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Mrs S Marland
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Marland

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Goose Green Primary School

Following my visit with Sally Hall, additional inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 November 2009, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the fourth 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; the school has turned a corner at this visit but there is much still to do, and continuing low standards, after 20 months in special measures.

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 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 fourth monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 November 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, pupils, governors, several staff, and a representative from the local authority.

Context

During the autumn term, the substantive deputy headteacher began a secondment to another school. Many new staff have been appointed, including two assistant headteachers, one of whom is acting as deputy headteacher, and an advanced skills teacher. The school also currently employs full time an experienced headteacher as an executive leader.

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning

Pupils' attainment in standard assessments in 2009 improved a little on 2008, and, in some areas, represented the school's best ever set of results. Nevertheless, attainment at all levels of the school remains low when compared to national and local averages, as the school's self-evaluation rightly identifies. In 2009 girls fared significantly better than boys.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, for children moving into Year 1, were considerably below local averages in all respects and have declined from a good position at the March 2008 inspection. The school's early years provision was specifically monitored in this visit for the first time.

At Key Stage 2, in 2009, the strongest overall improvement was in mathematics, where the proportion of pupils achieving the national expectation was close to average. However, in mathematics, as in English and science, too few pupils achieved the higher level. Standards in reading were notably higher than in writing, where pupils' attainment was particularly low, as previous reports have shown. Current standards in writing, seen by inspectors in a scrutiny of pupils' work, are well below national expectations across the school. Whereas, for example, in a Year 5 class observed, pupils read out loud from a straightforward text with confidence and reasonable accuracy. Pupils say they enjoy practical work, such as science experiments and visits from authors.

In several year groups, pupils have made low levels of progress in recent years and have much to catch up. The school's bank of assessment data is being improved. At

this stage, however, the school is unable to say how much progress pupils have made so far this year.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

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

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Behaviour at play and lunchtimes has improved further from that seen at the last visit, partly because each phase now has exclusive use of the playground at set times. Pupils appreciate these changes, saying that the playground is less crowded and there are fewer accidents. Behaviour is generally managed appropriately by staff, with many pupils still needing guidance and active supervision. Pupils say that they feel safe and that they can turn to adults if they are troubled. Anti-bullying campaigns help them to understand the consequences of their actions.

In lessons, pupils respond well to opportunities to discuss their ideas, with their talking partners, for example. However when they are asked to start working on their own, pupils are sometimes reluctant to get started and can be restless. In some classes, expectations for this are set more clearly than in others.

Pupils are keen to improve school life and the school council is an effective conduit for their voice in making some improvements, for example to playground equipment. However, the school council does not yet become much involved in discussions about learning.

Attendance has improved recently, with parents and pupils responding to the school's drive to reduce absence and lateness. However, attendance rates are still below the national average.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

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

The effectiveness of provision

Teaching has improved since the last visit. More good lessons were seen and there is far less inadequate teaching; nevertheless, this still exists in small pockets. New and existing staff are working together with great commitment. They really care for the children and clearly want to see outcomes improve. Teachers share planning more effectively in their year groups and pupils know better what they are expected to achieve through explicit learning objectives and success criteria. Following staff training, marking of pupils' work is now thorough and encouraging. Pupils like it but

they are not given enough opportunities to follow up the comments quickly and improve their work as a result.

The strengths of good lessons include:

- interesting, exciting activities which engage the pupils
- good pace with sharp introductions and learning built on in clear steps
- good opportunities for pupils to present their work to inspire their peers
- using inspiring resources such as key words, films and music to help pupils focus
- clear feedback to pupils as the lesson progresses about how they are getting on and how they can improve their learning
- teachers' strong subject knowledge, such as when they model writing for pupils.

Weaker teaching and learning occurs when:

- work set in lessons is not related, or matched closely, to the assessments made of pupils' attainment and needs (this is a very common weakness throughout the school and results, for example, in higher attaining pupils being insufficiently challenged)
- there are too few opportunities for pupils to work independently and make choices
- pupils' behaviour is unsettled or unduly noisy, because the work is not interesting or demanding or expectations of them are not applied clearly
- teachers dominate whole-class discussions which reduces pupils' opportunities to contribute their ideas and think for themselves.

A suitable range of work is covered over time in English and mathematics. The school is committed to providing a broad, interesting curriculum and correctly recognises the importance of this in raising standards. It recognises too, that the contribution of middle leaders needs to develop for this to come to full fruition. However, specialist teaching and provision, for example in French and music and, for older pupils, in numeracy and literacy, help. The school's own sports coach and one from Millwall Football Club do much to encourage pupils to be active. The process for arranging educationally valuable school visits, and associated risk assessments, is good.

The new leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has made a proficient start in revitalising provision. Her team, many of whom are recently appointed, are working well together to develop and implement a new, clear and well-constructed action plan. However, not all actions in the plan are fully costed. Relationships between staff and the young children are very positive. Staff question them well, drawing out their thinking and language. Children sustain their concentration and are confident to discuss their activities. In lessons, adults make careful observations, recording children's progress and using this information to plan the next steps in learning. It is

too early yet to measure with certainty, the effectiveness of these actions in terms of improving outcomes. The school is addressing the need to improve the outdoor provision to ensure that children have constant access to all areas of learning.

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 – satisfactory overall because teaching is notably better but inadequate in respect of using assessment data
- establish and implement a clear and carefully targeted, costed and timed plan which improves provision and outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The recent changes in senior leadership have been well managed and promising staff appointments have been made throughout the school. Job descriptions of all senior staff are thoughtfully defined and complement each other. Senior staff are working hard, building their partnership, and are starting to deliver some improvement, though much is at an early stage. They are all good role models. The acting deputy headteacher has, partly through her personal example, led the development of practice in marking. She is also developing the school's system for tracking assessments of pupils and is clear in her thinking about how this relates to other developments. The executive leader provides much needed additional management capacity at this time by, for example, supporting the new special educational needs coordinator. The assistant headteacher has audited in a detailed way, the training needs of middle leaders, which are significant. This gives a platform for the future improvement of their work.

With her senior team, the headteacher has made several thoughtful changes; one example is in class organisation and staff deployment, particularly important with so many new teachers. School leaders have made some necessary hard choices and all key decisions are now based on robust and generally accurate self-evaluation information, carefully applied. The school's ability to judge itself correctly has improved considerably this term. Its judgements are well recorded and collated; and correctly based on impact and outcomes rather than just actions taken. Consequently, senior staff show they know that, in spite of a great deal of hard work, there is much more still to do, and that recent improvements must be built on quickly to improve standards significantly. To this end, school improvement planning shows a clear vision for the future.

Staff are taking more responsibility for their own and the school's development, helping build the school's internal capacity to improve. They also are clearly focused on making outcomes for pupils better. For example, the new mathematics subject leader organised a good training session for all teachers about how to start lessons

smartly, to which staff contributed well, supporting each other. He also organised an evening workshop for parents.

The governing body's work continues to improve, with a positive impact made by new members. Governors provide practical help in their individual areas of expertise and interest. They ask some increasingly telling and robust questions. They are becoming more discerning in their approach and less understanding of weaker practice where it exists. Rightly, they increasingly demand and expect improvement on behalf of the community, in a supportive style.

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 – good

External support

The local authority's working with the school has improved a great deal in key areas. Prudently, the lead officer is now also the school improvement partner, avoiding some duplication of effort. She continues to provide helpful advice and has led local authority teams, working closely with school staff, in making sure school self-evaluation is much more accurate. The local authority has continued to provide some helpful funding and good support with personnel matters. Local consultants have supported the school effectively in making the improvements in teaching. London Challenge has improved the impact of its work by helping the school develop provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The lead officer and headteacher are aware that, over time, the amount of external support should be carefully reduced to allow the school more time and scope to develop its internal capacity to improve.

Priorities for further improvement

- ensure that the school has good, robust data showing pupil progress, which is collected and updated systematically throughout the school year
- improve the use of such assessment data in lessons to make work more challenging and better matched to individual and group needs
- ensure pupils can respond directly and more immediately to the much better marking now being carried out by staff
- take action to enhance the skills and contribution of middle leaders, thus further building the school's internal capacity to improve.

At the next monitoring visit, the area for improvement about improving pupils' progress and standards will be re-worded to include specifically the Early Years Foundation Stage.