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Mrs N Yudin
The Executive Headteacher
Lyon Park Junior School
Vincent Road
Wembley
London
HAO 4HH

Dear Mrs Yudin

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Lyon Park Junior School

Following my visit with Jennifer Bax, Additional Inspector, to your school on 30 and 31 March 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 fourth monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2009. 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 – 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 the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Brent.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2009

- Ensure safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements.
- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their learning and progress in reading, writing and science by:
 - improving the proportion of good or better teaching to at least 80% by the end of the summer term 2010
 - ensuring that all teaching is informed by pupil assessment so that work is closely matched to pupils' needs, especially for those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English
 - making sure that the marking of pupils' work is consistent and provides all pupils with clear guidance on what they need to do to improve their work
 - rigorously evaluating the progress made by pupils in order to take swift and focused action for improvement.
- Develop the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for the rate of pupils' progress and for ensuring that satisfactory safeguarding procedures are in place and regularly reviewed.

Special measures: monitoring of Lyon Park Junior School

Report from the fourth monitoring inspection on 30 and 31 March 2011

Evidence

Inspectors observed 16 lessons and parts of other lessons taught by a total of 17 teachers. Four of these lesson observations were conducted jointly with the executive headteacher and the associate headteacher. Inspectors met with senior and middle leaders, the Chair of Governing Body, a member of the governing body responsible for monitoring attainment and progress and the school's improvement partner. Inspectors talked to children and looked at their books in lessons. They also met with 24 pupils from across Years 3 to 6 and scrutinised the English and science work of 12 pupils from Years 5 and 6. Inspectors examined school documents including policies, improvement plans and information about pupil progress. The lead inspector also met with a group of 11 parents and carers.

Context

In January 2011, the junior school entered into a federation with the infant school which is located in the same building. The acting headteacher, who was also headteacher of the infant school, became substantive executive headteacher for the Federation of Lyon Park Schools. The deputy headteacher became associate headteacher for the junior school. A seconded deputy headteacher, who has been in post since January 2010, will leave at the end of the spring term. An assistant headteacher has been appointed, initially for the summer term. The newly-formed governing body met for the first time on 6 January 2011.

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

In 2010, validated levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 improved when compared to the previous year. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected level in English rose by 13% and was closer to the national average. Attainment in mathematics remained broadly similar to previous years. Overall, the proportion of pupils who attained a Level 4 in both English and mathematics rose by 10%. The rate of progress made by this group of pupils was much improved on previous years, but the proportion of pupils attaining the highest levels in English was low. In addition, attainment in science, as measured by teacher assessment, was also low.

Inspection evidence confirms that the rate of progress made by pupils continues to improve steadily. However, there are some variations between subjects and across year groups. Leaders are now identifying and tackling these differences more promptly so that pupils make a good start to their time in school or catch up on past underperformance. Overall, progress and attainment in writing remain weaker than in reading. However, the teaching of writing has improved. In the best lessons teachers model successful writing and make effective use of a range of strategies to help pupils evaluate and improve their work. Nevertheless, there is still a lack of

clarity about progression in writing across year groups. This means that some work is repeated and pupils are not always sufficiently challenged to produce writing of the highest quality. The progress made by pupils in science is also improving because teachers are more confident in their planning and their subject knowledge is developing. Astutely, leaders are focused on ensuring that the progress made by pupils in mathematics is maintained and that any gaps in the pupils' knowledge are addressed fully.

Pupils are making better progress in lessons because the proportion of good teaching has increased steadily. A large majority of teachers are now capable of teaching good lessons, whilst satisfactory lessons often demonstrate a number of good features. However, improvements have been slower since the last monitoring visit. Some teaching remains inconsistent and some inadequate teaching persists. Leaders recognise the need to establish quickly a set of agreed approaches, based on the good practice that already exists, so that all teaching has a more consistent impact on the pupils' learning and progress.

In lessons the pupils' social skills and personal confidence are developing well. In general, other adults are being deployed more successfully to support pupils, especially those who speak English as an additional language. Pupils are eager to learn. They say that they learn best when activities are challenging, involve problem solving or research and when teachers help them to make links between subjects. For example, pupils in Year 3 had thoroughly enjoyed learning about the Roman army in history, alongside creating mosaics in art and design. In the best lessons, teachers use information about pupils' prior achievement to plan imaginative activities that are well adapted to the needs of pupils. In these lessons teachers identify clear success criteria that enable pupils to evaluate how well they have achieved their learning targets. These teachers often develop the pupils' understanding successfully through their targeted questioning. In the least successful lessons work is not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of the majority of pupils. In these lessons, teachers often talk for too long, are reluctant to take risks in their teaching and do not plan activities that stretch the more able. This means that for some pupils the pace of learning is too slow. Most teachers now adopt a consistent approach to marking. Pupils say that this helps them to see what they have done well and what they need to improve. Nevertheless, pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunities to respond to the good advice given by their teachers and in a few classes marking is irregular.

The quality of middle leadership is developing steadily and is now more focused on tracking pupil progress. Consequently, teachers are becoming more accountable for the progress made by the pupils in their classes. Year leaders are also beginning to demonstrate a better understanding of the steps they can take to improve the consistency of monitoring and assessment within and across year groups. They recognise a need to ensure there are systematic routines for their own monitoring activities and that there are more frequent opportunities to moderate pupils' work based on common assessment criteria. In science, a curriculum review has been conducted, the school has adopted consistent schemes of work and there is ongoing

work to improve further the teachers' subject knowledge. The improvement plans produced by middle leaders are generally well devised and identify a range of appropriate actions. Nevertheless, in some instances the success criteria are too vague and there are few measurable targets. This means that it is currently difficult for leaders to evaluate thoroughly the actions they have taken.

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

- raise pupils' attainment and improve their learning and progress in reading, writing and science – satisfactory.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

Safeguarding procedures now comply with statutory requirements. A safeguarding committee has been established that monitors safeguarding across the Federation of Lyon Park Schools. This committee has reviewed the safeguarding and educational visits policies and has identified a number of priorities to ensure the continuing safety of pupils and staff. Recent e-safety training was well attended by parents and carers and members of the governing body. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 spoke with confidence when explaining how to stay safe when using email.

Although the governing body is relatively new, its members possess a wide range of relevant skills and expertise. Key posts have been filled quickly and there are clear role descriptions for individual governors, including those who have responsibility for monitoring safeguarding and pupil progress. There is also better peer support for governors who have key responsibilities with expertise being shared more widely. The executive headteacher reports to the governing body regularly so that its members have an accurate view of the progress made by the school and its priorities for future improvement. For example, governors are aware of the need to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning improves more rapidly. They also ensured that the recently agreed leadership structure empowers leaders at all levels to work more efficiently so that the rates of pupil progress increase further.

In general, parents are knowledgeable about the changes that have taken place at the school and are positive about the improvements that have been made. They say that their children enjoy coming to school and, in most cases, that concerns are dealt with quickly because there is improved communication with the school. They say that homework is now more regular and feel better informed about the progress their children are making. Most say that the school's support for individuals is strong, particularly for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Parents suggest that the quality of information shared between the school and home could be enhanced with improvements to the school website. Parents also noted the school's rewards systems had a positive impact on their children's motivation but felt that these systems were not consistent across all classes.

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

- ensure safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements – good
develop the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for the

rate of pupils' progress and for ensuring satisfactory safeguarding procedures – good.

External support

Support from the local authority is well targeted. Rightly, it is becoming more selective as the school strengthens its own capacity to provide the necessary support from within. Whole-school support for literacy has focused successfully on revisiting good practice in teaching approaches and more recently on strategies to support the more able writers in Year 6. Ongoing work in science has helped the subject leader for that subject to begin to improve the curriculum and develop further the teachers' subject knowledge. Recent paired observations with local authority officers have supported senior leaders in moderating their judgements of the quality of learning and teaching. The school's improvement partner knows the school well and continues to offer timely support and challenge.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that middle leaders share existing best practice and agree common approaches to monitoring and assessment so that these are applied more consistently across year groups.