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1 November 2007

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

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HARECLIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with Clive Lewis, Additional Inspector, to your school on 16 and 17 October 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. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report 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

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF HARECLIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 16 and 17 October 2007

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, the senior management team, subject leaders, the chair of governors, the attendance officer and the school's link improvement officer. Informal discussions were held with pupils in the course of lessons and break times.

### Context

There have been several staffing changes. Four teachers, including one of the assistant headteachers, left the school during the summer term. A deputy headteacher joined the school in September, along with three other new teachers and three learning support assistants. One teacher is currently on long term sick leave and his class is being taught by a supply teacher. A temporary replacement is being sought.

### Achievement and standards

Since the last monitoring inspection, the results of national tests and assessments taken at the end of the summer term have become available. At Key Stage 2, the school's results were lower than the previous year in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with the national figures, the results were very low. Performance in English was particularly poor, especially in writing, where only one fifth of the pupils reached the level expected for their age.

At Key Stage 1, results in reading and writing were very low with just under half of the pupils reaching the level expected for their age; fewer than the previous year. Results in mathematics were better and improved on 2006; three quarters of the pupils achieved the expected Level 2. In both key stages, very few pupils achieved higher levels and the school fell far short of its targets and its predictions. At the end of the Reception Year, very few children reached the goals that are expected at the end of the Foundation Stage.

The results show that there is still a good deal of work to do to raise standards. Nevertheless, there are indications that some pupils are beginning to catch up, because the school's tracking information shows that the proportion working at age appropriate levels is increasing. The number making satisfactory progress is also increasing, although far too many pupils made unsatisfactory progress last year. Improvements in reading and mathematics have not been matched by improvements in writing, which were slight. Improvement has not been consistent across year groups because of variations in the quality of teaching between classes and year groups. The pupils are starting from a very low base, therefore satisfactory progress is not good enough to ensure that they reach their potential and that the longstanding legacy of underachievement is erased. Children in the Foundation Stage

do not get off to a flying start and, although growing consistency in teaching means that fewer are slipping further behind in Key Stages 1 and 2, the pace of improvement is not yet quick enough.

Attainment in the current Year 6 is exceptionally low. Only about one quarter of these pupils were working at levels appropriate for their age at the end of Year 5, a decline from the standards they reached at the end of Year 2. This is partly, but not wholly, the result of disruptions caused by changes of teacher. Despite good teaching by the Year 6 teachers, who are working very hard to speed up progress, it is unlikely that the challenging targets for 2008 will be met. If the school is to have special measures removed in the necessary timescale, it must be able to demonstrate that pupils in other year groups, from the Reception class onwards, are progressing quickly and making up lost ground. Teachers' understanding of the National Curriculum levels that are appropriate for each age group is more secure and expectations are higher. However, the impact of this is not showing strongly in improved outcomes.

The systematic teaching of phonic skills is having a positive effect in strengthening pupils' knowledge and ability to apply what they have learned to their reading and writing. For example, pupils' attempts at spelling unfamiliar words are increasingly phonically plausible. Many pupils, particularly in the older classes, have completed the programme. However, the standard which pupils reached in order to exit the programme was low; in future, the school has set a higher standard.

Significant weaknesses have been identified in aspects of writing and mathematics, following analyses of test results. Work to remedy these weaknesses is in the early stages of implementation.

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

The strengths noted at the last inspection have been maintained. Although there are some children whose behaviour is challenging, occasionally resulting in an unavoidable exclusion, behaviour overall is satisfactory. Pupils understand the recently introduced policy for managing behaviour and have been involved in setting rules for their class and the school. Most respond appropriately. Attendance has continued to improve as a result of very rigorous and effective follow up systems and very good links with the community and outside agencies. As a result, the school exceeded its latest attendance targets.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is improving. In most of the lessons seen during the inspection, teaching was satisfactory. The proportion of good teaching is increasing and no inadequate teaching was observed; however, not all teachers were seen. Teaching in the Foundation Stage was broadly satisfactory when the school was

inspected last November and remains so; improvements are evident in Key Stages 1 and 2.

Teachers are now making better use of assessment information to help them plan lessons. They are more closely involved in analysing data and there are plans to connect all classrooms to the school network so that each teacher can enter data for their own class and analyse progress. Teachers' knowledge of the levels of attainment of their pupils is secure. Teachers now use different strategies to help pupils think about their own learning in lessons. This is something that older pupils have not encountered much in previous years and teachers face a considerable task to move them from being passive recipients of information to being actively involved and thoughtful about what they are learning. Target setting is well established and pupils talk about their own targets for English and mathematics.

Systems to track pupils' progress and attainment are now better established. These include tracking pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, a review of the management of the school's provision for these pupils is still in the early stages. Class teachers now write pupils' individual education plans. There has been satisfactory progress in ensuring that learning support assistants are deployed so as to match pupils' needs and that there is flexibility to respond to changing needs. As yet, not all support assistants are suitably qualified to manage the wide range of needs in each classroom. The new special educational needs coordinator, with strong support from the local authority (LA), is enthusiastically developing her skills in managing the overall provision, although there is some way to go before management and provision are secure and progress can begin to speed up.

The school now has a much clearer view of the significant challenges it faces in improving pupils' achievement and standards. Assessment and tracking data is collected every six weeks and this is allowing the school to gain a much more detailed picture of the effectiveness of its intervention strategies.

The senior management team and teachers are clearly focused on raising standards. Teachers know the objectives for learning for their year groups in English and mathematics and are striving to get the pupils there. However, for many pupils, and in some classes the majority of pupils, the age appropriate objectives are over a year ahead of their current level. Work is sometimes pitched at too high a level which means that learning is superficial rather than building firmly on what pupils already know and can do.

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

The school's plan for improvement has been revised and gives a much clearer picture of what steps are to be taken to tackle the areas for improvement identified in November 2006. It also includes some quantifiable success criteria and suggested questions for governors to ask when checking on the school's progress. In addition, subject leaders have developed action plans for English, mathematics and science. They are rightly focused on improving performance in next year's national tests, but the success criteria do not give enough emphasis to raising standards in all year groups. Much of the action to be taken consists of making sure that policies and procedures are established and resources improved, but there is not much indication of the practical steps that teachers will take in their day to day teaching to address the gaps and areas of weakness in pupils' knowledge and skills.

The school's leadership structure has been changed. It is now much more straightforward and roles and responsibilities are clear. The recently appointed deputy headteacher has made a good start. She has the support and confidence of the staff and is working well in a complementary role to the headteacher. Many of the senior and middle leaders are new to their roles and relatively inexperienced, but are keen and enthusiastic about the part they have to play in keeping the school moving forward. Given the size of the task that faces them, external support is needed to make sure that they quickly develop the knowledge, understanding and skills to carry out their roles effectively. Staff report a much stronger sense of direction and improved lines of communication. Morale has improved and the school has a much more positive feel.

Systems for checking the quality of teaching and for assessing and tracking attainment and progress are now in place and are being followed. Governors receive reports about these activities and the minutes of their meetings show that there has been considerable discussion about the outcomes of lesson observations, scrutiny of pupils' books and what the tracking information is showing. At the moment, governors wish to see information about pupils' progress more frequently than the school feels is feasible to provide. Governors have expressed a wish to see assessment information expressed in terms of average points scores for each class or year group, whereas the school presents information in terms of age related expectations. Agreement needs to be reached quickly and adhered to. Knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses is growing. Robust action is being taken to tackle barriers to swifter improvement, for example in the quality of teaching. The performance management of teachers has been re-established and the system affirms the teachers' accountability for the progress that their pupils make.

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 continued to provide a level of support that is appropriate for the priorities that the school is working on. It has contributed to the satisfactory

progress made so far. Teachers appreciate the advice they receive from primary strategy consultants and other professionals. The School Improvement Partner is providing support and challenge for the school in evaluating the progress being made. Discussions with members of staff at different levels show that there is a degree of mistrust between the school and the local authority. This needs to be resolved quickly, in the best interests of the pupils.

Priorities for further improvement

No additional priorities have been identified.