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Miss Anne-Marie Strachan
Acting Headteacher
Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School
Dunley Drive
New Addington
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Dear Miss Strachan

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

Following my visit with Stephanie Matthews, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16 and 17 September 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in March 2009. 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 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 the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Croydon and the Archdiocese of Southwark.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "John Kennedy".

John Kennedy
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 16 and 17 September 2009

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, the executive headteacher, other school leaders, the chair and vice chair of governors, groups of pupils, representatives from the local authority and the archdiocese, and a mentor from a local primary school for the newly qualified teacher. Inspectors also interviewed a representative from London Challenge and spoke informally with staff and pupils during the inspection.

Context

There have been significant changes to the teaching staff and governing body since the last inspection. Six teachers have left, but the school has been very successful in recruiting experienced teachers. The majority of the teachers, including a newly qualified teacher, are new to the school and took up post in September. The deputy headteacher left the school last term and two acting assistant headteachers have been appointed. With one exception, there is a completely new governing body and a new chair and vice-chair have been appointed. Throughout this period of change the headteacher, teaching assistants and other staff have provided continuity. The school has entered a soft federation with Coloma Convent Girls' School, a local Catholic secondary school, whose headteacher is now the executive headteacher of Good Shepherd.

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

The emphasis that the school is now placing on improving the quality of teaching and learning and raising standards is bearing fruit. This is most evident in Year 6 where 2009 test results in mathematics and English were the highest ever at the school and show a marked improvement on 2008. Almost four fifths of the pupils reached age-related expectations in English, and three quarters in mathematics. The proportions of pupils achieving at the higher levels also rose impressively in English, mathematics and science. This step change in the progress that pupils are making is directly linked to the focus on improving the quality of teaching, better tracking and use of data about pupils and the targeted one-to-one intervention that was put into place during the summer term, with additional support from London Challenge. The school recognises that these early positive trends need to be sustained and that further work is required to ensure that pupils reach their challenging targets and make the expected levels of progress of which they are capable. Pupil numbers are small and considerable variations in overall performance can be caused by individual circumstances. Nonetheless, there remain inconsistencies in the progress that different classes make in different subject areas. In some, there was a dip in the

progress that pupils were making in reading and writing. Despite the improvement, pupils still have much to do to catch up because of the poor progress they made previously. The priority which the school has rightly given to Key Stage 2 has not resulted in a drop in standards for younger children in the Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1. Key Stage 1 assessments during the summer, for example, also show an improvement in the proportion of pupils achieving age-expected levels, particularly in reading and writing. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, for instance, children who started with limited social skills make good progress in this area of development.

Pupils spoke with inspectors about the changes they have noticed in lessons. They spoke of a 'big focus' on handwriting and getting much more homework. Homework is now being set more regularly and consistently. Pupils said that they thought that teachers were stricter and they liked this because their lessons are calmer. Pupils told inspectors that they enjoy coming to school and this was reflected in the high levels of attendance that inspectors witnessed in lessons. They enjoy their lessons with their new teachers. One pupil, capturing the views of all those who met with inspectors, said that 'learning is much better now'. They look forward to activities such as the 'brain gym' and more practical activities and they participate well in these.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Raise standards and achievement in mathematics, science and in English, particularly writing, in Key Stage 2, by ensuring that work is more carefully matched to the needs of all pupils – satisfactory

Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils are polite and mostly well behaved. Inspectors saw some impeccable behaviour in lessons. However, this was not always the case and in a number of lessons it was evident that there were some pupils who have not yet developed good listening skills. As a result they became restless easily, lost concentration and were not always clear what they were being asked to do. Pupils' participation and behaviour during assembly was exemplary. This could be seen in their singing and the pride and confidence with which they made their individual contributions. These experiences contribute very effectively to their spiritual and social development.

The effectiveness of provision

Improvements in the quality of pupils' learning are directly related to the quality of teaching observed by inspectors, some of which was of a very high quality. The impact on pupils can possibly best be summed up by one pupil who commented, 'We are learning more.' Although most teachers are new to the school, they have quickly developed positive relationships with the pupils. Teachers are confident in their knowledge and they manage the learning environment well. They set high

expectations for learning, as one teacher made clear to her pupils, 'We cannot waste learning time.' The school is fortunate in having some experienced teachers who are able to provide excellent role models in both planning and conducting lessons.

Improvement in the quality of teaching is reflected in greater consistency in lesson planning. It is more thorough and in some instances exemplary. Teachers have a clear focus on learning objectives and on sharing these with pupils. Planning includes differentiation to support individuals and groups of pupils. This is particularly clear when pupils are involved in group work. At times, it is less apparent in other lesson activities and there remain instances when planning and related activities do not make clear how the most-able pupils will be challenged. Some planning is not yet precise enough to show how the differing needs of pupils will be met, particularly those with a learning difficulty and/or disability as distinct from those who speak English as an additional language. Teaching assistants are a valuable asset and are available in almost all lessons. The majority are experienced and know the pupils well. While providing beneficial support, their deployment is not always sufficiently explicit in terms of the delivery of the lesson plan. School leaders have recognised the need to have better information about the nature and level of pupils with additional needs so that resources and interventions can be targeted to best effect.

Learning is at times adversely affected by low-level chatter and restlessness. Some pupils fail to listen properly to instructions and guidance. To some degree this is because they have not yet developed good listening habits, but it is also related to the quality of the teaching. Listening skills were very good in some lessons and in assembly. On these occasions learning was outstanding. Information and communication technology (ICT), such as the use of electronic whiteboards, are enhancing the learning environment. Some teachers are using these interactively but this is not yet consistent practice in every class.

The use of assessment to support learning is showing improvement. Questioning is often good and pupils are gaining experience in assessing their own work and that of others. Information about pupils' progress is now more readily available for teachers. Some inconsistencies remain. Scrutiny of work for last year indicates that there was considerable variability in marking. The school is aware of the need to monitor this carefully as part of a continuous process of raising expectations about the quality and presentation of written work. Assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage is not sufficiently secure at present because teachers are not given enough information about levels reached at the end of each stage and there is insufficient information about individual children at transition into Reception and Year 1.

Curriculum development is improving and is given high priority by the leadership team. The school has received good external support in this regard and also benefits from increased opportunities for sharing ideas with other schools. A whole school curriculum map is now in place and this includes a clear focus on literacy across the

curriculum. At present the school is not auditing or planning for the delivery of numeracy through other subjects. Strengths are evident in music. Statutory requirements are being met and there has been a clear improvement in the development of ICT. The school is not yet maximising the opportunities for personalising the curriculum so that the needs of all pupils are met fully. Pupils do not formally learn a modern foreign language, although some teachers are making good use of the language skills of individuals to celebrate the school's ethnic diversity. Pupils are enthusiastic about the range of after-school clubs and visits that are on offer. The curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage meets requirements. All learning areas are covered and good resources are available. However, the reception classroom is large and the outdoor area is offset from it and is shared with the Nursery. Reception children have limited opportunity for free flow play using the outdoor area because the two members of staff are not able to supervise the whole area.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement.

- Ensure that teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve and challenge them fully in lessons, especially the more able – satisfactory
- Improve curriculum planning in Key Stage 2 to ensure continuity in pupils' learning in literacy, numeracy and ICT – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The acting headteacher, appointed a short time before the last inspection, provides strong leadership and is making clear inroads in improving the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils. She is valued and respected by her staff and by external partners. She has set high expectations for staff and roles and responsibilities are clear. Working closely with the local authority, archdiocese, London Challenge and the executive headteacher, the school has acted decisively and in a relatively short space of time to secure strong appointments to the teaching staff and the governing body. While it is too early yet to see measurable impact, a solid platform is evident.

A new senior leadership is in place and inspectors could see a common vision and passionate determination among them, and the staff as a whole, to secure improvements without delay in achieving better outcomes for pupils and better communication with parents. Throughout this time of change the acting headteacher has provided a stabilising influence and she has been instrumental in ensuring that the changes being brought about are being focused on the right areas. Actions are being planned in a considered way, making the best of additional external support. Systems for monitoring have been established and are more rigorous. As a consequence the headteacher has a very good strategic overview. She has an accurate understanding of the emerging strengths and the rate of progress being made in addressing the school's remaining weaknesses. The school's tracker system enables senior leaders to have a comprehensive knowledge of the progress that

individual pupils and groups are making. Class teachers have yet to be trained in its use. There is a well-thought-out professional development programme in place for staff, including very good support from within and outside the school for the newly qualified teacher.

The governing body is new and benefits from a range of experienced governors, including some headteachers. The working relationship since the end of the summer term between the chair, vice-chair and headteacher has developed well. Arrangements for its working, such as its committee structure, are embryonic. The school has come a long way in a relatively short time. However, because of the changes made in staffing and governance, sufficient attention has not yet been paid to the involvement of senior leaders, staff as a whole and governors in evaluation and wider planning for school improvement. Where quick and important action is taken, its impact is evident. For instance, improvements to the accommodation reflect the priority the leadership team have given to making the school a better place for staff and pupils alike.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement.

- Improve leadership and management by ensuring all new initiatives to raise standards and achievement are consistently implemented and rigorously monitored – good

External support

The comprehensive local authority action plan meets requirements and sets out clearly how the wide range of external support will help school improvement. There is a clear alignment with the school's own action plan. The local authority, archdiocese, London Challenge, school improvement partner and the newly federated Coloma School provide coordinated and effective support which the school values and which is helping to accelerate the pace of improvement. Actions are carefully considered to have maximum impact on areas of identified weakness. Success criteria are clear, with an aim to remove the school from special measures at the earliest possible opportunity. The impact of support is evident in many areas such as the development of literacy and ICT throughout the curriculum and the monitoring of teaching and learning. The contribution of the federation has been considerable during the summer term and is reflected for example, in the quality of the appointments made for September, and the successful summer school. The School Specific Monitoring Group meets regularly and ensures that actions are monitored and evaluated. Consequently, external partners have an accurate knowledge of the progress the school is making and their confidence in the path ahead is well placed. While the range of external support is considerable, it is not oppressive and it is appropriate for the school at this stage in its journey of improvement.