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15 June 2012

Ms Wendy Hick
The Executive Headteacher
Manorfield Primary School
Wyvis Street
Poplar
London
E14 6QD

Dear Ms Hick

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Manorfield Primary School

Following my visit with Simon Rowe, Additional Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 June 2012, 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2012. 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.

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.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2012

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing frequent, good opportunities for pupils to practise and develop their skills in these two areas
 - supporting pupils' learning in mathematics by using practical resources when needed
 - ensuring that the curriculum promotes the acquisition of good basic literacy and numeracy skills for all groups of pupils.
- Take urgent action to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all teaching is satisfactory or better and a substantial proportion is good by:
 - ensuring teachers have high expectations of how hard pupils should work in lessons
 - matching activities to the needs of individual pupils so that all are challenged well, particularly the most able
 - ensuring marking is regular and frequent and gives clear guidance to pupils about how to improve
 - focusing sharply on improving pupils' reading in Year 3, and giving better support to those whose attainment was low at the end of Year 2 providing pupils with clear targets for their next steps in learning.
- Take swift steps to improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - providing a clear structure of leadership for senior and middle leaders, with clear roles and responsibilities
 - implementing a rigorous programme of monitoring and evaluation of teaching that is followed up with high quality support for all staff.

Special measures: monitoring of Manorfield Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 June 2012

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, various members of staff, two groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and the lead adviser for the school from the local authority.

Context

A few changes have taken place since the previous inspection. Following the resignation of the former headteacher in March 2012, the interim executive headteacher was contracted immediately to work in the school for four days each week over two terms. In her absence, the deputy headteacher is responsible for running the school one day each week. The governing body and local authority are currently reviewing the substantive post. Two teachers are on maternity leave and two will leave at the end of this term. Senior staff are presently covering the two vacant posts until suitable applicants are appointed before the end of the school year. The number of pupils on roll remains stable.

Achievement of pupils at the school

The progress that pupils made in all lessons seen was never less than satisfactory, confirming better teaching and learning since the last inspection. Pupils are keen to learn and willingly use talking partners to discuss ideas and provide feedback. This responsiveness leads to them cooperating well their class teacher. Pupils spoken to say they are well supported and they learn best when work is practical, fun and teachers use different examples to explain what they have to do.

Current assessment data indicate that predicted results in the national tests in English and mathematics in Years 2 and 6 are expected to be better this year. This improvement is expected because there has been sound targeted work on identified areas for improvement in reading, writing and numeracy skills. Additionally, staff have responded well to the increased training and monitoring of teaching and learning to improve their practice, which contribute to pupils making better progress. Nevertheless, there remains variability in the rate of pupils' progress, notably in Years 3 and 4 where it is slower and linked to the quality of teaching over time. For example, in Key Stage 2, White British pupils and those with a disability or special educational needs are not making the same rate of progress as their peers. The school recognises that there is still more to do in ensuring that the achievement gap closes quickly for all groups and no child is left behind, particularly as their starting points are similar.

A sharper focus on developing literacy skills and new approaches to teaching mathematics are factors contributing to improvement in teaching and learning. The

sound investment in equipment for teaching mathematics has provided pupils with direct opportunity to use resource materials when calculating and investigating sums. Senior leaders have begun to ensure that staff can understand and use assessment data to track pupils' progress and meet their needs. However, at this stage, although pupils know about the group they are in when work is set, they are not clear about the level at which they are working.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics – satisfactory.

The quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection and all teaching seen was at least satisfactory. A sound start has been made to sharpening teaching practices so that better planning and teaching techniques can result in accelerating pupils' progress. For example, increased monitoring and feedback to staff as well as coaching individuals have been used to improve teaching and learning. In addition, staff have had opportunities to observe good or better practices and key subject coordinators are working with consultants to develop planning. These practical approaches have contributed to improving teaching. Furthermore, expectations of what pupils can achieve have been spelt out so that teachers are in no doubt that the responsibility of proving how well they are accelerating pupils' progress lies with them in the classroom.

Although the majority of lessons seen were satisfactory, there has been a clear move to 'raise the game' and, as a result, the profile of good teaching is increasing, albeit, at a sound pace. In the good lessons teachers had clear expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Good subject knowledge was used to extend pupils' thinking through effective questioning which provided them with opportunities to give their views and develop clear communication skills. There were good opportunities for pupils to practise new skills, and all were suitably challenged. For example, in a Year 3 mathematics lesson, the more able pupils very confidently acted as 'teachers' whilst explaining, questioning and instructing their mixed-ability group to do subtraction and partitioning before selecting the most able in the group to demonstrate to the class the methodology used. This practical approach worked well as number skills were consolidated and independent learning was promoted. It also confirmed pupils' views that they enjoy mathematics 'best' and learn well when work is 'fun', 'practical' and involves using the interactive whiteboard.

However, the main characteristics of good teaching were only partially evident in other lessons, primarily because teachers talked for too long. Subject expertise was not used effectively and, occasionally, teachers did not know enough to extend pupils' skills. Additionally, questioning techniques are not well developed, there are too few opportunities for pupils to take control of their learning, expectations were not sufficiently high in relation to what pupils can achieve in a short time and, consequently, pace was too slow. Furthermore, work was not always well thought out or matched to needs.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- take urgent action to improve the quality of teaching and learning so that all teaching is satisfactory or better and a substantial proportion is good – satisfactory.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils say they feel 'happy' and safe in the school because 'teachers are always around and watching'. At playtimes, pupils interact well with the staff on duty. In all lessons seen, behaviour was mostly good as it was in the playground and around the school. For example, sensible and mature behaviour was observed when the fire alarm was accidentally raised. On this occasion, pupils acted quickly and diligently applied the rules of cooperation. In lessons, pupils work very well together and show good levels of acceptance and tolerance of peers who have specific learning or behavioural difficulties or who are occasionally fussy.

The behaviour room has been closed, and there have been very few fixed-term exclusions. However, at this stage, formal systems to monitor behaviour are not fully in place. Pupils know about the different forms of bullying and are confident that they can turn to an adult to deal with 'silly behaviour such as name calling' quickly and firmly.

The school works very hard with external agencies and the local authority to improve attendance and discourage extended leave. Attendance is currently at 94.4% and remains in line with the average for primary schools nationally.

The quality of leadership in and management of the school

The executive headteacher has brought a new sense of purpose and impetus to the school. She has awakened the staff awareness and understanding of what they need to do to consistently well to improve pupils' attainment and progress. Planning for improvement has been well considered and involved investigating and auditing the underlying weaknesses that have led to the school's decline. The raising achievement plan, along with the local authority's statement of action, provides staff with clear directions about the approaches they will use to drive improvement. Staff morale is therefore buoyant because there is clarity of direction. They understand how, why and when they will be held to account and, for the first time, professional development is linked to their needs and involves them engaging in professional dialogue with each other. The headteacher has gained the confidence of staff and is well supported by the senior and middle leaders.

In the absence of systems to monitor provision and outcomes, the headteacher and governing body, well supported by the local authority, have moved quickly to begin developing a systematic approach to improving the school. Regular monitoring of teaching and learning has been introduced and the senior team has responded well to the training to carry out lesson observations and provide accurate feedback,

support and coaching to staff. These actions have raised the quality of teaching and learning in a short time. Although line management is new, subject coordinators have started to take more control of their area of responsibility, and are adopting a strategic approach to managing their subject so that outcomes can improve. For example, the introduction of action plans for developing English and mathematics is typical of the strategy for improvement. Middle leaders have risen to the challenge and realised that there is no place to hide. However, the school senior leaders, including the governing body, recognise that there is still more to do in equipping middle leaders with effective leadership and management skills to develop their subject area. Further training is planned before the end of the current term. Professional development for teaching assistants is also planned to ensure they are consistently proactive in lessons and have the right skills to provide good quality support and guidance.

The curriculum review has led to the school adapting a thematic approach with planned links to literacy and numeracy, information and communication technology and personal and health education. However, at this stage, there is not a coordinated policy on cross-curricular skills across the curriculum. A clear system for senior leaders to oversee the quality of planning in year groups has been introduced and is leading to more consistency. While the re-organisation curriculum is at the early stage of development and much has been done to concentrate on literacy and numeracy in almost all year groups, there has been no formal catch up sessions for Year 6 pupils.

The governing body is well constituted. It has been strengthened and includes a strong group of very experienced officials, knowledgeable about corporate decision making and school effectiveness. As such, accountability is much improved and the governing body make demands on the school about its planning and effectiveness. Regular meetings between the school leaders, the local authority lead adviser and the Chair of the Governing Body ensure that provision is kept under review. The governing body fulfils its duties and safeguarding requirements are fully met.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- take swift steps to improve the quality of leadership and management – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose. Good support, advice and guidance, as well as regular monitoring, mentoring and training, have enabled the school to move forward quickly.