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17 March 2011

Mrs K Palmer  
The Executive Headteacher  
Gordonbrock Primary School  
Perry Rise  
London  
SE23 2QU

Dear Mrs Palmer

**Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of  
Gordonbrock Primary School**

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school with Ann Sydney, Additional Inspector, on 16 March 2011, and for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. I appreciated the time given by staff, pupils, the chair of governors and a local authority officer.

Since the last inspection, the school has entered into a federation with another nearby school, led by an executive headteacher. One of the deputy headteachers of Gordonbrock became the head of school. Additionally, from January 2011, the school has moved to a temporary location, away from its community, whilst a new building is built there. This involves transporting almost all of the children by bus at the beginning and end of each day.

As a result of the inspection on 2 December 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

good progress in making improvements

and

outstanding progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.

By Year 6, the school's secure assessment systems show that standards are in line with national averages in English and mathematics. In 2010, more Year 6 pupils than average reached above average standards. Because of the lower starting points of the current cohorts, the school is not expecting standards to rise in the next two years. However, it has clear evidence that the progress being made by pupils has improved well, especially in writing, which has been recently a whole-school development area. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, pupils attain in line with expectations, with their progress improving. The targets for all pupils are demanding and raise expectations of how well they can do.

This improved progress is a result of better teaching, following staff training linked well to a supportive programme of observations by senior staff. Lessons seen by inspectors were interesting, well planned and lively. Work was often well matched to the needs of different groups of pupils, using attractive resources, on the basis of the assessments made. Pupils were well engaged by the use of individual whiteboards and opportunities to discuss their work in pairs or groups. Marking of pupils' work seen was thorough and encouraging, but pupils needed more time to respond directly to the comments. Teaching assistants supported pupils well in lessons, although in some cases there was a lack of clarity about the objectives specific groups were expected to achieve. There remain some inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Sometimes, pupils spent too long listening on the carpet, with the teacher not checking their understanding sufficiently.

Working together, the staff ensured very quickly that the temporary buildings are bright and stimulating and a good learning environment. Staggered play and lunchtimes are well established to make best use of limited indoor and outdoor space and a suitable outdoor area for the Early Years Foundation Stage was quickly established. Pupils cooperate well with the necessary routines.

The excellent management of this upheaval by senior staff has ensured that there has been no distraction whatsoever from their main task of seeking improvements in teaching and outcomes. Throughout, the executive headteacher has kept a very firm focus on developing management systems, building very rapidly the ability of staff at different levels to contribute. The head of school provides very strong support, developing her own leadership skills well. Other staff with management responsibilities speak with one voice. They have quickly become confident and clear in describing their relevant priorities, and feel empowered to take responsibility within the guidance of the well-constructed school improvement plan. They contribute well to accurate self-evaluation. Phase leaders are now key drivers of improvement. One said the school was in a period of 'really exciting change'. Provision and outcomes for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are improving as a result of better systems and management. The school leaders are aware there is plenty more work to do to develop the school, but have very quickly built structures and developed the skills of members of staff so that the school is very well placed to make longer-term improvement.

Staff receive very useful support from counterparts at the other school in the federation. This is another reason for the rapid positive change taking place. The governing body understands the purpose of what is being done. It receives well-constructed and honest reports from the executive headteacher, which it interprets and questions appropriately. The local authority played a key strategic role in setting up the federation, and funding the necessary work involved. Sensibly, it has made itself available to provide support and challenge when needed without dominating; it has shown well-founded trust in the arrangements in place.

I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in December 2009**

- Build on improvements in the use of assessment information in planning to ensure that all children make the progress that they should.
- Share good practice so that all teaching can develop to be as good as the best.
- Develop leadership and management at all levels to improve capacity and to continue to drive rapid improvement and raise standards.