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13 February 2013

Mrs Wendy Hick  
Manorfield Primary School  
Wyvis Street  
Poplar  
London  
E14 6QD

Dear Mrs Hick

### **Special measures: monitoring inspection of Manorfield Primary School**

Following my visit with Olson Davis, additional inspector, to your school on 12–13 February 2013, 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 third 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 – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

The school may appoint up to two Teach First teachers for the autumn term 2013. This decision is based on the school’s strong record of successfully developing previous appointees and the much-increased capacity to sustain improvement.

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 Tower Hamlets.

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 by 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 third monitoring inspection on 12–13 February 2013**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and managers, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. Discussions were held with a few pupils during the breakfast club.

#### **Context**

Following the last monitoring inspection, the music specialist left the school, the literacy coordinator relinquished the post and the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator will retire at the end of the summer term. New staff were recently appointed and all are experienced practitioners. The new literacy coordinator has already taken up the post but the Early Years Foundation Stage coordinator and music teacher will take up their positions at the start of April. The number of pupils on roll remains stable.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Pupils work very well in lessons. They are very keen to learn and always work absorbedly. A Year 4 pupil told inspectors that, 'The best thing about school is getting into class and getting in to the momentum of lessons because teachers help us to get things right.' This comment underpins the enthusiasm pupils have for learning and is a contributory factor to them making better progress.

The school's use of data to track pupils' progress is more robust, particularly as assessment is regular and procedures for monitoring pupils' performance and identifying underachievement have been strengthened. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children continue to achieve well through the good use of assessment to plan targeted activities that build on their learning. Assessment data show that the vast majority of pupils are making good progress in lessons and over time, overall. Training and well-targeted interventions in English and mathematics lessons are helping individuals and groups of pupils to increase overall rates of progress. The pace of improvement is faster because the quality of support in lessons is never less than good. The majority of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress in line with expectations, as do pupils with English as an additional language but who have well-developed English language skills. The school keeps under review the progress of White British pupils, those eligible for the pupil premium and pupils at the early stage of learning English to ensure that barriers to their achievement are tackled rigorously.

There is a sharper focus on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills through practical activities. For instance, in literacy lessons, teachers employ an effective range of intervention strategies to promote reading and writing skills. Pupils draw on their knowledge of phonics (the sounds letters make) to pronounce tricky and complex words. Additionally, small group work and language therapy sessions are used well to develop reading. Guided reading is very well structured and promotes independent and comprehension reading. The reading skills approach is being pioneered successfully across Years 2 to 6. Older pupils are becoming competent at interpreting texts accurately, and can 'read between the lines' and justify personal interpretation as they select, infer and deduce textual information. For example, Year 6 pupils can demonstrate their appreciation of different features of texts and are showing awareness of the ways in which writers use language to express meanings. Discussions and role play are used effectively as a prelude to writing.

The school recognises that, while writing is often organised and imaginative, weaknesses remain in the basic grammatical structures of sentences, spelling and punctuation. Research and planning are being carried out on developing writing, and further training on improving pupils' writing skills is planned. Similarly, in mathematics, from as early as the Early Years Foundation Stage, practical activities, such as cooking and costing cakes, help to increase pupils' knowledge of numbers. Other approaches across the school include the use of games and simple equipment, such as counting sticks to improve number work.

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

- Improve pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics – good

### **The quality of teaching**

Teaching continues to improve. There is now more consistency in the quality of teaching, and the proportion of good and occasionally better lessons far outweighs those requiring improvement. The school continues to build on the good practices because effective systems are in place for staff to work collaboratively and record and peer assess each other's work. In-service training, including developmental work on handwriting and presentation, is ongoing as leaders consolidate good practice. Furthermore, leaders are requiring more of all staff, particularly as performance is referenced to the teaching standards. Consequently, all staff know what is required of them.

The school's planning structure ensures that there is attention to using assessment information to meet the needs of all groups of pupils, and teaching assistants are very well deployed. Inspectors saw high-quality support from higher-level teaching assistants. In all lessons seen, teaching assistants were effective in supporting pupils' learning. Lessons are well structured and there is good attention to developing pupils' ability to explore and communicate ideas through talking partners and feedback. The teacher's role at the start of lessons is clearly identified in

contextualising the work and setting a positive pace to learning. In the best lessons, teachers had high expectations and maintained a good pace to building pupils' understanding of new concepts. Skilful discussions, targeted questioning and the use of practical activities increased pupils' grasp of concepts. For example, in mathematics, Year 6 pupils worked on a range of activities in ability groups to identify how to work out the perimeter and area of regular and irregular shapes, while Year 3 pupils' experiment with time led them to say, 'Time is circular, it's not in a straight line.'

In the few lessons requiring improvement, the teachers talked for too long, expectations were not high enough, questions were not well targeted and there was insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' language skills.

The quality of marking continues to improve. However, although there is attention to pupils editing their work, there is not a consistent approach to giving them sufficient time to respond to comments on improving their work. Plans to develop handwriting and presentation skills are timely and well considered.

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

- 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 – good

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour is consistently good or better. They enjoy taking part in lessons and are confident about tackling their work and representing their school. For example, a Year 2 pupil started the assembly for this year group and, with support, engaged others to join in the question and answer session. Relationships are positive, and pupils expressed confidence in the friendly ethos and the staff supporting them. Persistent absence is high for a few pupils but the school is working very well with the welfare officer to reinforce clear messages rigorously and take actions as necessary. There have been two temporary fixed-term exclusions since the start of the current term. The school has developed good supportive strategies for pupils with specific behavioural needs.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The headteacher, senior and middle leaders, and members of the governing body demonstrate determination to raise and sustain attainment further. They share an insightful understanding of the steps needed for improvement and, because rigorous systems have been put into place to monitor the school's progress, there is a culture of planning and self-evaluation. This has underpinned the improvements to date and served to increase the school's capacity to sustain improvement.

Training and development opportunities have led to the school developing the leadership and management skills of middle leaders and other staff. Notably, middle leaders have increased their understanding of school improvement and are well versed in interrogating and using assessment data to identify pupils' progress. Distributive leadership is very much a feature of the school and there is a clear line of accountability for pupils' learning, and expectations of what pupils can achieve are high. For example, in Year 6, more pupils are targeted to achieve Level 6 in mathematics and in literacy; textual grasp and appreciation are taught in preparation for secondary school. The overall targets for each year group have been raised to reflect the better progress pupils are making. Research work on good practice is carried out and the best practice is tailored to meet the needs of pupils. Senior leaders have been effective in developing middle leaders but realise that all of them need training in lesson observation skills. Partnership work with local schools is being used to compare and contrast the school's performance and as part of forward planning.

The governing body is insightful about the school's progress; it is vigilant about the school's work, and its increased knowledge about school improvement is linked to its direct evaluation and monitoring visits it has begun to carry out. The good level of engagement is enabling it to challenge the school's performance.

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

- Take swift steps to improve the quality of leadership and management – good

### **External support**

The local authority's very good initial support has enabled the school to accelerate the rate of improvement. Consequently, the school is no longer reliant on the local authority's ongoing advice, support and guidance. The local authority has reduced the time allocated to the school; its monitoring of the school's progress is reduced to being 'light touch' and support, if required, is determined by the school through negotiation with the link adviser and literacy and numeracy consultants.