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11 December 2008

Ms Miranda Flack  
Headteacher  
Eastcote Primary School  
Eastcote Road  
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Dear Ms Flack

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Eastcote Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 3 and 4 December 2008, 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 September 2007. 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

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 Education for Bexley.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Krafft  
H M Inspector

## Special measures: monitoring of Eastcote Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 3 and 4 December 2008

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, groups of pupils, the School Improvement Partner and the Deputy Director of the local authority.

### Context

There have been a number of staff changes, including at leadership level, since the previous monitoring visit in June and there are no longer links with the previously federated school. The headteacher has been without a substantive deputy headteacher this term. The local authority arranged for associate headteacher support from another local school but the time available has been limited. More substantial time has been secured from January 2009. Two vacancies in Key Stage 2 have been covered by supply teachers since September. A leading mathematics teacher has been appointed to fill one of the vacancies from January, with recruitment under way to fill the other vacancy. The governing body has been joined by two new governors. The school continues to have a deficit budget and major building work has now started.

### Achievement and standards

Modifications to the tracking system have now been completed and are being used to inform meetings about pupils' progress. These are used to set targets in reading, writing, mathematics and science for pupils in Years 1 to 6. Pupils who are not achieving as well as they should, based on their prior attainment, are also identified so that additional support can be provided to accelerate their progress. However, it has taken too long to establish these systems because teacher assessments have been inaccurate and unreliable. For example, results at the end of Year 6 in 2008 fell in English, mathematics and science. This was unexpected in the light of the school's own data, based on teacher assessments, which indicated an improvement. The headteacher has rightly focused training and support on improving teacher assessment and moderating judgements. However, the school's own tracking information, work seen in pupils' books and the progress made in lessons observed show that pupils' progress remains inconsistent and is not being accelerated quickly enough to address the legacy of underachievement.

The assessment of pupils' scientific skills of enquiry has been introduced recently but is not yet embedded or having an impact on raising achievement in science.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise achievement in science and mathematics in Years 3–6 and writing in Years 1 and 2, particularly for girls – inadequate

## Personal development and well-being

Pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. They are polite, considerate and courteous. Pupils work effectively in groups and independently because they are confident and sociable. They say that they particularly enjoy work that involves them in practical activities and some say that there has been an increase in the opportunities to conduct science experiments. They also note that classroom displays are now more interesting and interactive. Although groups of pupils are given different work in lessons according to their ability, they continue to report that work is still sometimes too easy or too hard. Some feel that they are not given the help that they need in lessons to complete tasks successfully.

## Quality of provision

Improvement in the quality of teaching has not been fast enough since the previous monitoring visit. Although teaching overall is satisfactory, there has been no increase in the proportion of good or better lessons, and some inadequate teaching remains. Consequently, too many pupils are not making the progress they are capable of. This is because expectations of the pace of learning are not high enough and the different activities that pupils are given are not consistently challenging to ensure that targets are met. The guidance that pupils are given to help them complete tasks successfully, or to assess their own learning, sometimes lacks clarity or is not timely. As a result, the pace of learning slows. Lesson planning is now more consistent. Common features evident are the inclusion of National Curriculum levels that different groups of pupils are working at, more specific links between the learning objective and success criteria, and the identification of groups to be provided with targeted teacher support. The deployment of teaching assistants has been refocused to facilitate this. They are also more explicitly involved in assessing the progress that identified pupils are making in lessons. This change to their role is very recent and its impact on improving teaching and raising achievement is not yet evident. In lessons, pupils continue to be given good opportunities to share their ideas with a partner, which contributes to their enjoyment and motivation.

Marking continues to include comments for improvement. Clear assessment criteria to show the levels the pupils are working at and what is needed to attain the next level are now located at the front of pupils' books but these, and pupils' targets, are not linked effectively to the comments for improvement. There is an over-reliance on worksheets in mathematics, particularly for the younger pupils.

The previous monitoring visit identified that an evaluation of the effectiveness of additional support and specific programmes to help pupils attain the levels expected had not been undertaken. This remains the case.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching in Years 1–6, including by sharing good practice – inadequate

- improve the use of assessment information to plan work that challenges all pupils – inadequate

### Leadership and management

Staffing issues and weaknesses in assessment have hindered progress since the previous monitoring visit, and the leadership of literacy and assessment has been redistributed among senior leaders. Much time has been spent in developing plans, reorganising systems and ensuring that assessment information is more secure. However, there has been insufficient focus on evaluating the impact of actions on improving teaching and raising achievement. Since the previous visit, the plans for improvement have been rewritten as a single annual plan. However, this single plan is now cumbersome and not sufficiently narrow in its focus to ensure that actions are manageable and of good quality. Areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2007 are not prominent and some targets and milestones against which progress is measured are not sufficiently challenging to secure the rapid improvement that is now needed. Governors are providing increasing levels of challenge. They have rightly identified the need for changes that have been made to become embedded, so that they can have an impact on improving outcomes for pupils.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- involve managers at all levels in improving teaching and learning and raising achievement – inadequate

### External support

External support has been focused on securing more accurate teacher assessment and joint moderation activities are increasing teachers' confidence in levelling pupils' work. The support from consultants has raised awareness of more interesting use of resources when designing mathematics activities and the science leader has received appropriate support from the advanced skills teacher on planning and moderation. A local school has also shared good practice in assessment. However, the impact of support on improving teaching and achievement has been limited, and the local authority recognises that progress in addressing the issues identified at the previous inspection has been inadequate. The school is now part of the local authority intensive support programme. The School Improvement Partner and headteacher are aware that any additional support needs to be carefully managed so that it does not prove over-burdensome and detract from the school's main focus of improving achievement.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the rate of progress by embedding systems and evaluating the impact of actions on improvement more sharply.