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18 February 2011

Mr M Britt  
Headteacher  
Canonbury Primary School  
Canonbury Road  
London  
N1 2UT

Dear Mr Britt

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Canonbury Primary School**

Following my visit with Gill Walley, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16–17 February 2011, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in March 2010. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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 the governing body and the Director of Children's Services for Islington and Cambridge Education@Islington.

Yours sincerely

Sue Frater  
Her Majesty's Inspector

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in March 2010

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
  - ensuring there is effective leadership and management of the provision
  - ensuring the curriculum meets the needs of individual children
  - ensuring that activities challenge children sufficiently and that adults' questioning develops children's thinking and extends their learning
  - using assessment information more rigorously to inform planning and to set high expectations for children's learning and development
  - making sure that staff are more vigilant in spotting minor health and safety issues.
  
- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 in order to raise attainment in mathematics, science and ICT by:
  - eliminating inconsistencies in the quality of teaching so that more of it is consistently good
  - improving teachers' use of assessment information to plan work that builds on the previous learning of all groups of pupils
  - ensuring that the more able pupils are always given suitably challenging work
  - improving the provision for teaching ICT skills across the school.
  
- Develop an effective leadership and management structure across the school and ensure that all staff with leadership and management responsibilities fulfil their roles effectively, especially in improving the quality of teaching and learning.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Canonbury Primary School**

### **Report from the second monitoring inspection on 16–17 February 2011**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, groups of pupils, the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

The headteacher, who had been in post for two weeks at the time of the school's section 5 inspection in March 2010, has established a team of six new non-class-based leadership posts to ensure that good practice can be quickly and effectively developed across the school. The posts include a new senior leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage, who was appointed in September 2010.

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

Pupils are now making better progress in the majority of lessons, especially in mathematics, and in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 because teachers are using assessments to match work to pupils' abilities. Pupils say they particularly enjoy mathematics lessons because they like being challenged to solve problems. They also enjoy the many more opportunities they have to apply their independent learning skills in science investigations and in using information and communication technology (ICT) to research topics such as the Tudors. Parents who attended an assembly commented that the school now feels 'very lively' and their children are making better progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 2. Attainment in the end of Key Stage 2 national tests for English and mathematics in 2010 was above average and more pupils than previously attained the higher levels. The school's monitoring of progress indicates that current pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain similar results in reading and mathematics. This is due to the school's effective intervention strategies including booster lessons for more able pupils. The school has identified writing as a priority for improvement. While teachers have different expectations of writing for different groups of pupils, this tends to relate to quantity rather than quality. Teachers are not yet using the pupils' curricular targets for writing to inform literacy lessons, although they use mathematics targets well to inform appropriately challenging activities.

The new senior leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage has established an improved system for monitoring children's progress from baseline assessments. Consequently, assessment is now more thorough and used by teachers in the nursery and reception classes to plan children's next steps in learning. Observations by all staff in this key stage are now used well to target activities and adults'

questions to meet and extend individual children's specific learning and development needs. This is leading to better progress for all children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – good.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 in order to raise attainment in mathematics, science and ICT – good.

### **Other relevant pupil outcomes**

Pupils behave well in and around the school, and they are eager to learn. They support each other in lessons, listen to each other in assemblies and play cooperatively in the playground. There were two fixed-term, and no permanent, exclusions in the past year. Although pupils enjoy their increasingly engaging lessons, their attendance is low. They say they feel safe in school and that any bullying is usually addressed effectively by the staff. They know how to keep safe and healthy and they make a positive contribution to the community, for example as 'playground buddies'. They are developing appropriate literacy, numeracy, ICT and social skills to support their future education. Participation in assemblies and discussions and a wide range of educational visits promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively.

### **The effectiveness of provision**

The proportion of good teaching is increasing, particularly in mathematics and in the Early Years Foundation Stage where Cambridge Education@Islington has provided good support. The senior leadership team is effective in ensuring a consistent whole-school approach to lesson planning, assessment and the marking of pupils' books. Curricular targets for literacy and numeracy enable pupils to know how to improve their work. While teachers' use of assessment to match activities and questions to pupils' abilities is improving, it is not yet consistently good across all classes and areas of learning, particularly in writing and in extending pupils' responses. Other features of good teaching include the modelling of new skills to develop pupils' understanding and to clarify expectations, and regular feedback from the pupils during the lesson to keep them on-task and to assess and reinforce their learning. The absence of these features in some lessons results in a slow pace of learning. The curriculum, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in mathematics, science, ICT and topics that include history, is increasingly meeting pupils' needs and interests. The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils who speak English as an additional language, is effective. Safeguarding requirements are met. Health and safety issues that were previously reported in the Early Years Foundation Stage have been addressed fully and all members of staff are much more vigilant in carrying out risk assessments.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – good.
- Accelerate pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 – good.

### **The effectiveness of leadership and management**

The local authority has judged appropriately that the senior leadership team is now in a position to sustain improvements without its support. Senior leaders are developing effectively the monitoring and evaluation skills of subject leaders, including in science and ICT, to promote further improvements in teaching and learning. These middle leaders evaluate regularly teachers' planning and pupils' work books, although their monitoring of lessons and analysis of subject performance information are at an early stage. The senior leadership team, together with the governing body, are beginning to hold subject leaders and teachers to account through regular pupil-progress meetings. This is leading to improved progress for all pupils, including more-able pupils. While self-evaluation is generally accurate, analysis of lesson observations does not take sufficient account of evaluation of pupils' work books to show more precisely the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress. Evaluation of the school improvement plan and raising achievement plan is thorough and leads to good progress in all areas identified for improvement in the previous inspection and monitoring visit.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Develop an effective leadership and management structure across the school – good.

### **External support**

The impact of the external support provided by Cambridge Education@Islington, including the School Improvement Partner, is good. It can be seen in the improvements in the teaching of mathematics, in better provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, and in the developing skills of senior and middle leaders. The local authority is supporting the school very well in increasing provision for ICT and, in the meantime, is enabling the school to forge creative partnerships with other providers to provide access to ICT resources.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Secure more consistently good teaching by:
  - refining teachers' use of targets and assessments to match activities and questions more closely to pupils' abilities, particularly in writing
  - modelling skills to develop pupils' understanding and to clarify expectations
  - reviewing pupils' progress regularly during the lesson.

## **PROTECT-INSPECTION**



- Further develop the skills of middle leaders in lesson observation and analysing subject performance information, and in linking these areas in evaluating the impact of teaching on learning and pupils' progress.