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Mrs Sharron Marland
Headteacher
Goose Green Primary School
Tintagel Crescent
East Dulwich
London
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Dear Mrs Marland

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Goose Green Primary School

Following my visit with David White and Jo Curd, additional inspectors, to your school on 23 and 24 June 2009, 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 March 2008. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate, because standards and the quality of teaching are not showing satisfactory improvement; however, a number of systems within the school have improved helpfully

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.

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
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Goose Green Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 23 and 24 June 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, including several lessons, and scrutinised pupils' work and school documents. They carried out two lesson observations jointly with senior staff. They met with the headteacher and members of staff, groups of pupils, the chair and vice-chair of governors and a senior representative from the local authority.

Context

Some teaching staff have left since the last monitoring visit and others have joined the school. A new leader for the Early Years Foundation Stage joined the staff in April.

Achievement and standards

The school's more accurate and rigorous assessment and tracking systems indicate that some more pupils are reaching, or coming closer to, their age-related expectations. However, standards in all year groups remain well below those expected. Pupils have continued to make unsatisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6 throughout the year. The standards being achieved in writing and mathematics are lower than those for reading, where there has been improvement. Potentially higher-attaining pupils underachieve. Within these inadequate levels of achievement, better progress by pupils has been observed in classes and year groups where teaching is of a higher quality, or where the pupils have begun the year from particularly low levels of prior attainment.

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 overall, though improvement in reading is satisfactory

Personal development and well-being

Most pupils are confident, friendly and polite. They are eager and motivated to learn. In some of the more successful lessons, they enjoy stimulating discussion in twos and threes, which really helps their learning and development. However, they struggle or become bored or too noisy when work is not suitable, restless when they are not actively involved and sometimes behave badly when teaching is inadequate.

They generally play happily and safely together in the playground. They particularly enjoy using some new equipment, for which they collected supermarket tokens, and a large new 'train' which provides shade and carriages for them to sit in and chat. As

one said, 'I love the playground; there's lots to do.' The playground feels particularly crowded at morning play, however, when pupils from Year 1 to Year 6 are out together and there are occasional accidents as a result of vigorous play in a crowded environment. Pupils' movement around the school is generally calm, largely because staff provide frequent reminders as they guide and manoeuvre classes.

Attendance shows improvement this term but is still below national and local levels. Some pupils do not arrive at school punctually, which detracts from individual and class learning.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage sometimes find it difficult to settle because activities are not always sufficiently engaging or well matched to their interests or development levels.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve pupils' personal development and behaviour in Years 1 to 6 – satisfactory

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning in over half the lessons seen during the monitoring visit was inadequate. This was largely because work did not match pupils' learning needs or styles, pupils were not sufficiently actively engaged and many lessons proceeded too slowly, often with too much time spent on the carpet or carrying out routine or unfocused tasks. The school's better assessments of pupils' progress are not yet being used sufficiently well to plan work that is suitable and challenging for all pupils. Too often, all pupils do much the same work as each other and, although planning indicates some variation in the tasks for different groups, this is often superficial and does not closely meet pupils' needs. Although some developments, notably in provision for reading, have brought improvements across the school, overall this impact is small.

Assessments in the Early Years Foundation Stage are frequent and thorough, recording what children can do, know and understand, and identifying what they need to do or learn next. These are not used well enough, however, to plan activities which meet individual children's learning and developmental needs. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum and teaching and learning are not currently sufficiently effective. They have declined in quality since the inspection in March 2008.

Systems to ensure pupils' safety and well-being have improved well. Staff have received appropriate training; times, such as the lunch period, have been prudently reorganised; communication with pupils is better; and systems for managing behaviour have been developed. Pupils report that they feel safe and are now confident that staff will listen to and act to resolve any significant issues or concerns they may have. A post-box in the school hall for pupils' suggestions or concerns acts as an additional and potentially anonymous way for pupils to communicate with



staff. A high level of supervision at playtimes, lessons and as pupils move around the school contributes well to pupils' safety and the generally calm and settled atmosphere of the school. The sports coach continues to do much good work in promoting pupils' active lifestyles safely and is a very positive role model of healthy living.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve 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; this issue has now been suitably dealt with, so will not be specifically graded in future monitoring inspections

Leadership and management

The experienced headteacher, with the active support of senior staff and governors, has led positive and needed changes in several areas. Some necessary difficult decisions, about staffing in particular, have been taken firmly. As a result, there is now a clearer sense of vision for the future of the school, shown in the strategic transformation plan. Proposed improvements to the curriculum, to make it more enjoyable and inventive, remain in train. Useful work has been done to ensure greater consistency across the school. For example, teachers all share learning objectives and success criteria with their classes; so that pupils understand better what they are learning and how they can be most successful. All classes now have attractive reading areas as part of a whole-school focus on reading; this has supported the improvements in this area. These positive developments all show the headteacher's leadership.

However, it is also true that in the five months since the last monitoring inspection, the school has not built fully enough on the staff's general willingness to embrace change. Although some worthwhile work has been done with teachers to help them improve their practice, including attendance at appropriate courses and modelling of better practice, this has been too little and has had insufficient impact in this most vital area. The actions are clearly and specifically directed at the right areas, which are shown in the raising attainment plan, but are not meticulous and far reaching enough to bring about all the needed improvements. The quality of teaching and learning has not notably improved. In its self-evaluation, which is, for the most part, accurate and much better presented, the school has tended to over-rate the quality of teaching and learning, which makes further improvements more difficult.

There continues to be development in the contribution made by, and in the roles of, senior and middle leaders. These staff can all show some positive impact in their areas of responsibility. However, there are not appropriate leadership arrangements for curriculum subjects. The new leader in the Early Years Foundation Stage has

accurately identified improvement needs but there is not yet a targeted plan to bring about the necessary changes.

The governing body continues to be active and committed. Members are continuing to learn about and to develop their understanding of the issues faced by the school. The governors' monitoring group considers and debates the right issues. Understandably, it accepted the school's over-optimistic view of recent improvements in teaching, supported by the local authority; but, in discussion with HMI, members clearly showed their concern about this and their willingness to challenge and support further in this area.

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 – inadequate, due to the lack of positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning and, consequently, on pupils' achievement

External support

The School Improvement Partner, a senior local authority officer, continues to be a useful sounding board for the headteacher, providing reassurance and continuity. However, her recent formal reports lack rigour in their analysis of the school's position and have not helped guide the key further improvements needed. The project board, convened by the local authority, continues to meet termly, though its most recent minutes were not available to inspectors. The local authority provides strong support in key personnel matters. Support from London Challenge has enabled staff participation in courses, support and challenge for school leaders, a useful link with another school and some helpful practical support in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, its impact on the provision and outcomes for pupils is not marked.

Priorities for further improvement

- Improve teaching and learning across the school by matching work much more closely to pupils' assessed needs and by increasing the pace of learning, with less of pupils' time spent listening on the carpet and more engaged in active and challenging activities.
- Assure this improvement in the quality of lessons by directing more resources, especially the time of senior staff and consultants, to supporting, coaching and monitoring the day-to-day quality of teaching.
- Establish and implement a clear and carefully targeted, costed and timed plan which improves provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage (this will become a new key recommendation and will be specifically monitored and graded in the provision section from the next monitoring inspection).