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9 March 2009

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 Anthony Green, Additional Inspector, to your school on 25 and 26 February 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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 – inadequate

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of the Interim Executive Board and the Executive Director of Standards and School Effectiveness for Hackney.

Yours sincerely

Kekshan Salaria
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Grazebrook Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 25 and 26 February 2009

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, two groups of parents, the chair and a member of the Interim Executive Board (IEB); and a representative from the local authority (LA). A range of school documents were scrutinised. Pupils were observed at break times and generally around the school.

Context

Two members of staff have left the school since the last monitoring inspection. At the time of this visit, one teaching post was being covered by a long-term supply teacher. The IEB has started the process to recruit a substantive headteacher for September 2009.

Achievement and standards

Although pupils' progress across the school is still inadequate, it is slowly starting to improve. In half of the lessons observed, teachers are now displaying a clear focus on the need to accelerate pupils' progress. However, inconsistencies in teaching in several year groups mean that, overall, pupils are not making the progress of which they are capable. This is particularly the case in English and science where a thorough analysis of the gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding has not been carried out, with the result that teachers are unable to plan accurately to fill the gaps in pupils' learning.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2, pupils are beginning to make satisfactory progress, especially in mathematics, because of the improving quality of teaching and a large amount of additional support. In Years 3 to 6, while pupils' progress is improving slowly, it remains unsatisfactory over time, given pupils' capabilities. Some teachers are beginning to match work more accurately to the ability of their pupils, although expectations of pupils in some classes remain too low.

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

The behaviour of pupils around the school is good. In lessons, the majority are eager to learn and are attentive, especially when the work provides sufficient challenge. However, some become restless and disengaged from learning when lessons proceed at too slow a pace. Pupils recognise the school's increased focus on learning and talk readily about improvements in the school, for example the introduction of a school uniform and improvements to school lunches. Staff provide a warm and caring atmosphere in which all pupils, especially the most vulnerable, feel safe and secure.

Quality of provision

During this monitoring visit, inspectors observed the vast majority of classroom-based staff teaching. Teaching remains satisfactory overall. The proportion of good teaching has increased but some inadequate teaching remains. Stronger lessons are characterised by positive working relationships between pupils and teachers, strong subject knowledge and a continuous focus on the learning intentions for the lesson and how pupils can judge whether they have been successful. This was evident in an outstanding mathematics lesson where inspectors observed the use of highly effective strategies to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. This resulted in pupils' increased confidence in their ability to express their opinions articulately. The teacher encouraged pupils to evaluate their work and indicate their level of understanding.

In the less effective lessons planning does not take into account pupils' starting points. Although, in these lessons teachers' plans are detailed tasks are not always appropriately matched to the needs of individual pupils. Additionally, there is insufficient focus on key vocabulary, on explaining terminology, or on providing visual props and prompts to aid understanding. Helpful displays and aids for learning, such as 'word walls', are not referred to consistently during lessons. Teaching assistants are now taking a more active role across the school but the quality of their intervention remains variable. In the main, this is due to lack of guidance from teachers as to the purpose behind each learning activity.

The quality of marking remains variable; some marking is regular and encouraging, but generally it does not provide pupils with sufficient guidance on how to improve. Additionally, where marking has identified areas for improvement, these are not followed up with pupils to ensure they have been acted upon.

The quality of teaching and learning has improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Members of staff work together closely and are sharing their expertise. There is a good balance between teacher-directed and child-initiated activities, and both are used well to extend the children's thinking.

The school has made good progress in ensuring that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out and action has been taken to make the areas of the school safe. For example, appropriate safeguarding arrangements are in place, the health



and safety policy and risk assessment procedures have been updated, and regular health and safety checks are now carried out involving the IEB. Improvements to the school continue to take place, such as the refurbishment of the Nursery area and the resurfacing and improved drainage of the Reception class playground. This area for improvement has now been addressed.

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 – good

Leadership and management

The executive principal has effectively ensured that pupils work in a calm, safe and inviting learning environment. She is challenging inadequate practice and providing support to remedy the weaknesses. Senior leaders have worked hard to ensure that the cultural change needed in the school is firmly rooted in accelerating pupils' learning. Most staff demonstrate a readiness to embrace these changes. However, not all staff subscribe to it fully; this is slowing down the pace of change and progress on the developments required. The good leadership of mathematics has had a significant impact on improving pupils' progress across the school. However, the capacity of middle managers remains too variable. The English and science leadership do not provide a clear view of how well pupils are doing or how to analyse and interpret data in order to accelerate pupils' progress. This is a significant barrier to urgently needed improvement in the quality of provision and standards and is impeding the school's capacity to address the key areas identified for improvement at the last inspection.

The school has improved its communication with parents. Some parents commented on how useful they found newsletters and events such as the mathematics curriculum evening. However, the IEB and the senior leadership team need to ensure that parents are updated regularly on the progress the school is making particularly while it is in special measures.

Leadership and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved significantly. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has ensured that staff have detailed knowledge of what the children know and can do through careful observation and assessment. She has a good understanding of the strengths and priorities for development.

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 LA is providing extensive support to enable the school to make the expected progress against the issues identified in the report. However, the support is not

being sufficiently evaluated against the pace of development that is urgently required to raise the quality of the education provided.