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Mr M Colcombe  
The Headteacher  
Hareclive Primary School  
Moxham Drive  
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Bristol  
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Dear Mr Colcombe

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HARECLIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit with Martin Cole and Mary Usher-Clark, Additional Inspectors, to your school on 2 and 3 May 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 headteacher, the senior management team, the subject leader for literacy and the manager of the school's reading initiative, the chair of governors, the school's link improvement officer, and a group of pupils.

### Context

There have been several changes since the school was last inspected. One of the assistant headteachers has left and the school has so far been unsuccessful in recruiting a deputy headteacher to replace this post. One other teacher left and another is currently on long-term sick leave. Her class has been taught by several supply teachers. The school has four newly qualified teachers. The chair of governors

resigned recently and a new chair of governors was elected this term. Membership of the governing body has been bolstered by additional appointments.

### Achievement and standards

Improvements in arrangements for assessment and tracking progress have given the teachers a more secure knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment. Teachers are now more aware of how much progress should be expected over the course of a year and are beginning to gather the information needed to show whether their pupils are on track to achieve this. There have been organisational changes designed to boost attainment in Year 6. The pupils have been split into three classes to make smaller teaching groups and have recently been organised by ability for lessons in English, mathematics and science, in order to meet their needs more effectively. Booster classes have also been arranged to help them prepare for their forthcoming national tests. In order to improve attainment in English across the school, a reading and phonics programme has recently been implemented with the support of local authority consultants. Consultants from the Intensifying Support Programme have also helped with setting curricular targets in English and mathematics and with aspects of teaching. Consideration is now being given to ways of raising attainment in writing. Teachers are positive about the changes which are taking place, but some of the initiatives are very new and the impact on the pupils' progress and the standards they reach is not yet evident. Subject leadership in mathematics and science is not strong and little has been done so far in these subjects.

The school anticipates that pupils are on track to reach or exceed the targets set for the current Year 6. Even if they do so, results will still be very low. Challenging targets have been set for Year 2 and it is not clear from the school's tracking information whether they are achievable or not.

In the lessons observed, pupils generally made satisfactory progress, matching the quality of the teaching. However, the school's tracking information shows that too many pupils are not making the progress that is expected of them over time, and that standards are very low. There is not enough consistently good teaching to help pupils make up ground that they have lost in the past. There will need to be a significant improvement in the quality of teaching together with rapid improvements in provision for mathematics and science if the pupils' progress is to accelerate.

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

- raise teachers' expectations of what the pupils can do, to improve standards and achievement in English, mathematics and science – inadequate.

### Personal development and well-being

Many of the strengths noted at the inspection in November 2006 have been maintained. However, behaviour is not as good as described at that time. Whilst

most pupils are well behaved and responsive, some pupils and classes are challenging. When lessons engage pupils' interest and teachers expect pupils to do their best, they respond appropriately. There have been improvements in attendance and the school has met its targets.

### Quality of provision

In most of the part lessons seen during this inspection, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. There was a small amount of good teaching and in three lessons teaching was inadequate. This means that, overall, teaching is still inadequate. However, some improvements have been seen in how teachers engage pupils with the tasks that they are asked to do. For example, a science lesson motivated and interested the pupils in learning about their senses through a series of practical challenges. Weaknesses remain in some lessons where the pace is too slow, where tasks are not well matched to the pupils' abilities, or where the tasks do not fully promote the learning objective. Sometimes, when the teacher was teaching the whole class, teaching assistants sat passively and did not support pupils' learning.

Stronger links have been made between the Reception classes and the recently opened, adjacent children's centre. Good practice is being shared. Accurate assessments are made of attainment on entry and activities are planned and organised accordingly.

The school has written or revised policies for teaching and learning, assessment, marking and feedback in order to establish what is expected of teachers. Staff have been trained in how to ascribe levels to pupils' work more accurately, and new procedures and systems for assessing and tracking progress are now in place. These steps have the potential to bring consistency of approach and to help teachers plan to meet pupils' needs more effectively.

Teachers have worked to make their classrooms more helpful to pupils in their learning. Every classroom now displays the pupils' targets for English and mathematics. The pupils who spoke to inspectors knew their targets and what they should do in order to reach them.

The school has had a good deal of support from the LA to help coordinators to begin to sort out provision for pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a clear picture now of which pupils are receiving additional support. However, there is still much to be done, for example, to ensure that support from teaching assistants matches need and is flexible enough to respond to changing needs. The pupils' progress also needs to be closely tracked to make sure that the intervention programmes are having the desired impact.

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

- provide more relevant and engaging tasks and improve the use of assessment information to move pupils on in their learning – satisfactory
- provide pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities with better guidance and support to help them make faster progress – satisfactory

## Leadership and management

Checks on teaching have improved to the extent that the headteacher has an accurate overview of the relative strengths and weaknesses within the teaching staff. Sound support from the LA has helped to verify the reliability of the school's own checks. However, the school is heavily dependent on the headteacher to check the effectiveness of the teaching. This is because there is no deputy headteacher and other senior staff lack the experience, training or skills to contribute to checks. Consequently, observations of teachers' classroom performance, although useful when they do take place, are not frequent enough. This is a shortcoming when the school has a significant number of teachers who are new to the school or to teaching, or in temporary employment. Following observations, teachers are given relevant targets for developing aspects of their performance, but follow up checks on their progress are too long delayed. This is slowing the pace of improvement in the teaching. So far, checks on teaching have been broadly focused and have not, for example, looked at those specific aspects of teaching identified as causes of concern in the school's inspection last November.

The school's plan for improvement also lacks focus. The most important priorities are not clear and actions are not precise enough. Criteria for measuring success are sometimes vague and the plan does not give a clear picture of what the school is aiming for in order to come out of special measures.

Governance has improved. The chair of governors has a secure understanding of what the governing body needs to do to improve its effectiveness. Governors are becoming more systematically active in holding the school to account for its performance and helping it to clarify priorities.

Reasonable progress has been made in improving checks on pupils' progress. Staff training has improved the accuracy of assessment of pupils' standards and a thorough system for regular recording of progress promises to be a more effective tool for measuring the school's performance in the future.

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

- implement robust arrangements to check teaching and pupils' progress more effectively – satisfactory.

## External support

The local authority has revised its statement of action. It now contains details of actions to be taken in science and is satisfactory. Targets for improvement in teaching have not been revised as the LA rightly took account of the school's starting points. However, the target date for removal of special measures is optimistic given the complexity and severity of the issues the school has to tackle.

In line with its statement of action, the LA has provided the school with a high degree of support for a number of important areas. The impact is beginning to show in the improvements that are being made in putting together the structures and procedures the school needs in order to improve teaching and learning. The high degree of support is appropriate, given the many improvements that are needed, but care will need to be taken to make sure that the school is able to manage the workload.

## Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure planning for school improvement focuses on a manageable number of clearly identified priorities, details specific actions precisely, and defines exact and measurable criteria for measuring success.

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

Yours sincerely

Linda McGill  
H M Inspector