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17 December 2009

Mrs Pardesi  
Kensington Primary School  
Kensington Avenue  
Manor Park  
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Dear Mrs Pardesi

### Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 4 December 2009, for the time you gave to our discussions and for the information which you provided during my visit. I would be grateful if you would also pass my thanks on to the staff, pupils and Chair of the Interim Executive Board for the warmth of their welcome and help during the monitoring visit.

As a result of the inspection on 3-4 December 2008, the school was asked to:

- ensure the school development plan, subject action plans and the school's self-evaluation are more specific in linking actions to expected improvements in standards;
- improve communications across the school community;
- improve pupil progress through raising the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made:

inadequate progress in making improvements.

and

satisfactory progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement in the future.

Since the last inspection pupils' attainment has not improved and for the second year in a row, attainment was very low by the end of Year 6. Weaknesses in strategic leadership have prevented standards and achievement rising and this weakness has also hampered faster improvement in pupils' progress through raising the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good.



National test results for 2009 show some variation in the attainment of different groups. Those learning English as an additional language often do better than those from White British backgrounds. Boys and pupils with more complex special educational needs have not done as well as others. The value being added to pupils, especially in Key Stage 2 has been uneven and not as good as it should have been. In particular, higher ability pupils have not done well enough.

When the school was last inspected it was found to be satisfactory, but the strategic management was described as being, 'not as strong as it could be'. Communication between the school and the governing body had shortcomings and some of the governing body's statutory responsibilities were not being fully met. The development plan for 2008-2011 had not been agreed and development plans lacked measurable targets explicitly linked to raising standards. Since then, communication difficulties continued between governors and the school. Considerable differences of opinion were evident and the pace at which decisions were being made was very slow. Many issues were stacking up without decisions. This has had a major impact on the school's financial and development planning and ultimately on the outcomes and provision for pupils. The Local Authority's **Governor Support Service** offered a 'Leading Together' course to help secure better communication but governors did not attend. The situation worsened in January 2009. The Local Authority served a 'Warning Notice Schedule on the school because the governing body and committee meetings were ineffective and acted as a barrier to the development of the school. In particular, statutory targets had not been set by the deadline and performance management of staff was not completed. The budget, recovery plan and school improvement plan had not been agreed and policies were not being regularly reviewed. The Local Authority applied to the Secretary of State for an Interim Executive Board (IEB) to take over from governors. This was seen as essential to lead the major changes required to improve standards. The IEB was confirmed shortly before the monitoring visit on 1 December 2009.

The IEB is made up of a very strong and knowledgeable group of professionals. With the IEB in place, the school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve following a period when progress in developing the school was inadequate. Already the new chair of the IEB has met with senior staff and has visited the school four times. The headteacher and Chair of the IEB agree that the school has lingered too long and the children have lost out. As the headteacher noted, 'the school can now move forward as there is a sense of commitment and eagerness'. Monthly meetings are now planned with shared tasks for intervening periods. The strategic direction of the school is focused firmly on outcomes for pupils. Plans are already underway to slim down the improvement plan so that it only has a few key priorities that link sharply with improving performance in English, mathematics and science.

Despite difficulties in some aspects of strategic leadership, the school is able to demonstrate that some satisfactory changes have taken place in teaching and learning in the last year. However, the school cannot yet assure consistently good teaching overall. Nonetheless, the school's assessment records show that higher proportions of pupils are on track to do better in English and mathematics than in



the past. For example, in English, there has been a focus on writing through the Stratford City Project, in which pupils have been developing their literacy skills by finding ways to start up their own business. Through this, pupils' persuasive speaking skills, their skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) and writing have developed well. There has been a focus on guided reading and more training is planned for this in the spring term of 2010. Pupils are enjoying taking part in the 'Talking for writing' workshops. For example, they have produced interesting newspaper reports following drama activities where they captured the story on the digital camera to support their writing. To help pupils to catch up further, there are booster groups and early morning extra phonic classes.

Senior leaders have satisfactory plans in place to develop learning through the 'teaching and learning' development plan. This rightly focuses on helping pupils to develop more cooperative and independent learning skills as lessons are sometimes over directed by teachers. Leaders know that in science, pupils are not doing enough high quality investigation work. The sample of work seen shows that pupils are not spending long enough thinking about their scientific conclusions; this is a barrier to helping more pupils to reach higher levels of attainment.

Middle managers are beginning to evaluate the effectiveness of provision in the subjects for which they are responsible. This is a further factor in why the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve. The headteacher has delegated responsibilities, although several posts are being held as an 'acting' post because of past difficulties with governors in making substantive appointments. Senior leaders evaluate the quality of lessons regularly and evidence suggests that the quality is improving, although the overall quality remains satisfactory rather than good. The school has appointed an inclusion manager, which is helping provision to improve, especially for pupils with special educational needs. A new intensive support speech and language programme is showing signs of helping pupils to do better.

The school is working to develop communication with parents satisfactorily, with new initiatives such as coffee mornings, newsletters and by informing parents about their children's targets. However, the partnership with parents still remains a focus for further improvement as some parents feel that communication is poor.

Other outcomes remain positive since the last inspection; for example, pupils are delightful and keen to do well. The art work is of a very high quality and beautifully displayed, which makes the school an attractive place to be.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons  
Additional inspector

