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29 November 2007

Mr Robert Leach  
The Acting Headteacher  
Pardes House Primary School  
Hendon Lane  
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London  
N3 1SA

Dear Mr Leach

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF PARDES HOUSE  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 20 and 21 November 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Education Officer for Barnet.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker  
Additional Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF PARDES HOUSE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the third monitoring inspection: 20 and 21 November 2007

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher, members of the teaching staff, representatives of the governing body and a representative from the LA.

### Context

The executive headteacher and the associate headteacher left their posts at the end of last term. The deputy headteacher is now the acting headteacher. There is a new permanent member of the teaching staff. In addition three temporary teachers are new to the school. Two of the temporary teachers joined the school to teach classes that had experienced considerable disruption over several weeks only a short time before this monitoring visit. The governors have appointed a retired headteacher as a part-time advisor. She is also a mentor to the acting headteacher.

### Achievement and standards

The results of national tests at the end of Year 2 in 2007 showed a marginal improvement in writing although none of the boys reached the higher level. Standards in reading declined but in mathematics there was an upturn with one third of the boys attaining the higher level. At the end of Year 6 standards fell in English and mathematics. Further analysis of the results shows progress in mathematics, between Year 2 and Year 6, has slowed significantly and too many boys did not make enough progress. Results improved in science where six out of ten boys reached the higher level.

The school has recently carried out a scrutiny of the boys' work in English and science. The findings accurately illustrate the variation in the amount and the quality of the boys' work. This variation has been exacerbated over the first part of this term by a number of changes of teachers in two classes. In recent weeks the situation has improved. The boys are making better progress in lessons; for example, in a Year 4 lesson where the boys were exploring the setting for a story. Most lessons are satisfactory but there are still examples where progress is barely satisfactory and sometimes slow. For example, in an undemanding mathematics lesson in Year 2 the boys gained little from cutting out and sticking the months of the year in the correct order because most already knew this. Inconsistency in the progress the boys make continues to hinder efforts to raise pupils' achievement throughout the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- Raise pupils' achievement, particularly in writing and science – inadequate

### Personal development and well-being

There has been a notable improvement in the boys' behaviour and in most classes attitudes to learning are more positive. With these improvements the school has become a calmer, more orderly place for the boys to learn. The acting headteacher

has succeeded in establishing some ground rules for managing behaviour, now being followed by all of those who teach in the school. For instance, boys are now escorted from Jewish Studies classes to secular curriculum classes. This leads to their being ready to start work as soon as they arrive in the classroom. However, there are still instances of noisy behaviour but these have reduced considerably because expectations are now clearer and more consistently implemented. This is a positive development towards re-establishing a platform for sustained improvement.

Discussions with a teacher who has worked in the school for a number of years revealed her view that the 'atmosphere in the school is more comfortable' and 'the boys are responding much better'. This is evident in most classes where relationships between the teachers and the boys are much more positive. The addition of weekly art and music lessons, led by specialist teachers, is considerably enhancing the boys' enjoyment and broadening their horizons.

### Quality of provision

The profile of the quality of teaching has improved, although inconsistencies remain. This improvement is recent and it has yet to have a marked impact on the boys' progress. The teaching in the Foundation Stage remains secure and effective. In Years 1 and 2, new staff have yet to establish themselves, consequently the pace and challenge of lessons have yet to meet the needs of all abilities. In Years 3 to 6 there is now greater consistency of approach and there are early indications of better progress as result.

More effective use is being made of the assessment information the teachers collect. Targets for the pupils are currently being moderated by the acting headteacher to ensure they are sufficiently challenging. The boys have all been involved in a 'conference' with their teacher to set their targets. These targets are now increasingly evident in their work.

The acting headteacher has successfully enhanced the curriculum to give the boys more opportunities to participate in creative activities. The addition of weekly art and music lessons is a very positive development. However, the time available for some subjects is not used well enough. For example, the work in some boys' geography and science books does not reflect the time allocated to these subjects.

Appropriate steps have been taken to make sure the teachers check that all of the boys have returned from Jewish Studies lessons on time. The register is now taken again to check their attendance.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- Use the information from the school's assessments to make sure that all work is pitched at the right level to support pupils' learning, to monitor and track the progress that all pupils make and to identify where they could be doing better – satisfactory
- Improve the quality of teachers' planning of activities to meet pupils' needs, with appropriate pace and challenge for their differing abilities – inadequate

## Leadership and management

The acting headteacher has spent much of his first two months in securing the services of teachers for three classes, who are prepared to make a commitment to stay at the school for the current academic year. Although this proved difficult his considerable determination has resulted in the prospect of a more stable situation than has prevailed for some time. He has also sought to improve communication between the Rebbes, who teach Jewish Studies, and the teachers of the secular curriculum. The continuing difficulty in recruiting a headteacher means that a coherent approach to managing and leading the whole school remains central to laying the foundations that will enable the boys to make rapid progress. Recent improvements in establishing clearer expectations of behaviour are contributing to a firmer foundation to move forward at a quicker than has been possible in recent times.

The acting headteacher is currently working without the support of a deputy or middle managers. As a result, it is difficult to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented rapidly and consistently throughout the school, particularly during a period of many staff changes. Although the literacy and science coordinators have carried out a scrutiny of work and some planning has been monitored, the school's work has not been rigorously examined this term. For example, in spite of the significant decline in results in mathematics no rigorous examination of mathematics provision has taken place. This is because there is no mathematics coordinator and the acting headteacher has had to spend so much time establishing a more stable staffing situation. Nevertheless, he has succeeded in generating an air of optimism and an evident willingness amongst the staff to make the significant improvements that are required. A longstanding member of the teaching staff commented that she felt that the changes of the last few weeks placed the school, 'in a better position to improve,' than at any time since joined the school.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- Rigorously monitor the quality of provision, including the planned changes to the curriculum, and evaluate the effectiveness of actions by their impact on pupils' learning and progress – inadequate

## External support

The local authority officer and consultants continue to provide the school with a range of support although the impact of their efforts is weakened by the constant changes of staff. Nevertheless, consultants are now supporting the new literacy coordinator and the science coordinator has recently received support to carry out a work scrutiny.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Raise the boys' achievement in mathematics.