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Ms D Helmore  
The Headteacher  
Roskear School  
Roskear  
Camborne  
Cornwall  
TR14 8DJ

Dear Ms Helmore

Special Measures: Monitoring Inspection of Roskear School

### Introduction

Following my visit with Mary Usher-Clark, Additional Inspector, to your school on 19 and 20 June 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 October 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 headteacher, a group of Year 6 pupils, selected staff, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

Since the last monitoring visit the substantive headteacher has tendered his resignation. The governors are working closely with the LA to plan for the appointment of a successor. The post will be advertised in the spring term 2008 with the intention that the successful candidate should take up post in September 2008. In the interim, to provide continuity, the acting headteacher and deputy will continue in their current roles. The assistant headteacher, who has been instrumental in driving the improvements in data analysis, comes to the end of his secondment in July and will return to his school.

## Achievement and standards

Standards in national and optional tests remain below the expected levels as a result of the legacy of previous underachievement. There is strong evidence to show that the progress pupils make is improving.

The recording and monitoring of assessment have been rationalised so that there is now one useable and accessible system. It is now possible to track specific groups of pupils and make comparisons between their rates of progress. Staff have received training in the use of data, but as the system is still new the information is not yet used consistently to inform their planning. Senior managers recognise that teacher assessments, although improved, are not yet totally accurate so the measurement of progress is largely based on objective testing. Moderating examples of pupils' work during staff meetings and marking the test papers of other classes have also strengthened the assessment process. In addition, this has increased teachers' understanding about expectations and work in other classes and year groups. Teachers appreciate having data to support them in identifying gaps in pupils' knowledge and in making the target setting for each pupil more effective. Most year groups now make good progress but issues remain in some classes. These are being addressed through the accountability interviews and cross referenced to lesson observations when senior managers use the data to monitor that all pupils are on track.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- improve systems for gathering assessment information so that teachers have a better understanding of the pupils' progress and the pupils know what is expected of them – good progress in terms of improving the system, satisfactory progress in gaining teachers' understanding.

## Personal development and well-being

Most pupils have good attitudes to their learning and enjoy coming to school. They particularly enjoy their new active playtimes and the school council is proud of its involvement in organising this. The school council has made huge strides since the last monitoring visit. Members have received training from the deputy headteacher and understand the democratic process of elections, structuring meetings and setting an agenda and are actively involved in their own and whole school action planning. Older pupils take the responsibilities given to them seriously, helping younger pupils and leading the newly formed house system.

Although the overall attendance figure for the school falls below national expectation, there has been a significant improvement, reducing the level of unauthorised absence by almost 50%. The school is doing all it can to encourage better attendance. However, there is a degree of resistance from a few families. A new form of electronic registration is due to start next week and will enable the

school to track absence more closely. The number of pupils arriving late for school has dropped considerably due to the earlier optional start to the school day.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- work more closely with parents to improve pupils' punctuality and attendance – good.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the visit in March 2007:

- allow the school council to take a more active role in the running of their school – good.

### Quality of provision

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Since the last monitoring visit teaching has improved. There is a range of good teaching throughout the school and some outstanding practice in Key Stage 1. However, some inadequate teaching remains. In these lessons the pace is slow and teachers' expectations are too low. The work set lacks challenge and tasks do not always meet the needs of lower ability pupils. The pupils become bored and restless and, in some cases, low level disruption, such as off task chatter, is the result. Where weaker teaching persists, the school is providing appropriate support through coaching and opportunities to observe good practice. Senior managers are also prepared to challenge underperformance as part of the school's accountability process. Following an audit of pupils' needs, teaching assistants have been more effectively deployed and provide good support. Outstanding support is provided by those teaching assistants who work with the pupils who have a hearing impairment. They use signing fluently and take every opportunity to work with, and involve, other pupils in the class. The inclusion of this group of pupils in lessons and around the school is a pleasure to observe.

New curricular planning based on themes running across all subjects is ready to be introduced in September. This is designed to meet the needs of all pupils more appropriately and is being effectively driven by an enthusiastic assistant headteacher. Careful consideration has been given to linking curricular changes with strategies to improve attendance and raise the quality of teaching.

Most pupils talk about their work with confidence, know how well they are progressing, and what they need to do to improve to the next level. Some pupils are given the opportunity to assess their own work and have become more aware of their targets and involved in their own learning. The Year 6 pupils told inspectors that their 'what I have learned today' books really help them to do this.

A strength of the school is the number of pupils who are able to use signing as a means of communication with their hearing impaired peers. They learn this skill at an after school club or during the school day and some pupils find that it helps them to improve their own understanding of English and communication.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- improve teaching and the curriculum so that learning is suitably challenging for all pupils, especially the more able and those in Years 3 to 6, so that it enables them to achieve as well as they can – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

Improvements in leadership and management, together with effective communication systems, have enabled significant changes to take place within the school. Staff are encouraged to share ideas, voice opinions and are actively involved in decision making processes. A number of the staff wished to express their views about the senior leadership team to inspectors. On more than one occasion the headteacher was described as inspirational. She is consistent in her handling of difficult situations, including working with parents, and this gives the staff confidence and makes them feel secure. Even in instances where their performance is being challenged, teachers feel that this is done fairly and based on reliable monitoring. Accountability interviews have been incorporated into the performance management process for teachers and are effective in providing a clear agenda for discussion which is focused on raising standards, monitoring progress, and setting targets.

The headteacher is extremely well supported by an able and effective deputy who also has the confidence of the staff. Together, they have clarity of purpose and a vision for the future of the school. This involves developing staff skills, empowering them to make decisions, but equally not shirking from challenging some long standing poor performance. Leadership and management have been strengthened at all levels including the degree to which subject coordinators take responsibility for their areas and the status of the inclusion coordinator has been raised appropriately.

Governors feel better informed about the school through the reports received from the headteacher and other senior managers. Training has enabled them to know the questions they need to ask in order to hold the school to account. The action plan is now discussed and monitored as a standing agenda item at full governors meetings. The chair of governors works closely with the headteacher and together they have led governors to make decisions which have prevented a deficit budget being set. However, necessary changes to staffing, such as the assistant headteacher returning to his school and the deputy headteacher returning to classroom teaching for three days per week next year, will result in a reduction in the capacity of senior leaders. This will need to be monitored closely.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2006:

- improve leadership and management to strengthen self-evaluation so that managers have a clear view of the school's strengths and can identify and remedy any weaknesses – good.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the visit in March 2007:

- conduct regular reviews of pupil progress between the headteacher, or appropriate senior manager, and class teachers in order to raise standards and achievement and hold staff to account – good.

#### External support

The local authority continues to provide good support to the school through the input of subject consultants. This has been particularly effective in mathematics, science, special educational needs and the early years. As staff, and senior managers in particular, have grown in confidence they are becoming proactive and taking control in determining the level of support they require. Objective monitoring against the action plan is effective and the LA also works with the school to moderate the judgements on teaching and learning.

#### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

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

Yours sincerely

Pauline Robins  
H M Inspector