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25 February 2008

Mr M Colcombe
The Headteacher
Hareclive Primary School
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Dear Mr Colcombe

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HARECLIVE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Following my visit with David Edwards HMI to your school on 11 and 12 February 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third 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 – good.

One newly qualified teacher may 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 third monitoring inspection: 11 and 12 February 2008

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, two subject leaders, a group of governors and a representative of the local authority.

Context

There have been further staffing changes since the last monitoring inspection. Several posts are covered on a temporary basis, either by supply staff or teachers who already work part time in the school. A leader for the Foundation Stage will take up post after Easter and a coordinator for pupils who have special educational needs has just been recruited.

Achievement and standards

Standards are beginning to rise. There are several reasons for this. Firstly, procedures for tracking pupils' attainment and progress, for setting targets, and for identifying those in need of additional support are robust and firmly established. Secondly, teachers' knowledge of pupils' levels of attainment is more secure and information from assessments is used to help plan lessons that match the pupils' learning needs. Finally, initiatives that focus on particular aspects of underachievement are increasingly successful.

Good progress has been made in Year 1 in raising standards from an exceptionally low base in reading, writing and mathematics, and the proportion of pupils working at the level expected for their age has increased considerably. Progress is not so swift in Year 2. The school's current assessments show that the school is unlikely to hit the targets that were set for seven year olds for the end of this academic year. Standards in this year group are worryingly low.

Taken overall, pupils are making satisfactory progress in Key Stage 2. In some year groups, progress in reading and writing is marked. The rate of progress in mathematics is slower, reflecting the emphasis that the school initially placed on improving pupils' basic skills in English. Progress is not consistent across the year groups, however, reflecting the quality of teaching, but some pupils are moving on very quickly indeed. Some in Year 6 have reached their end of year targets in the space of six months. Despite this, it is unlikely that the school will improve on its test results from last year; the pupils have too much ground to make up. However, the pupils should be closer to attaining the results that would be expected in the light of their results in Year 2.

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 – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and in the playground at break and lunch times. Pupils from the Foundation Stage upwards are happy and enjoy coming to school. They increasingly cooperate and support each other, working well in pairs, taking turns, and listening to others' contributions. Attendance levels are in line with the national figure and reflect both the pupils' growing enjoyment of school and the robust procedures that the school has established to promote good attendance.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. As noted at the last monitoring inspection, there are strengths in teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2. The impact of this good teaching is showing in the good progress that some classes and year groups are making, particularly in reading and writing. The well focused work of teaching assistants is also playing an important part in helping pupils to make up lost ground. The school's information on pupils' attainment and progress highlights where the rate of progress is not so swift, showing where efforts need to be made to raise the quality of teaching. There is still not enough consistently good teaching across the school, which leads to the patchy progress noted above.

The school's efforts to improve teaching are hampered by the continuing instability in staffing. Subject leaders give guidance to temporary teachers and support them with planning in English and mathematics. However, observations during this inspection showed that some supply teachers' grasp of the levels of attainment of the pupils in their class was not secure, leading to the provision of tasks that were too easy. Similarly, there was a lack of skill in identifying learning objectives and success criteria in a way that would help the pupils understand exactly what they were supposed to get out of a lesson.

The school is now able to distinguish more easily between those who have learning difficulties and those who are underachieving, and plan interventions appropriately. The good guidance and support given to pupils who have learning difficulties are helping them to make progress at a faster rate and, in some cases, to exceed the targets that have been set for them.

The pupils usually want to learn. They respond well to the ways in which teachers and support staff acknowledge and praise their efforts. As the pupils are experiencing more success, they are becoming more enthused by learning, particularly in the lower years of the school. They are proud of their achievements and like to show them off. During a phonics session in Year 1, a pupil remarked with great glee, 'I like sentences!' having successfully written one.

The school's curriculum places strong emphasis on basic skills, particularly in English, and the accelerated progress that pupils are making shows that this has not been misplaced. However, as the school looks towards the future and the removal of special measures, the balance will need to be adjusted. Lack of resources also

restricts the school's ability to cover the National Curriculum, for example in information and communication technology.

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 and/or disabilities with better guidance and support to help them make faster progress – good.

Leadership and management

Leadership has continued to improve. The headteacher and deputy headteacher make a good team, and the impact of their work shows in the improving rate of progress in tackling the areas for improvement. They have not shirked from delivering difficult messages where necessary, and are determined to continue with the drive forwards. The school checks the quality of teaching and pupils' progress in a variety of ways, for example by direct observation and scrutiny of pupils' books and teachers' lesson plans. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress are thorough and helpful to teachers, although it is not always easy to see 'the big picture' among the detail of information at the level of an individual pupil. The school's evaluation cycle is well established and provides useful information, which helps the leaders and governors to know how well the school is doing and where further development is needed.

The leaders of English and mathematics are playing a stronger part in planning for how their subjects will develop and in checking on the impact of strategies to raise standards. Despite these growing strengths, there are some gaps. The deputy headteacher is doing sterling work in overseeing the Foundation Stage and provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities until these posts are filled, but leadership of some subjects is not yet prominent enough.

Governors continue to monitor the school's progress and have a realistic view of what has been achieved so far. Plans for additional governors to become more familiar with aspects of the school, for example by meeting with subject leaders, are sensible.

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

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

External support

This term, the local authority (LA) carried out an inspection of teaching and learning at Hareclive. This enabled the LA to check on the impact of its own actions, as well as identifying areas for further work. The outcomes from the review were broadly positive and accord with the findings on teaching and learning noted above. Next steps for the school were appropriate. The impact of the LA's input is visible in the improved progress that pupils are making in reading and writing. The LA continues

to withhold delegated powers from the governing body, but is rightly considering whether powers should be restored in the light of the progress that the school is now making. Relationships between the school and the LA are much improved.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure that the curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements