Junior School
Chantry Mead Road
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Dear Mr Knollys

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Moorlands Junior School

Following my visit with David White, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16 and 17 March, 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 second 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.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – 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 Bath and North East Somerset.

Yours sincerely

Mo Roberts
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Moorlands Junior School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 16–17 March 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, the staff, groups of pupils, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority. Inspectors observed 16 lessons.

Context

The interim headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in January 2010. One senior member of staff remains on long-term sick leave. The school is now in a period of formal consultation regarding a possible hard federation with Moorlands Infant School. Some of the governors have changed. One vacancy remains on the governing body.

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

There is a noticeable improvement in pupils' enthusiasm for learning, classes have an upbeat approach and pupils are increasingly involved in their learning. In science lessons, for example, pupils were seen testing instruments for pitch, the effectiveness of electric circuits and how solutions vary. Their books show better progress in both mathematics and science; however, overall attainment still remains below the national average. Recent tests to verify the accuracy of teachers' assessments indicate that some of the previous assessment grades awarded were overly generous. Pupils' exact levels have been more securely established and increased rigour put into the process of assessment by the new management team. This means pupils are increasingly aware of their exact level and what they have to do to reach the next. In all lessons seen pupils made at least satisfactory, and in approximately half of classes, good progress. This included a large proportion of mathematics and science lessons. Pupils who have special needs and disabilities and those new to learning English continue to make similar progress to their peers in the classes observed. Where pupils are stimulated by first-hand experiences, such as the recent visit to Lyme Regis, their writing is developing well. Younger pupils enjoy the impetus given by performing small plays before they try to write the related story.

Progress since the last monitoring visit 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

Pupils have responded well to the new behaviour management system and they think the rules are fairly administered. They know if staff action is required it will be taken and they appreciate this prompt response. The 'choice time' they can earn motivates them. They welcome the fact that the very small number of disruptive children have been dealt with as a matter of urgency. Consequently, the necessity for exclusions has substantially decreased. Attendance has been slightly reduced by the adverse weather conditions. Pupils have a clear understanding of healthy living and enjoy the recently extended opportunities for physical activity, including the competitive games with other local schools. They report they feel part of an increasingly busy and industrious school community. Interestingly, they are well aware, and appreciative of, their teachers' efforts to brighten up the dilapidated school environment and to make lessons more active and interesting. There is evidence that pupils are responding positively to the spiritual and moral messages given in lively assemblies.

The effectiveness of provision

The pace of teaching has improved and lessons have begun to include more challenge for individual pupils. There was one example of particularly good planning for pupils who have special educational needs and some good teaching interaction between teaching assistants and a group of special needs pupils. Teachers' expectations are not always sufficiently demanding for their pupils, including those who have special educational needs. This was the main reason for some lessons being judged satisfactory rather than good. Also, some pupils are still too easily satisfied with the limited amount of work they complete in the allotted time. Most, however, are trying hard and have begun to monitor their own progress now that teachers regularly provide clear measures of success for each lesson. Lessons are becoming more consistent across the school. The curriculum is being focused on stimuli to raise attainment. Meetings between teachers and parents and carers enabled staff to share the developments in assessment with parents and carers so they can support their child's learning. Overall, the use of assessment to identify what each child needs to learn next is still an area requiring further work before it is successfully embedded in all classes. The lack of blinds in some classrooms makes it difficult for learners to always see the interactive whiteboards.

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 new interim headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken prompt and very effective action to raise expectations. School organisation has tightened, with a



prompt start to the school day and after lunch sessions. Communication with parents has been improved and school leaders have successfully achieved a whole staff team approach. The school ethos is noticeably improved and both staff and pupils feel their views are taken seriously. Regular staff meetings focus well on the key improvements required. The reorganisation of the classrooms saves time. The revised school improvement plan demonstrates a clear sense of urgency and numerous actions have already been completed. This is leading to rapid change and ensures the school moves on swiftly and purposefully based on a sound analysis of its needs. School leaders have also taken prompt action to enlist local authority support to tackle a recently identified weakness in English. Middle management has improved; science has benefited from visits by and advice from a local secondary school specialist. The science leader now has a detailed and appropriate action plan for the subject. The deputy headteacher is ably leading mathematics and the English coordinator has appropriate plans involving some additional external support for classes. The involvement of the information and communication technology coordinator in the senior management team together with the special needs coordinator also has a good impact on the future sustainability of senior staffing.

The governors have met regularly to organise the consultation for federation and to deal with a number of urgent matters, including the impact of a recent flood in part of the school. They have no clerk at present which puts an extra strain on them. Despite this they are continuing their training and have welcomed new members. They support the school effectively and understand the need to rapidly complete the succession arrangements. They are increasingly asking pertinent questions about the school's data and what they tell them about how pupils are expected to catch up to the national level.

Progress since the last visit on areas for improvement:

Improve leadership and management at all levels so that leaders and managers:

- develop a concise set of agreed priorities for action with clear success criteria related to pupils' progress – good
- take rapid and decisive action in order to implement the actions consistently – good
- 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 local authority continues to offer the school strong support and has agreed to give additional support to the teaching of English.

