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24 September 2008

Mr Mickey Kelly
Acting Headteacher
Goose Green Primary School
Tintagel Crescent
East Dulwich
London
SE22 8HG

Dear Mr Kelly

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Goose Green Primary School

Following my visit with Stephen Parker, Additional Inspector and Ann Sydney, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16 and 17 September 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory; whilst there is much work still to do, the school is now in a position where improvement is possible and has begun.

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 Director of Children's Services for Southwark.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton
HM Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Goose Green Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 September 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met or spoke with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and staff, several groups of pupils, the chair and other governors, two senior representatives of the local authority (LA), the school improvement partner and the headteacher designate.

Context

After the March inspection, the headteacher left and has been temporarily replaced by the headteacher of another school within Southwark LA. A new permanent headteacher has been appointed and is expected to begin work later this term. Several new teachers began working at the school in September.

Achievement and standards

Standards remain below the national average overall. School data shows that too few pupils are on track to meet age expectations. Although the 2008 results have yet to be validated, indications are that they still show the same trend of decline seen since 2005. There have, however, been small improvements in writing and the percentage of Year 6 pupils reaching above average standards.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 – inadequate

Personal development and well-being

There has been a significant improvement in pupils' personal development and behaviour. The interim headteacher has changed the ethos of the school by introducing new systems and being an excellent role model for staff and pupils. There has brought a new pride in 'The Goose Green Way' of respect and care for others. An example of the change in attitude was seen when a Year 4 boy was accidentally bumped in a PE lesson and a child, on another team, went to comfort him and deflect any potential aggression. Most pupils take pride in their work. Straightforward but well-thought-out changes in systems, such as re-organising playgrounds and improving supervision, have led to improved behaviour at playtimes which has followed on into lessons. Pupils feel safer, the number of incidents involving poor behaviour has declined notably and there have been no recent exclusions. Attendance, however, is still below the national average. Pupils voice a new confidence in the staff. 'The head interacts with children in a way they understand', said a Year 6 pupil. They point to a greater sense of equality and

recognition of their cultures and voice. This improvement can be summed up by a Year 6 chant in an enjoyable and stimulating assembly: 'We're not perfect but we're getting better!'

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve pupils' personal development and behaviour in Years 1 to 6 – good

Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching overall remains inadequate, in spite of some limited improvements. Lessons are often interesting, thoughtfully resourced and classes are suitably managed by staff. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and there is a positive working atmosphere. However, it remains a key weakness that instruction and tasks set are not matched well enough to the wide range of pupils' abilities, particularly in mathematics. Expectations of all pupils, especially those who are higher attaining, are too low. Gaps in learning from the past are not tackled with enough determination. Pupils are often held for too long sitting listening on the carpet, leaving insufficient time to work on their own or in groups. Teaching assistants are underused. The learning environment, including display, is insufficiently stimulating. However, provision in Nursery and Reception continues to be good. Activities there are challenging and well-planned.

A phonics scheme has been adopted to strengthen progress in the early stages of reading and guided reading sessions are proving popular with older pupils. A new scheme of work has been adopted for mathematics, though too recently to have improved standards or teaching quality significantly. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties are now of better quality, though targets for improving behaviour are more sharply focused than those for other needs.

Pupils' behaviour is now managed much better. New equipment and games led by staff are making healthy exercise safe and fun in the playground. Assemblies in the hall are enjoyable and now make a stronger contribution to pupils' personal development. However, class assemblies are inconsistently organised without clear guidelines or planning over time. Systems for child protection and safeguarding are correctly established.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve the teaching and pupils' progress in English and mathematics and use assessment better to ensure that work in lessons is set at the right level for all pupils – inadequate
- Ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for through better supervision, consultation and communication with pupils and improved management of behaviour – good

Leadership and management

The school made a slow start after being made subject to special measures as the seriousness of the problems continued to be denied. However, since then, the clear and strong leadership of the current headteacher has brought about profound cultural change. Aptly, he describes the school as like a 'juggernaut which was hurtling in the wrong direction and is now beginning to turn itself around'. With both sensitivity and firmness when needed, he has enabled staff and governors to understand that:

- the school's significant weaknesses are real
- the needs of the pupils must always be paramount
- each member of staff is accountable for the impact of their work
- shared responsibility and teamwork are vital.

As a result, the school is now much better placed to improve. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy head. She is experiencing a time of significant professional development and has risen well to the challenge. She is well organised and works well with staff and parents. The recently appointed inclusion manager is clear about her role and what needs to be done. She is also learning fast and working hard, whilst being provided with suitable training and development opportunities.

The newly appointed headteacher is preparing well for starting in the school, has worked usefully with the current head and assessed accurately many of the school's needs.

The school's self-evaluation is now very accurate; the key weaknesses and strengths of the school are well identified. However, there is insufficient detail in many aspects. Similarly, the school's action plan, which has helped bring the changes so far, has shortcomings. It is not clear enough about how success is to be measured in terms of outcomes for pupils. It also lacks detail in some areas, particularly the improvement of teaching.

Middle leadership, particularly in subjects, remains weak, although there is some effective work beginning in English. Governors have become more challenging of the school, with the formation of the monitoring committee being especially valuable. New appointments have strengthened the governing body, though there remain some vacancies. Governors understand the potential of providing a broad curriculum, including learning outside the classroom, for raising standards.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Improve outcomes through better and more rigorous self-evaluation and monitoring of the school's work – satisfactory overall, but good in respect of pupils' personal development

External support

The LA helped the school significantly by brokering the services of the current headteacher. The lead officer it provides to the school supports the headteacher well and is a very effective 'sounding board' for senior leaders. However, the LA has not responded to the requirement of Ofsted, made in May, to adjust aspects of its statement of action. This has hindered some of its work with the school. It is important that this is rectified quickly and that the revised statement of action should link closely with the school's evolving plans. This will be evaluated by HMI at the next monitoring inspection. The work of the school improvement partner is diligent but it has not yet significantly helped the school to understand itself better or contributed appreciably to improvement. However, LA consultants and an advanced skills teacher work effectively, under the direction of the headteacher, to support staff in implementing new approaches to teaching and behaviour management, for example.

Priorities for further improvement

- Define more clearly, and implement, methods to improve the use of assessment information in lessons to ensure pupils are set tasks that match their needs.
- Provide further training opportunities for staff in these methods.
- Increase the level of detail in school improvement planning and self-evaluation, especially in relation to teaching and learning, and ensure there are clearer success criteria which are better related to outcomes for pupils.