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Miss M Rosen
The Headteacher
Keir Hardie Primary School
Edwin Street
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Dear Miss Rosen

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF KEIR HARDIE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 July 2007, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second 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

I observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the inclusion team, subject leaders, two governors, and a representative of the local authority (LA). I also spoke informally to pupils and teachers and looked at pupils' work in classrooms.

Context

Since the last visit the newly appointed headteacher has taken up her post. The school roll continues to fall as the regeneration of the surrounding area gathers momentum. The school's leadership team is in the process of planning for a reduction in classes and the move to mixed age registration groups and setting for English and mathematics from September. The school has had three headteachers in the last three terms.

Achievement and standards

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes are continuing the more rapid progress seen at the time of the last monitoring inspection. Children are doing best in developing their language and the practical application of mathematical skills. The most recent assessment of pupils at the end of Year 2 indicates that standards are rising. In the 2007 national assessments pupils did best in mathematics, and this is also where they have made the most progress. In Years 3 to 5, while too many pupils are still below average in English, mathematics and science, the gap is closing. In the recent Year 6 national tests pupils did slightly better in English but significantly less well in mathematics than they did in 2006. Standards in English and science look like being close to the national average. However, the progress pupils are making is not consistent enough across classes. Where teaching is best and expectations are highest pupils make most progress. Because pupils who have learning difficulties are now receiving support which is better matched to their learning needs they are making more progress. Those pupils who are in the early stages of learning English are also receiving improved support so that they too are making better progress.

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

At the time of the last visit pupils' personal development and well-being were judged to be good and this remains the case. Pupils throughout the school are polite, friendly and welcoming. They say they are proud of their school and are pleased about the improvements they can see. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and are eager to learn. As a result attendance is above average. Because expectations are high and are shared by the whole school community, behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school and pupils say they feel secure and well cared for.

Quality of provision

Teaching was judged as inadequate at the inspection in November 2006 but the good progress seen at the last monitoring inspection has been maintained. All lessons now benefit from improved planning which identifies appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of differing abilities and needs. Teachers' planning consistently identifies clear learning objectives so that teachers know what they are to teach and pupils what they are expected to learn. Teachers explain learning objectives carefully, check that pupils have understood and at the end of the lessons assess their progress. The school has focused on improving pupils' speaking and listening skills and because of better teaching, pupils are becoming increasingly confident. They are more prepared to answer questions and to participate enthusiastically in drama and role play. Key vocabulary is now identified, explained and referred to

during the lesson. Sometimes opportunities to extend pupils' vocabularies are not exploited sufficiently well, particularly in practical learning and discussions. The best lessons have a real sense of enjoyment and fun. The recently introduced systems for using assessment information to track pupils' progress is now being used more effectively to ensure pupils' learning needs are being met. The school is beginning to refine this system so that the progress of groups of pupils over time is tracked more rigorously.

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 – good progress

Leadership and management

The newly appointed headteacher, well supported by the deputy headteacher and leadership team, has built very effectively on the good work of the previous acting headteacher. She has taken care to ensure the shared vision for the school continues to be put into practice. High aspirations and a commitment to school improvement are common themes which emerge from discussions with staff, governors and pupils. In order to refine this vision further the leadership team has consulted widely about how well the school is doing and how to improve. The consultation is beginning to extend to parents through the use of focus meetings and questionnaires. This has resulted in a clearer structure for the school development plan and some sharper success criteria but not all of these have yet been agreed so that the plan is not complete. Subject leaders are better informed, very enthusiastic and more confident in carrying out their role.

The governing body is increasingly involved in the process of evaluating how well the school is doing and holding it to account. This is in part thanks to improved information from the school, including a comprehensive report from the headteacher and reports from subject leaders. It will be better able to monitor the school's performance when the development plan is finished and approved. Governors continue to be well supported by the LA.

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 – good progress

External support

The LA has continued to provide the school with good support. It has supported the leadership team by providing an accurate analysis of how well the school is doing and good advice on how to improve further. Subject leaders have also been well supported and are being provided with the knowledge and skills to enable them to carry out their roles with increasing confidence. The LA is aware of the need to reduce its direct support in order to enable school improvement to be increasingly self-sustaining.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – good

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

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