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15 May 2014

Mrs Carel Buxton  
The Headteacher  
Snaresbrook Primary School  
Meadow Walk  
South Woodford  
London  
E18 2EN

Dear Mrs Buxton

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Snaresbrook Primary School**

Following my visit with Sibani Raychaudhuri, Additional Inspector, to your school on 14 and 15 May 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in June 2013. 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.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

The school does not need to appoint any more newly qualified teachers.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Redbridge.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in June 2013**

- Improve teaching and make sure none is inadequate by ensuring that:
  - teachers plan tasks at the right level of difficulty to challenge pupils of different abilities, especially the more able
  - pupils spend enough time learning actively
  - teachers' questioning is probing and extends learning fully
  - teaching assistants are directed more effectively to assist learning throughout the whole lesson teachers always take action to stop and prevent silly behaviour in lessons.
  
- Provide better feedback to pupils by:
  - making sure pupils understand what it is that they are aiming for and how to reach the next level in their learning
  - ensuring that pupils' work is marked in a way that helps them to know how to improve it, and that pupils are given time to respond to these comments.
  
- Raise pupils' achievement in mathematics and in English, especially writing by:
  - improving the teaching of phonics and the use of home-school reading records
  - providing better opportunities to interest boys in writing and making sure pupils write for different purposes in a range of subjects ensuring mathematics
  - lessons focus closely on the skills pupils need to learn.
  
- Prevent individuals or groups of pupils from falling behind, by:
  - gathering accurate information about pupils' starting points when they join the school, and tracking their progress much more carefully through the school
  - using records of pupils' progress to identify pupils and groups of pupils who are underachieving and taking prompt action, where needed, to help them make good progress
  - making sure leaders use the pupil premium funding more effectively
  - rigorously checking attendance and improving it for poor attenders.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - improvement plans focus sharply on what needs to be achieved, contain targets that are more challenging, that actions are fully implemented and the impact closely monitored
  - leaders check the curriculum thoroughly to ensure sufficient depth of coverage for each subject
  - leaders ensure the needs and interests of all groups of pupils are met, especially boys, those who are more able and those for whom the school receives additional funding

- managers responsible for subjects or other aspects of the school are fully involved in driving improvement
- leaders and managers accurately assess the quality of teaching and take steps to ensure that teaching is good or better, holding teachers to account for pupils' progress
- governors hold the school fully to account for the standard of education provided, and that they are equipped to do this well
- an external review of governance is carried out to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 14 and 15 May 2014**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, learning assistants, the school council, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, and with the associate adviser from the local authority.

### **Context**

Following the last monitoring inspection, two senior teachers, the associate headteacher and an assistant headteacher, have left the school. An interim associate headteacher, with responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school, was appointed at the start of the current term. During the monitoring visit, a new deputy headteacher, a senior teacher from the supporting school, Redbridge Primary, was appointed to the permanent post as the inclusion and assessment manager. She will continue to support Snaresbrook School part time, as the inclusion manager, before beginning her new appointment in September 2014. Two class teachers also left and one of those was the lead teacher for information and communication technology. The vacant positions were filled by a permanent teacher and an experienced teacher from Redbridge Primary who is working in the school until the end of this term. Currently, the senior team includes three assistant headteachers from Redbridge Primary School. Each is providing additional support one day each week. One is focusing on assessment, another on inclusion and the third on developing information and communication technology.

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

Good progress, as reported in the last monitoring letter, has been sustained. This is primarily linked to, firstly, the emphasis senior leaders are placing on developing good quality teaching. Secondly, senior leaders are also using monitoring to maintain a learning environment that is focused on accelerating pupils' progress. As a result, the quality of teaching is much better, and pupils say they are challenged and enjoying their work.

Observations of lessons show that pupils in all year groups are settled and aspire to master all skills taught. The school's tracking and validated information on pupils' progress indicates that predicted and approved targets are expected to match the above average results achieved in 2013. While progress is good overall, the tracking data also show that pupils in Year 4 and Year 5 have tended to make slower progress in reading and writing respectively because previous assessments of their achievement were inaccurate.

The achievement of different groups of pupils is kept under scrutiny because the school is using a good range of initiatives effectively to support groups of pupils to make better progress. Good quality support is helping to close the attainment gap

for pupils receiving additional support to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. For example, assessment information shows that, by end of Years 2 and 6, there is very little difference in the performance of pupils eligible for additional support and their peers. The most-able pupils were entered for the higher Level 6 papers in reading and mathematics. These pupils applaud the opportunities available to them to experience secondary school work at other partner schools, including Bancroft Independent School, Woodbridge High School and Wanstead High School.

Close scrutiny of assessment information has helped senior managers and governors to commission a review of the reasons for pupils with special educational needs making slower progress than their peers. As a result, various overlaps were identified and resources were re-targeted carefully to support them. Case studies show that intensive one-to-one and/or group support is contributing to them meeting, or exceeding, the progress expected.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, most children have met or exceeded the national expectations in all areas of learning. The majority are at a good level of development in literacy and numeracy. Improvement in literacy is linked to the continuing emphasis on teaching phonics (the sound letters make). Currently, pupils in Year 2 have now all passed the screening check and Year 1 pupils are expected to exceed the national average.

### **The quality of teaching**

The target to ensure that most teaching is good or better has been achieved early. This has been possible because of the consistent drive to promote good or better teaching, and provide training linked to the school development plan and the needs of individual staff. All of this is underpinned by robust performance management, whereby staff are held accountable for pupils' achievement.

Teachers have a clear understanding of what they need to do to sustain above average standards. Notably, learning assistants are more sure-footed about their role. They have responded very well to the training provided. Participation in the behaviour management course has led to them recognising that quality work, rather than quantity, is a key factor to pupils making better progress. As a result, they have adjusted their approach to working with pupils when consolidating learning so that pupils can master the key skills taught. Plans are in place to ensure wider participation in the behaviour management course.

The quality of teaching is characterised by the following strengths: structured planning, high expectations, prompt start to lessons and rapid pace; well-selected resources linked to activities, and a rich learning environment filled with good quality displays to support learning. Teaching assistants are very well deployed.

A minority of teaching is outstanding and is readily distinguishable from the good teaching. In these lessons, learning is unremitting and teachers do not lose sight of their high expectations. They constantly check pupils' learning and adjust their

teaching so that pupils can achieve exceptionally well. Pupils are encouraged to become reflective learners and have practical opportunities to apply the taught skills. With outstanding teaching, intensive questioning led to pupils refining their answers and mastering particular skills.

Good teaching uses assessment information effectively to set suitably challenging work. Teachers use demonstrations well so that pupils can aspire to achieve better targets. However, because there is a sharp focus on teaching technical skills, teachers are not always fastidious enough in ensuring that pupils use the taught techniques accurately. For instance, in literacy, pupils know the different punctuation marks and figurative terms, and they command a wide vocabulary. However, they do not always use them accurately to create the best effect. The very few lessons requiring improvement are now not consistently typical of the teaching profile. Such teaching lacks challenge and pace is slower.

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

As at the last monitoring inspection visit, the attitudes and behaviour of pupils remain good with many exceptionally good features. Pupils apply themselves to their learning and enjoy grappling with ideas. From the Nursery upwards, children do not waste time. Pupils display positive attitudes to their learning and settle quickly to their work. The ambassadors, as the voice of the pupils, demonstrate the ambitious value the school is instilling in all pupils to become life-long learners. The ambassadors are reflective and mature learners who convey a great sense of responsibility for younger pupils. Attendance is improving and is broadly average for primary schools. The school has not had any exclusion since September 2013.

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

The exemplary leadership of the executive headteacher has enabled staff to maintain their commitment to driving improvement. This has been possible because of the clarity of vision for improvement and strategic planning to remain focused on improvement, despite the rapid changes in teachers. The governors, with the headteacher, have embarked on a grand plan of re-building the school. Their long term plan for the future has involved using temporary measures to fill the gaps in the senior leadership team. Appointments have not been rushed as senior leaders and governors are ensuring that the best applicants are selected. Planning for the future includes securing a strong foundation with experienced senior and middle leaders and good classroom practitioners. The foundation has now been laid; key appointments have mostly been made and staffing is secure with a clear shadow structure in place. Nevertheless, the challenge for the current leaders at all levels is to ensure that they can sustain the increased capacity without the external support from the main partners, Redbridge Primary School and the local authority.

Middle leaders have been very responsive to the training provided to work alongside more experienced colleagues from Redbridge Primary School and local authority consultants. Key senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for the Early

Years Foundation Stage, special educational needs, English and mathematics, are at varying levels of development, but the quality of their monitoring, project work with pupils, and training for staff, show a good level of development. For example, the coordinator for early years, as an experienced member of the senior team, has worked extensively with staff to improve the teaching and development of phonics skills in the school. Similarly, the coordinator for mathematics has successfully used programmes of work with under-performing pupils to improve their progress in the subject. The school recognises that all middle leaders are not yet seasoned leaders. Further work is planned to develop their skills and expedite their progress.

Monitoring is robust and middle leaders are involved in checking work and planning. For example, book scrutiny is regular; marking is diagnostic and of a high quality; this involves pupils using progress booklets and assessing their achievements. Feedback to pupils and staff is normal, and identifies areas for improvement; various literacy and mathematics support packages are used; monitoring is now accurate and the process of holding staff to account for pupils' achievement is rigorous. Information is therefore reviewed in relation to pupils' gender, ability, special educational needs, ethnicity, proficiency in speaking English as an additional language, and time of starting at the school. This is ensuring that all can have equal access to support to achieve well. Highly effective monitoring is exemplified in improvement in teaching, and achievement, as well as a greater understanding of pupils with special educational needs. As a result, numbers of pupils identified at school action has reduced significantly by over 20 per cent.

The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum in response to the recent changes nationally. The new curriculum is expected to reflect diversity and inclusion, with pupils carrying out in-depth project work across subjects. Currently, pupils are provided with a good range of opportunities to develop their cultural and social skills through projects such as storytelling, as seen during the monitoring visit when Year 4 pupils achieved well in their role play during the Wizard story-telling sessions. Community art work with parental involvement is also planned.

The governing body has been strengthened with additional expertise in human resources and the Early Years Foundation Stage. Governors have aligned themselves to subject areas and year groups, enabling them to use their expertise effectively when challenging the school. For example, the expertise in academia, safeguarding and child protection, community work and information and communication technology is put to very good effect when challenging the school on its performance. The governing body has deliberated the long term future of the school and is working closely with the local authority and Redbridge Primary School to ensure that the exit strategy includes a smooth transition when the work of the executive headteacher comes to an end.

### **External support**

Leaders at all levels, and the governing body, recognise that the very good support from the local authority has helped the school to improve quickly. The link officer

has worked closely with senior leaders and the governing body to outline the long term future of the school. As a result, there is a secure understanding that sustaining the capacity of the school is paramount to its long term effectiveness. The role of the local authority during the handover period has been well considered. Accountability is regular and reviews of the school's work are contributing to staff maintaining their focus on driving improvement.