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3 June 2008

Mrs S Jones  
The Headteacher  
Clehonger C of E Primary School  
Gosmore Road  
Clehonger  
Hereford  
Herefordshire  
HR2 9SN

Dear Mrs Jones

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF CLEHONGER C OF E  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit with Peter Kemble, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 May 2008, 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 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed only after consultation with Her Majesty's Inspector.

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 Director of Education for the Diocese of Hereford, the chair of governors and the Director of Education for Herefordshire.

Yours sincerely

Sue Morris-King  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF CLEHONGER C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 20 and 21 May 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, science coordinator, vice-chair of governors, two other governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

In January 2008, the LA announced a major review of the schools in Herefordshire. Under these proposals there was the possibility that Clehonger would be closed and a new merged school opened on another site. As a result of this announcement, a number of parents removed their children from Clehonger; most notably in the Year 2 class which now has only 10 pupils. Plans for school reorganisation have since changed and the LA has written to the school to assure them that they are no longer under threat of closure or amalgamation.

### Achievement and standards

In the Reception class, children are generally achieving in line with what is expected for their age. In Years 1 to 6, although some pupils in each class are attaining the expected levels for their age in English and mathematics, overall standards remain very low. However, the school's tracking data, coupled with evidence from the work in pupils' books, indicates that a growing number of pupils are starting to make satisfactory progress.

Many pupils, especially those in Key Stage 2, have serious gaps in their knowledge and understanding and this sometimes hampers their progress in lessons. During the inspection, where lessons were carefully planned to remedy these weaknesses and to build on what pupils already know, progress was at least satisfactory. Where planning was less precise or where the teacher did not intervene quickly enough to correct pupils' misunderstandings, progress was slow and occasionally inadequate.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2007:

- raise achievement in English, mathematics and science to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential – satisfactory.

### Personal development and well-being

Pupils' behaviour during the monitoring inspection was good. Pupils have very good relationships with each other and with staff, and were polite and welcoming to inspectors. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. When lessons are stimulating, pupils rise to the challenge and are highly enthusiastic. Older pupils in particular take

a pride in being responsible for aspects of the school, for example Year 6 pupils help during assemblies and act as receptionists at lunchtime. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in assembly were very good. Pupils took part and listened well. The school's attendance is around the national average, although 17 pupils attend for less than 90% of the time which means that they miss too much learning time.

### Quality of provision

The quality of teaching observed during the monitoring inspection was satisfactory overall, ranging from good to inadequate. The good lessons started promptly and the teacher set a brisk pace from the outset. The tasks set were suitably challenging for almost all of the pupils and pupils responded well. In these lessons questioning was used well to extend the pupils' thinking. In a good science lesson, positive use was made of the pupils' own experiences to extend their scientific thinking. Support staff had a clear understanding of their role and were highly focused on supporting the pupils' successful learning.

Some lessons, although satisfactory overall, lasted for too long, which slowed the pace of learning. In these lessons some pupils, particularly those with the weaker skills, found it difficult to concentrate for the full length of time. Where teaching was inadequate, the subject matter was interesting and appropriate for the pupils and the lesson's structure was suitable but pupils did not receive enough adult attention and guidance which led to too many making inadequate progress. Relationships between staff and pupils were positive in all lessons.

An appropriate amount of time is now given to phonics teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1. However, overall, at Key Stage 1 and in Reception, there is not enough teaching time. Moreover, the structure of the timetable, such as when assemblies occur, results in teachers not having enough flexibility in the timing of their lessons.

The headteacher, with the support of the LA inspector, has set a series of 'non-negotiable' actions which are required as part of staff's lesson planning. An appropriate common planning format has been introduced which has led to detailed planning and clearer structures for each lesson. This has also helped support staff to be more aware of their specific role in the lesson. All plans include the objectives for the lesson, although these are variable in quality and many are insufficiently focused on the desired learning outcomes for the pupils.

The headteacher has rightly identified that the previous lack of accurate assessment information has severely hampered pupils' progress and has taken a series of appropriate actions to improve this situation. There is now a growing range of accurate information available about the levels at which pupils are working. Lesson planning is taking greater account of the needs of the different groups of learners. However, the school is aware that this remains a priority for improvement. The marking of pupils' work, although still inconsistent from class to class, is developing well.

There is a lack of clarity in the school about the identification of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). Some of the pupils on the school's LDD list are those who have learning difficulties but some are those who are

underachieving for other reasons, for example because teaching has not met their needs. The result of this lack of clarity is that neither provision in lessons nor additional interventions are closely enough matched to the needs of pupils who do have a learning difficulty or those who are underachieving. The targets which have been set for these pupils' progress are generally too low and staff's expectations are correspondingly low.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2007:

- improve pupils' learning by ensuring that accurate assessment information is used to plan lessons that meet the needs of the wide range of abilities – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

The headteacher has responded professionally to the outcomes of the previous section 5 inspection and has taken a range of appropriate actions to begin to improve the school. She understands the need for urgent change and has communicated this clearly to the staff. Staff are working hard to put in place the required improvements, with increasing effect.

The school has implemented a new system to identify and track the level at which pupils are working in English and mathematics. Importantly, this has allowed the headteacher to gain a greater knowledge of the standards being reached by each pupil and the overall progress being made by each class. The system does not, however, clearly show the progress of each pupil or allow this to be easily tracked on a term by term basis. Nevertheless, this increased rigour in the collection and use of assessment data does make the headteacher better placed to hold the staff to account and to ask challenging questions where necessary. She has begun to hold regular meetings with each teacher in which planning and the outcome of lesson observations are examined and the progress of the class is discussed. This has led to some appropriate actions being planned and taken, although these are not yet sufficiently focused on the outcomes for individual children.

The leaders of mathematics and science have made a suitable start to improving provision in these curriculum areas and are beginning to understand the extent of the task ahead of them. Long term planning for these subjects has improved and training for staff has been introduced. However, initiatives are not yet sufficiently focused on raising standards. The headteacher is currently leading developments in English effectively. She recognises the need to share the leadership of this subject area with another staff member in the near future in order to be able to concentrate fully on other leadership issues.

Governors are committed to their roles and are determined to help the school to improve. The information received by the governing body has improved significantly and governors are now much better placed to challenge and support the school. Sensibly, they have organised a 'challenge committee' and a 'standards committee', each of which has a specific responsibility for overseeing parts of the school's action plan and reporting back to the full governing body. The standards committee has been assisted in its development by the school's LA contact inspector, although other

governors have not received support or training in interpreting data related to standards and progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in November 2007:

- improve the effectiveness of leadership and management in monitoring and evaluating the school's performance and improving areas of underachievement – satisfactory.

### External support

The local authority's action plan is now satisfactory. An appendix gives more detail of the actions to be taken and success criteria are clearer. However, the way in which the effectiveness of the LA's actions will be evaluated are still lacking in detail. The timescale which has been set for the school to be removed from special measures is realistic.

The local authority's support for the school since it became subject to special measures has been satisfactory. The contact inspector has an accurate knowledge of the school and the issues which need to be resolved and has consistently supported the headteacher in taking the required actions. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are benefiting from support from two experienced senior leaders from other schools who are acting as their mentors. Regular support from two LA consultants has helped the staff to improve their planning and has begun to help with the development of the curriculum. The LA is aware that further intensive support is now required to ensure that all teaching is at least satisfactory.

### Priorities for further improvement

- Identify those pupils currently on the LDD list who do have a learning difficulty and those who are underachieving for other reasons and plan and implement the appropriate interventions accordingly.
- Ensure that all pupils' targets are suitably aspirational.
- Refine lesson planning and ensure that each lesson has a clearly defined learning outcome.
- Refine the system for tracking pupils' progress
- Re-evaluate the amount and use of teaching time in all key stages, and particularly in Key Stage 1.