



28 March 2007
Mr Derek Stritton
The Acting Headteacher
Keir Hardie Primary School
Edwin Street
London
E16 1PZ

Dear Mr Stritton

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KEIR HARDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with David White, Additional Inspector and Susan Thomas-Pounce, Additional Inspector, to your school on 21 and 22 March 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in November 2006.

This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the acting headteacher and deputy headteacher, subject leaders, local authority consultants and advisors and governors. They spoke to pupils, examined pupils' work and met with the school improvement team.

Context

Since the school was last inspected the headteacher has resigned. At the beginning of December an experienced local authority consultant who had been supporting the school was appointed acting headteacher. He currently works in the school for three days a week. An experienced substantive headteacher has been appointed and begins at the start of the summer term. Four additional governors have been appointed by the local authority.

Achievement and standards

Standards have been too low for too long. They have been below average, often significantly so, in each of the last five years. At the time of the last inspection pupils' achievement was inadequate and standards were exceptionally low.

Children in the Foundation Stage are now making better progress because the quality of teaching has improved. A comprehensive action plan to address issues highlighted in the previous inspection has been drawn up, implemented and closely monitored by the school and local authority. Resources are now readily accessible to children and the much improved provision is supporting their independence and confidence. Adults are effectively deployed and a new teaching and learning policy is beginning to impact on achievement and standards. Lessons seen indicate that standards are rising across the school and the rate of progress pupils make is accelerating. This is borne out by the school's analysis of standards in reading and writing which suggest that a greater proportion of pupils are now working at the expected levels or above. However, the rate of improvement is not consistent across all year groups with pupils in Years 2 and 6 making most progress. While overall, standards remain below average, the school's most recent analysis indicates that pupils in Year 3 are doing best.

The support provided for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, the more able and Black African pupils now has a clearer focus on raising standards but it is too early to be able to see the impact on pupils' achievement.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Improve achievement in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 – good progress

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and strengths of the school. The acting headteacher has effectively promoted a sense of shared identity and pupils, even the youngest, are taking real pride in their achievements. There are clear expectations regarding conduct and behaviour and pupils have very good attitudes to learning. As a result of these high expectations and shared values behaviour is good and pupils are polite, friendly and helpful. Independent learning skills are developing well, especially when pupils are actively engaged in tasks that are varied and challenging.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning observed during the visit ranged from outstanding to satisfactory. None was inadequate and much was good. Lessons begin with a clear introduction of the learning objectives so that pupils know what they are to learn and how their progress will be assessed. Teachers identify key vocabulary and ensure that pupils understand unfamiliar words. In the best lessons teachers make good use of challenging questions to explore and extend pupils' understanding. Improvements in teaching have been achieved in part through better planning which is consistent across the school. Better teaching means that pupils now enjoy their lessons more. This was particularly noticeable in a Year 3 lesson on fractions set in the 'Smartie Factory' where there was good pace and a real sense of the fun of learning. All pupils have clear targets for literacy and numeracy and, while practice is not consistent across all classes, teachers are providing better guidance for pupils on how well they are doing and how to improve. The marking of pupils' work is improving and some is outstanding.

Every day begins with a specific focus on basic literacy and numeracy skills. This strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Younger pupils also benefit from a daily phonics lesson at the beginning of the day.

The school has made satisfactory progress in developing systems for gathering and analysing information on how well all pupils are doing. The newly formed inclusion team is beginning to monitor the effectiveness of targeted support and interventions for individuals and vulnerable groups of pupils.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that lesson plans identify precise learning objectives and that teachers use assessment information to plan appropriately for pupils' individual needs – good progress
- Improve the quality of assessment for pupils with learning difficulties and those for whom English is an additional language – satisfactory progress

Leadership and management

In the relatively short time he has been at the school the acting headteacher has provided very good leadership. He has been ably supported by the senior leadership team and deputy headteacher. Among teachers, governors and others who work in the school there is real enthusiasm, optimism and a determination to improve. There is now a clear vision for the future of the school which is shared by the whole school community. This vision is highly

visible as one moves around the school and is expressed not only through statements of intent but in the improved quality of teaching and learning and the positive relationships in the school. The school improvement plan outlines a range of actions intended to raise standards and address weaknesses identified at the time of the last inspection. The acting headteacher has left some details for the new leadership team to complete. Arrangements to monitor the progress of the action plan are satisfactory but some success criteria are not sufficiently clear or measurable, particularly those intended to monitor pupils' achievement and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. While progress with effective strategic planning is satisfactory, progress in developing the school's vision and sense of a shared identity is good. The leadership team has managed the local authority support very well to ensure that it meets the needs of the school.

Strengths in the leadership of core subjects which were apparent in November have continued. Self-evaluation now involves a wider range of staff, and subject leaders are beginning to develop the skills necessary to evaluate the school's performance. Improvements to the school's strategic planning will make the evaluation of progress easier. The new inclusion team is coordinating support for underachieving pupils well.

The governing body has been well supported by the local authority and is beginning to increase its effectiveness. They are committed and enthusiastic and are now better placed to hold the leadership team to account for how well the school is doing.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2006:

- Establish a clear vision for the school's work backed up by an effective strategic plan for improvement – satisfactory progress
- Develop the roles of leaders and managers at all levels to ensure they have the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve improvement – good progress
- Improve the quality of the school's self-evaluation by involving all stakeholders in the process – satisfactory progress

External support

The local authority has provided very good support for the school. The acting headteacher has helped bring about improvement and move the school forward during a period of considerable uncertainty. There has been good support from the school development officer and a range of local authority consultants and advisors.

The local authority's statement of action is good. It is rigorous and has measurable success criteria and clear timescales.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed subject to the following; no more than two newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director for Children and Young People's Services for Newham.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett
H M Inspector