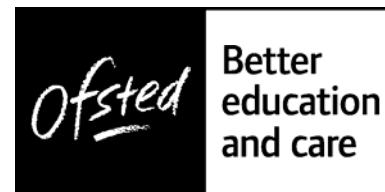


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5 May 2005

Ms R Graham  
Acting Headteacher  
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London  
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Dear Ms Graham

### **Implementation of Chisenhale Primary School's Action Plan**

Following the visit of Florence Olajide HMI, Carmen Rodney HMI and Usha Sahni HMI to your school on 27 and 28 April 2005, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings, which are recorded in the attached note.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures. The focus of the inspection was to assess: the quality of the action plan; the pupils' standards of attainment and their progress; the quality of education provided; the leadership and management of the school; the pupils' attitudes and behaviour; and the progress that has been made in implementing the action plan.

The school's action plan is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses.

The weaknesses outlined in the second paragraph of the note of the inspection findings should be addressed and amendments prepared by the second monitoring inspection.

The LEA's statement of action is good.

The school has made limited progress since being subject to special measures.

The LEA's target date of spring term 2006 for the removal of special measures is ambitious.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers until further notice.

I am copying this letter and the note of the inspection findings to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Tower Hamlets. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Reid  
Head of Institutional Inspections and Frameworks Division

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF CHISENHALE PRIMARY SCHOOL'S ACTION PLAN**

### Findings of the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures

During the visit, 25 lessons or parts of lessons and one assembly were inspected. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of governors, the LEA representative, and a number of nominated staff. Informal discussions were held with other members of staff and with pupils. A range of documents was scrutinised. Using this evidence, HMI made the following observations to the acting headteacher, the deputy and assistant headteachers, the chair and vice chair of the governing body, and the LEA representative.

The school's action plan is satisfactory overall with some weaknesses. The plan covers all the areas for improvement and includes appropriate timescales and quantifiable success criteria, which are linked to outcomes for pupils. Proposed actions are clear and specific and those responsible for them are appropriately identified. However, the action plan has some important omissions. Although it includes appropriate monitoring and evaluation procedures, it gives no indication of when most monitoring activities will happen or how they fit within the overall timescales for action. The plan does not sufficiently address how the school intends to develop the teaching assistants' capacity to support learning effectively and the teachers' expertise in managing pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. These were issues highlighted in the recent inspection. In addition, in its commentary the LEA notes a need for the school to: plan to appoint a special educational needs co-ordinator; identify measurable attainment-related success criteria in science and information and communication technology (ICT); extend the plan up to the school's target date for removal from special measures and plan an appropriate exit strategy. These crucial issues need to be addressed.

The LEA's statement of action is good. It details the support the LEA intends to provide and who is responsible for ensuring that the support is given. It also contains clear and timely monitoring and evaluation procedures. The commentary shows the LEA's awareness of the school's longstanding difficulties and contains an acceptable justification for the maintenance of the school.

The LEA's support for the school has been good. It provided useful advice and support to the governing body during the recent appointment of a substantive headteacher who will take up the post in September 2005. However, the current acting headteacher is the second in post since the action plan was written and although the LEA has worked hard to maintain continuity between changing headteachers, the change in leadership has slowed down the school's progress. Training and advice from LEA officers is helping the senior leadership team to establish effective practices to raise the pupils' achievement. LEA officers also provide valuable additional support to teachers who need it, particularly three newly qualified teachers.

The 2004 National Curriculum test results declined in both key stages. In Key Stage 1, when compared to all schools, the pupils' achievement was below the national figure in writing and well below it in reading and mathematics. When compared to similar schools, the picture was more positive; achievement was in line with the national figure in reading and mathematics and above it in writing. However, very few pupils attained the higher level 3 in reading and none achieved this in writing. In Key Stage 2, when compared to all schools, the pupils' achievement was well below the national figure in English, mathematics and science. A similar picture emerged in comparison to like schools, with the exception of mathematics, where attainment was in line with that of schools in its benchmark group. The school's data shows that pupils make insufficient progress from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

Standards were satisfactory or better in just over two thirds of the lessons. In the Foundation Stage, standards were good in language and literacy, and satisfactory in the other areas of learning. In Key Stages 1 and 2, standards in English were below the age-related expectations. Many of the strengths and weaknesses identified in the recent inspection report remain. Most pupils spoke confidently when explaining their views though they did not always speak clearly. The planning and provision for guided reading has improved but the pupils were not confident in using a range of strategies to pronounce unfamiliar words. In writing, the quality of the pupils' work improved when the teacher showed them how to plan and how to structure a sentence. However, the quality of writing was marred by many spelling errors and a lack of attention to grammar. The quality of handwriting varied from a neat cursive style to untidily formed letters.

In mathematics, standards were below the age-related expectations in half of the lessons in Key Stage 2. The pupils were encouraged to explain their workings and use a range of calculation strategies but some lacked the basic knowledge and understanding to apply the strategies correctly. Standards in science were below age-related expectations and achievement was barely satisfactory. The pupils did not use appropriate scientific vocabulary when describing their work and although they had many opportunities to carry out detailed observations, they did not have enough time to formulate hypotheses and conduct scientific enquiries.

Although standards are generally low, most of the pupils made reasonable progress in lessons. The pupils' progress was satisfactory or better in 22 out of the 25 lessons. However, the pupils who have special educational needs made less progress because learning activities were often not suitably matched to their needs.

The quality of the pupils' learning was good. The pupils were highly motivated and eager to learn in all lessons. They worked well with each other, readily complied with instructions, responded appropriately to questions and made thoughtful contributions to discussions. Most of the pupils concentrated well for considerably long periods and participated very well in all activities. They knew what was required of them and attempted to meet the challenges. Occasionally their learning

lagged behind teaching where their interest was insufficiently engaged. A few were passive or listless when the introduction or explanation was too long.

The quality of teaching has declined since the school was last inspected. This is partly due to unavoidable staff changes. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 22 out of 25 lessons; it was good in 12 of them. Where the teaching was good, lessons were well structured with clear learning intentions. The teachers' good subject knowledge combined with the use of positive behaviour management strategies and interactive teaching styles motivated the pupils to learn effectively. Learning tasks were appropriately matched to the pupils' abilities and they had sufficient opportunities to discuss their learning with each other. In these lessons, teachers used learning resources, including interactive white boards, effectively to engage pupils' interest and they used the plenary sessions successfully to assess and extend the pupils' learning.

In the weaker lessons, the teachers dominated the sessions and did not give the pupils sufficient opportunities to talk or answer questions. Learning tasks were inappropriately matched to the abilities of less able pupils and learning resources were not used efficiently. In these lessons, less able pupils in particular made limited progress.

The pupils' attitudes and their behaviour were satisfactory in all lessons, and good or better in two thirds of them. In one lesson, attitudes and behaviour were excellent. Behaviour in the playground, corridors and halls was consistently good. The pupils co-operated well with each other during lessons and playtimes. They used the playground facilities constructively and showed respect for each other's space. A consequence of the good management and organisation skills of the lunchtime supervisors was that the pupils continued to behave well during their mealtime and subsequent playtime. During assembly, the pupils carefully considered the theme of the day and respectfully joined in the prayer.

Attendance for the 2003/2004 academic year was broadly in line with the national average for primary schools although unauthorised absence was well above the national average. So far, at 93.7 per cent, attendance for this academic year has dropped slightly. Unauthorised absence remains high at 1.4 per cent but this is a slight improvement on last year. There have been a number of fixed term exclusions involving one pupil. This pupil has special educational needs and is currently receiving provision that is more appropriate.

### **Action taken to address the areas for improvement**

#### **1: improve the leadership and management, including securing the headship, by ensuring that key staff in management positions play an effective role in school improvement.**

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall. The acting headteacher took over the running of the school in January 2005. She has continued the work of the

previous acting headteacher and provides very good leadership and direction. She has been effective in establishing a new senior leadership team through the appointments of four phase leaders to lead the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1, Lower Key Stage 2 and Upper Key Stage 2. They have clear and specific job descriptions. In addition to other responsibilities such as assessment, they each lead a core subject area.

The team has a strong focus on school improvement and raising standards. It has established clear and effective procedures for monitoring and evaluating the quality of provision. These have included mapping curriculum provision across the year groups and setting up a database of assessment information. Consequently, staff can now track the pupils' progress termly. Team members are involved in analysing assessment data, scrutinising pupils' work and providing feedback and support to teachers on how to improve provision. Phase leaders lead staff planning meetings weekly and pupil progress meetings fortnightly. This provides them with the opportunity to influence planning and monitor the pupils' progress in each phase. The team has established a rigorous cycle of lesson observations, which has involved LEA advisers, consultants and subject leaders. This has provided them with a comprehensive picture of the strengths and weaknesses in teaching across the school. Subsequently, they have targeted support at staff who need it and this has led to improvements in some aspects of teaching.

The governing body provides effective support to the leadership team and works closely with the LEA and acting headteacher. The appointment of subject leaders continues, due to recent and pending staff changes. The appointment of a co-ordinator for special educational needs is unresolved. The school covers this role by buying the support of an LEA officer for 1.5 days a week and a member of the senior leadership team has responsibility for overseeing provision. However, in practice this is inadequate for the day-to-day needs of the school and needs urgent review.

The school has made reasonable progress in this area.

**2: raise pupils' achievement in English, science and religious education (RE) in Years 3 to 6 and in information and communication technology (ICT) throughout the school.**

The appointment of new subject leaders has brought a level of stability, which is clearly expressed in changes to the curriculum and assessment. Strengths and weaknesses in the subjects have been identified and suitable strategies have been introduced to address them. These include a review of schemes of work, planning, teaching strategies and the selection of resources; the use and analysis of assessment data; and marking to identify specific weaknesses in the pupils' work. The review of lesson planning has begun to have a positive impact on the medium and short term planning in English and ICT.

The co-ordinators have worked closely with the LEA and external consultants to introduce a more systematic approach to managing and developing teaching and learning in these subjects. The coordinators' training needs have been identified and appropriate support provided for them and the teaching staff. There is more rigour in the monitoring of planning, teaching and learning. Reasonable progress has been made in English and ICT, but there has been less progress in science and particularly so in RE where changes are at an early stage. The amount of time allocated for RE at Key Stage 2 has yet to be finalised. Although the actions have the potential to raise the pupils' achievements, they have not yet done so.

Progress on this area for improvement is limited.

**3: improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring that the results of assessments are used to help teachers plan effectively for pupils of different ages and capabilities, particularly those with special educational needs.**

There has been a strong emphasis on establishing assessment systems although their implementation has been slower. An assessment cycle clearly outlines for all class teachers the frequency and timing of assessment. The senior leadership team has monitored the implementation of the revised marking policy and provided feedback to the teachers to prompt action for further improvement. However, the teachers' assessments narrowly focus on English and Mathematics in Key Stages 1 and 2, and work to extend it to science and ICT is at an early stage. In addition, the teachers have not begun to use assessment results consistently when planning lessons. The co-ordinator for assessment is fully aware that improving teachers' knowledge and understanding of the descriptions of standards in different subjects and monitoring the accuracy and consistency of assessment are urgent priorities.

The school has invested considerable effort and resources to establish effective systems for identifying, recording and reviewing the pupils' specific needs. The enhanced provision of specialist support for pupils who have specific and complex needs is a positive outcome of the improved efficiency in the management of information. The new systems have been clearly communicated to the class teachers, but they have not yet been fully implemented. Many pupils who have special educational needs make limited progress in lessons, because assessment information is not used consistently to plan for their different needs. In addition, there is little evidence that the impact of the additional support on pupils' progress and standards is monitored and evaluated. The headteacher is leading the training of teaching assistants and the programme is well supported by the specialist teachers from the LEA's inclusion team.

Overall, the school has made limited progress in this area.