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Mrs N Yudin
Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Yudin

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Lyon Park Junior School

Following my visit with David White, Additional Inspector to your school on 10-11 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 first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in October 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 governors and the Director of Children's Services for Brent.

Yours sincerely

Chris Wood
Her Majesty's Inspector

Special measures: monitoring of Lyon Park Junior School

Report from the first monitoring inspection on 10-11 February 2010

Evidence

Inspectors observed 12 lessons across all year groups and parts of some other lessons. They were unable to observe all teachers because some were absent during the monitoring visit. Three joint observations were undertaken with members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were held with the acting headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the vice chair of the governing body and the school improvement partner. Inspectors also looked at a range of relevant school documentation and scrutinised a sample of pupils' work in English and mathematics.

Context

Following the retirement of the former headteacher at the end of the autumn term, an acting headteacher has been appointed, initially for the term of a year. She is headteacher at the infant school located in the same building. A consultant deputy headteacher also joined the school's leadership team in January 2010 and will be in post until the end of the summer term.

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

Most pupils, including those who are in the early stages of learning English, are now making better progress in lessons because the overall quality of teaching is improving steadily. This has been supported by the prompt and well focused interventions of the new senior leadership team and the local authority. Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that the proportion of good teaching is improving. Nevertheless, senior leaders recognise that a persistent number of inadequate lessons remain and this issue must be addressed urgently.

Improvements to the quality of learning have been brought about by a more focused approach to planning, together with a more purposeful deployment of all adults in the classroom. Consequently, pupils enjoy the well-resourced activities that are offered and this frequently leads to high levels of engagement and good behaviour. However, teachers do not yet plan activities that consistently meet the different needs of all pupils, particularly the more able. In these instances, and where the pace of learning drops or there is insufficient challenge, pupils can become restless.

The quickly establishing use of 'talking partners' offers pupils the opportunity to rehearse their ideas and to develop their language skills. This has been particularly successful in improving the quality of pupils' writing and in supporting the language acquisition of pupils at the early stages of learning English. Teachers' use of questioning is also developing well and is increasingly used to probe and extend pupils' responses during discussions. Teachers now need to sharpen the use of these



important strategies as a more precise means of targeting the pupils' different needs.

A more consistent approach to marking is being employed by all teachers, although the quality is still too variable. Teachers often provide pupils with supportive comments about their work and more are providing advice on how to improve, particularly in writing. However, whilst the pupils' personal targets are recorded in their books, there is seldom any reference to these targets in the marking. Some pupils are being encouraged to assess their own work against specific success criteria but this is also inconsistent across classes.

There are now robust assessment and tracking systems in place that enable the school to form a clear judgement about individual and group attainment and progress. This is enabling the school, through half-termly assessments and pupil progress reviews, to set more ambitious improvement targets for pupils and to manage intervention activities more strategically.

Progress since the last inspection on the area for improvement:

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve their learning and progress in reading, writing and science – satisfactory

The effectiveness of leadership and management

At the time of the last inspection, safeguarding was judged to be inadequate as the school's procedures did not meet the government's statutory requirements. Prompt and successful action was taken by the school to resolve this issue.

Following the appointment of the acting headteacher, a full audit of safeguarding was carried out by the school improvement partner in conjunction with senior leaders, staff and pupils. This audit, which was recently presented to the governing body, accurately identifies a number of strengths, such as the school's commitment to keeping children safe and promoting their well-being. Nevertheless, it also makes several timely recommendations to improve the quality of the school's current systems even further. Senior leaders in the school are ensuring that these actions are addressed quickly and the governing body will monitor their effectiveness in due course.

The deputy headteacher and the member of staff with responsibility for child protection have also reviewed the school's safeguarding policy. Senior leaders and the governing body are fully aware of the importance of this revised document in driving forward effective safeguarding as well as the need to see that it is implemented quickly. A safeguarding committee, made up of the acting headteacher and three governors, has been convened and will meet at regular intervals to monitor progress against this area and make certain that all procedures are adhered to.



The governing body has a clear understanding of the priorities identified by Ofsted and is now determined to address these successfully. Governors are supportive of the acting headteacher and are working closely with her and the local authority to ensure that they are better informed about the work of the school and more involved in providing the challenge it needs to improve. In addition to the safeguarding committee, a governor has been identified as taking responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. She has a secure knowledge of the pupil progress meetings that have been introduced and understands the need to analyse information from these meetings to identify and challenge any disparities in the rates of progress made by different pupils.

There have been several recent appointments to the governing body that have strengthened its capacity. In order to develop the expertise of all governors more quickly, a programme of regular training had begun which has already revisited their key roles and responsibilities. Future training will focus on data analysis, teaching and learning and the curriculum. In particular, the school recognises correctly that it is essential that governors are able to form clear views of what constitutes good learning, teaching and pupil progress.

Progress since the last inspection on the areas for improvement:

- Ensure safeguarding procedures comply with statutory requirements – satisfactory
- Develop the role of the governing body in holding the school to account for the rate of pupils' progress and for ensuring that satisfactory safeguarding procedures are in place and regularly reviewed - satisfactory

External support

The local authority understands the school's strengths and priorities for development and has set ambitious milestones to secure more rapid improvement. Through the local authority statement of action, it has identified clear and challenging targets, underpinned by effective and ongoing support from the school improvement partner, advisers and consultants. For the most part, this support, which is valued by the school, has been effective and progress has been steady as a result. This has been most apparent where support has been closely focused on the school's immediate needs and circumstances. In particular, improvements have been discernible in the development of teaching and the use of talk to support writing and the language development of pupils in the early stages of learning English.