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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 David Wynford-Jones to your school on 2 and 3 February 2010, 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 fifth 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, while improving, has not been able to show it is on track to leave the Ofsted category at the next visit, which will be a full inspection.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate overall, although there have been further improvements in some important areas.

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 Local Authority and the inspection team.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton  
Her Majesty's Inspector



Special measures: monitoring of Goose Green Primary School

Report from the fifth monitoring inspection on 2 and 3 February 2010

## Evidence

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

## Context

The substantive deputy headteacher continues her secondment to another school. In general, staffing has remained stable. A new chair and vice chair of governors have been elected.

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

Pupils' progress continues to accelerate but remains inconsistent throughout the school. This is because of variations remaining in the quality of teaching. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 were observed making good progress in their English and mathematics lessons, with attainment in Year 6 close to national expectations. The school is projecting that a large majority of pupils in Year 6 will attain the nationally expected levels by the end of the academic year. The school's projections for the Year 2 end-of-year assessments indicate that pupils' attainment will be low. There is some doubt about the accuracy of all these figures and the school still finds it hard to show robustly how much progress each pupil is making.

Recent improvement in provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is beginning to have a positive impact on the rate of children's progress, more effectively helping them to grow in confidence and giving them greater opportunities to choose their own activities.

Pupils' attainment in the foundation subjects tends to be below expectations.

Progress since the last visit on the area for improvement:

- improve pupils' progress in all year groups, including the Early Years Foundation Stage, and standards by the end of Years 2 and 6 – satisfactory; this has improved from inadequate at previous visits because of the stronger position in Year 6 and improvements noted in pupils' progress in Year 2 and the early years, although inconsistencies remain.



## Other relevant pupil outcomes

Pupils' behaviour continues to improve, especially in lessons that are well taught and capture their interest. It deteriorates when lessons are less well focused. Pupils show great respect for each other's customs, cultures and beliefs, fostered partly by the school's provision in religious education. However, they continue to be boisterous at times as they move around the school, or when in halls at lunchtime, especially when not being directly watched by staff. Pupils say that they enjoy school. They are pleased that their learning is often more independent. As one older pupil put it, 'We figure it out for ourselves.'

Although the school has strategies to follow up absences, pupils' attendance remains 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

Teachers work closely in year group pairs to plan an increasingly interesting and broad curriculum. Rightly, literacy and numeracy are the key focuses. In these subjects, work builds up progressively, enabling each class to develop skills in a logical sequence. In many lessons in these two subjects, staff and pupils know clearly the specific, tight objectives they are aiming towards. Opportunities for pupils to use their developing skills in more extended or imaginative ways, however, are more limited. Pupils know their personal targets. Interventions, such as one-to-one teaching, are used to provide support for some pupils, although the school does not identify clearly the impact of this.

In other subjects, pupils have noticed with pleasure the greater levels of interest, 'fun' and breadth arising from the school's further adoption of a 'creative' approach to curriculum planning. One pupil, for example, noted that his teacher 'finds a game that everyone knows but then puts a subject on top of it, so we learn'. But pupils also say, correctly, that much of their work is easy. This is because teachers plan all the subjects for their year groups without a clear central steer from subject leaders. This leads to expectations of pupils being often too low, with insufficient planning for the progression of skills within and across year groups. This was exemplified in a well-managed and -paced Year 4 art lesson. The pupils enjoyed the lesson but its content was unambitious and limited. Their work was below age-related expectations.

The quality of teaching continues to improve, largely because of coaching and training programmes led by senior members of staff. It is, however, inconsistent, with some of the strongest teaching being at the upper ends of Key Stages 1 and 2. Broadly, the features of stronger and weaker teaching identified at the last visit still apply. What has improved further since then is the better implementation, in many cases, of teaching techniques, including:

- the use of learning objectives and success criteria
- pupils working effectively with partners
- regular references to previous and future learning
- some clever use of questioning to help pupils think better for themselves.

Marking is generally thorough and supportive, helping pupils to reflect on their learning. They now have better opportunities to respond to teachers' comments more immediately. In some lessons observed, teaching assistants supported lower-attaining pupils. While this support was helpful in sustaining pupils' concentration, it led to the pupils involved receiving less attention from the teacher than the others.

In some lessons, teachers plan and provide different work to meet the differing needs of pupils. However, this does not generally reflect specific assessments of these pupils or the particular next steps of learning they need to make. In one otherwise good and well-paced mathematics lesson, the differentiation used related too much to the amount and style of writing pupils could do, rather than reflecting their mathematical learning needs. Priorities recommended by Ofsted at the last visit, concerning the management and use of assessment data, have not been suitably developed or begun.

The detailed early years action plan has been suitably updated to show costs and appropriate timescales. There is a strong emphasis on developing the particular approach to learning of the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as developing the environment, improving the quality of teaching and promoting the children's personal development and their skills in some but not all early learning goals. While all these aspects are important, the plan, partly because of its length, does not show clearly enough the key actions and priorities.

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; however, inadequate progress continues in respect of the use of assessment data to inform planning and ensure work is well matched to pupils' needs
- 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 headteacher and her senior leaders successfully ensure that staff morale and commitment remain high, while dealing robustly with some residual staffing problems. Senior staff show the capacity to successfully guide, train and coach staff towards making improvement. The work of subject leaders for English and mathematics is making a positive impact too.

Senior leaders have an accurate view of the quality of teaching across the school, which in turn supports further improvement. They realise too that middle leadership, including subject leadership beyond English and mathematics, needs significant development, with work on this led by the assistant headteacher. The special educational needs coordinator shows commitment but does not have a precise enough overview of the school's performance in her area of responsibility. The school improvement plan and raising attainment plan are working documents, making some positive impact. The school is successfully raising its profile in the local community and the confidence shown by parents is rising.

The school's self-evaluation is limited. It is accurate in some important areas, such as the quality of teaching, but does not cover the whole range of aspects needed. The school, and governing body, tend to measure success by noting improvements in some key areas rather than through a rigorous, comprehensive analysis of its current position against standard benchmarks, which is needed. Therefore the school does not know all of its strengths and weaknesses well enough and there are gaps in its work. For example, the school has not audited its position in respect of promoting community cohesion, which could help improve the curriculum and aspects of behaviour. Self-evaluation information provided to inspectors did not show the low attendance rate. The school's analysis of the progress and attainment of pupils and groups remains limited and not fully accurate, and thus not leading sufficiently to further targeted improvement. It has taken too long for staff and governors to agree to purchase a new assessment software package, delaying progress in this area. All these factors are potential barriers to the school leaving an Ofsted category.

The governing body is active, committed and suitably organised. Under its new leadership, it continues to improve its work. Members provide useful expertise in key areas. However, the governing body has not ensured the school evaluates itself in all necessary aspects.

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.



## External support

The local authority has rightly reduced its direct advisory support in areas where the school is now showing better capacity to improve itself. Its support with personnel matters continues to be very useful. However, it has not been able to guide and support senior staff and governors to a position where the school can be fully confident it should leave the Ofsted category within the expected timescale, namely the next visit. City Challenge carried out a very recent review with senior staff of the quality of teaching across the school. This identified that staff were doing what senior leaders ask of them in terms of developing their teaching techniques and practice, but did not show or question the impact of this on learning and outcomes.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Evaluate the school robustly against the whole range of the Ofsted evaluation schedule, so that senior leaders and governors are sure of the school's full position and can take action and plan accordingly.
- Improve urgently the school's system for tracking accurately the progress and attainment of all pupils and groups of pupils.
- Ensure these assessment data are then increasingly used in teachers' planning and lessons to challenge all pupils appropriately, according to their needs and identified next steps of learning.
- Increase the level of challenge to pupils across subjects by continuing to develop the role and impact of middle leaders.
- Ensure that an audit, and subsequent planning, to develop the school's contribution to community cohesion is carried out effectively.