

Prospects Learning Services Ltd
Prospects House
19 Elmfield Road
Bromley, Kent
BR1 1LT

T 08456 40 40 40
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
www.ofsted.gov.uk

Direct T 020 8315 1250
Direct F 020 8315 1279
Kekshan.Salaria@ofsted.gov.uk



10 October 2008

Ms Sian Davies
Executive Principal
Grazebrook Primary School
Lordship Road
Stoke Newington
London
N16 0QP

Dear Ms Davies

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Grazebrook Primary School

Following my visit with Anastasia Savva and David White, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 1 and 2 October 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

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to agreement from HMI.

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 the Interim Executive Board (IEB) and the Executive Director of Standards & School Effectiveness for Hackney.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Grazebrook Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 1 and 2 October 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work over two days, scrutinised documents and met the executive principal, acting headteacher, a range of middle and senior managers, pupils from the school council, the chair of the IEB and a representative from the local authority (LA). A range of school documents was scrutinised. Pupils were observed at break times and generally around the school.

Context

There have been substantial staff changes at the school since the last inspection. Since September 2008, the leadership team includes the executive principal, an acting headteacher, deputy head and two assistant heads. There have been changes in middle management. The governing body has been dissolved and an IEB has been established.

Achievement and standards

Inspection and school evidence points to attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) being at least in line with the age related expectations. In 2008, unvalidated Key Stage 1 results demonstrate that Year 2 pupils attained standards that are in line with national expectations in writing and mathematics but below in reading. At Key Stage 2, unvalidated test results show that Year 6 pupils in 2008 attained standards in mathematics and science that were, at best, below those expected. Standards in English were well below expectations. Overall, standards seen in lessons and in the pupils' books remain below average. Across the school, pupils' progress is variable and inconsistent, with specific concern for rates of progress in Years 2 and 4. Higher ability pupils are also insufficiently challenged. Consequently, their progress, too, is limited.

Although, the school has introduced appropriate systems to improve the use of assessment data to monitor progress, these are in the very early stages of development. There is, as yet, no central analysis in place to provide a strategic overview. Sufficient data and information are not yet in place to inform teachers planning to meet pupils' learning needs. Target groups for support to improve rates of progress have been identified and await the completion of training for the adults who will be involved in the delivery of interventions.

The school has rightly introduced a new policy to address the inconsistencies in marking. Its impact is, as yet, limited. In the best practice teachers are assessing pupil attainment and are providing advice to pupils on how to improve. In some cases, a meaningful dialogue between pupils and teachers is taking place. In writing,

there is some evidence of pupils assessing their own work and most classes have English and mathematics targets. However, teachers did not refer to these during lessons observed and as a result pupils were not sure what they were aiming for in order to improve their work.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise standards in mathematics and science by making better use of assessment data to monitor how well pupils are doing and by setting high expectations – inadequate

Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy coming to school and generally show an interest in the activities planned for them. Most behave well in lessons and around the school but some become restless and disengaged from learning when teaching is dull or lessons proceed at too slow a pace. They are friendly and polite and relationships are good.

Quality of provision

During the visit, good or better teaching was observed in five lessons and inadequate teaching in three. The remainder of the teaching observed was satisfactory. The weaknesses in teaching and learning highlighted during the previous inspection are still very evident. Systems to improve teaching, such as the focus on assessment for learning and better use of data are underpinning some improvements. Nevertheless, these systems are relatively new and their impact is not yet consistent across the school. Thus not enough teaching has improved from satisfactory to good.

In the most successful lessons, planning is carefully matched to pupils' levels and needs. Interesting activities provide opportunities for them to extend their skills and knowledge. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour skilfully and relationships between pupils and staff are good. In the less effective lessons, pupils do not always make the progress of which they are capable because teachers' expectations are not high enough and learning is not managed effectively. Teachers do not readily adapt tasks if pupils do not respond as expected. In particular, teachers spend too much time talking, allowing insufficient time for pupils to explore issues for themselves, consolidate their understanding and reflect on what they have learned. As a result, plenary sessions are not effectively used to assess how well learning objectives have been achieved. The needs of the more able pupils are not met in these lessons and their progress slows.

Teaching assistants are now taking a more active role across the school but the quality of their interventions remains variable. This, in the main, is due to missed opportunities for training and a lack of guidance as to the purpose behind each learning activity.

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) leader is working closely with a consultant to build on the quality of provision across early years. She has a clear vision and is aware of the strengths and areas for development. Inconsistencies in the quality of learning remain, despite a high level of support. Reception provision is inadequate and this is evident in the quality of planning and assessment. Work is not challenging children, consequently, they are not achieving as well as they can. The EYFS leader is aware of the need to continue to develop provision to build on children's independent skills. The recent introduction of the 'key worker' system is working successfully in the Nursery and is impacting well on children's engagement. Relationships between children and staff are warm and caring and the school places a high priority on strengthening relationships with parents. This is evident in the recent improvements to the procedures for home visits and initial baseline assessments.

The school has made satisfactory progress in ensuring that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out and action has been taken to make the areas of the school safe. Training on risk assessment has been carried out for key members of staff and controls are in place. The assessments now include new playground equipment such as the 'stage play area' and outdoor equipment in the early years.

Relevant policies for health and safety are in the process of being shared and updated with staff and the IEB. Hazards pointed out during this inspection were immediately addressed. Notable improvements have been made to areas such as the reception playground and to the toilets. Pupils report that they are delighted with these changes. Appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure appropriate risk assessments are carried out and action taken to make all areas of the school safe – satisfactory

Leadership and management

The executive principal is highly experienced and has been involved with school on a part time basis since the summer term 2008. She and the acting headteacher have swiftly identified the strengths of the school and those aspects that require improvement. They have recognised that there are ongoing weaknesses in teaching and learning and have taken decisive action to address these. For example, appropriate systems are being introduced to improve weaker teaching and address shortcomings in assessment. These are beginning to have an impact although senior leaders recognise much remains to be done. They are fully aware of the need to change the culture of the school to focus firmly on learning.

The capacity of middle managers to move their teams forward is variable. This is a significant barrier to improvement in the quality of provision and standards as seen in the slow progress made by pupils. The leadership team are now beginning to hold middle managers to account through a system of regular meetings. Recruitment has

been difficult but the school is now gathering and deploying a suitably qualified team. In particular, the appointment of two assistant heads means the school has a greater capacity to improve at middle management level.

Appropriate programmes of continuing professional development supported and delivered by external consultants have been established. Staff are encouraged and expected to share good practice but it is too early to see the impact of all these developments.

The Interim Executive Board is newly formed but shares the school leaders' vision for the school and their commitment to improving standards. They are beginning to hold the school to account for its work. The chair of the IEB is attending the parents' forum to ensure parents views are taken into account as the school moves forward. Additionally, parents have been given the opportunity to comment and feedback on the school development plan.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels take decisive action to secure improvements in standards – satisfactory

External support

The quality of the support provided for the school by the LA is satisfactory. However, the initial target date of March 2009 for the removal of special measures was too ambitious and this has now been replaced by a target of June 2009. The LA has provided extensive support to this school. The challenge is now to check systematically the impact of its work in the school, and to hold the school rigorously to account for the implementation of its own improvement plan. The impact of the implementation of the LA statement of action is currently satisfactory in all key areas.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve the quality of teaching, so more of it is good, and eradicate inadequate teaching.