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Mrs C Stretton  
The Headteacher  
Marriott Primary School  
Marriott Road  
Leicester  
Leicestershire  
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Dear Mrs Stretton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Marriott Primary School

Following my visit with Mary Usher-Clark to your school on 29 and 30 October 2008, 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 January 2008. 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 (NQT) may be appointed subject to the following conditions. The school must involve the local authority (LA) in the appointment process. The NQT should be mentored in school by a teacher of proven high quality. All NQT entitlements must be met in full. Appropriate internal and external development, support and induction must be provided.

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 Education.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
H M Inspector

## Special measures: monitoring of Marriott Primary School

Report from the second monitoring inspection on 29 and 30 October 2008

### Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents, and met with the executive headteacher (EHT), interim headteacher (IHT), senior leadership team and representatives of the Interim Executive Board (IEB). A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the Local Authority (LA). Informal discussions were also held with other staff and pupils.

### Context

Since the last monitoring visit, the substantive headteacher has retired. The IHT continues to lead and manage the school on a day-to-day basis supported by an EHT for 2.5 days. A leading teacher has been appointed to develop effective teaching and learning across the school. The IEB was unable to recruit 2 additional teachers before the start of the academic year so the deputy headteacher and the special needs coordinator are each teaching a class. This has resulted in the creation of two large Years 5 and 6 classes rather than the previous three smaller classes. An additional behaviour mentor has been appointed to work with identified pupils. The chair of the IEB resigned due to work commitments and a new chair has recently been appointed. A number of vacancies remain unfilled on the IEB. Numbers on roll have fallen from 257 to 210 due to a large Year 6 cohort leaving at the end of the year and pupils moving to other schools. In addition, the LA has agreed not to admit pupils other than in Foundation 1 and 2 years in order to stabilise the school. Staff morale is improving. Re-organisation and refurbishment has enhanced the teaching and learning environment.

### Achievement and standards

Current standards remain exceptionally low in reading, writing, mathematics and science throughout the school. There is still a wide gap in pupils' skills and knowledge in all subjects with weaknesses in the fundamental basic skills of literacy and numeracy. Analysis of the school's assessment data shows that far too many pupils are working at levels below those expected for their age with too many making slow progress. However, green shoots of recovery are beginning to emerge. At the end of Key Stage 2 last year, higher proportions of pupils made expected or better progress in writing as a result of effectively targeted intervention. Consequently, attainment in English improved overall, and the gap between the school and national outcomes closed in that subject. However, standards in reading, mathematics and science remain well below the national average and are exceptionally low. Boys achieved better than girls in all subjects.

Where teaching is consistently good, pupils are starting to make accelerated progress. Nevertheless, this is not yet sufficient to address the legacy of past underachievement and pupils are still working at levels below those they are capable of. Since the last visit more pupils are taking an increasing pride in their work and there is some improvement in the number of older pupils that write fluently. Increasingly higher teacher expectations are leading to an improvement in the quality of handwriting and presentation, although this is variable from class to class.

Teacher assessments which show that children reach above average standards in most areas of learning by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the past have been too generous. The school recognises this and has set about ensuring that there is better assessment which is regularly moderated to ensure improved accuracy.

Teachers are beginning to use assessment information more routinely to identify and target pupils for improvement. Initiatives such as pupil progress meetings are increasingly being used by teachers to plan and address pupils' individual needs. A number of intervention groups designed to accelerate rates of pupil progress have been established and range of strategies, such as guided reading, have been implemented. However, the impact and effectiveness of many of these initiatives have yet to be monitored and evaluated by leaders and managers, and their findings shared with staff and reported to the IEB.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- raise standards, particularly in English, by assessing the individual needs of pupils and ensuring that they are met – inadequate.

### Personal development and well-being

Most pupils have good attitudes to their work. Behaviour during lessons is good when teaching retains their interest. They enjoy their practical lessons most, with physical education, music and science investigations particular favourites. The much improved environment is now more conducive to promoting better learning and behaviour. In the EYFS, further development of the outside areas is required to enhance the outdoor curriculum. Active playtimes and appropriate levels of supervision maintain the good behaviour during less structured times, but some shortage of equipment for older pupils can lead to some boisterous play.

School attendance remains inadequate and is well below average. A variety of strategies are being used, such as discouraging term time holidays and telephone calls to families on the first day of absence, but more needs to be done.

Timekeeping at the start of the day remains a problem for some families, with the ensuing disruption to lessons. As one pupils said, 'Loads of children in my class are late and this disrupts our learning, as the teacher has to repeat everything and it gets boring for the rest of us.'

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last visit. More good teaching was seen, but too much remains satisfactory with some still inadequate. In good lessons, previous learning is clearly built upon and the use of interactive whiteboards enhances lessons and supports learning. There is a good range of appropriate activities with clear instructions given to pupils. In poorer lessons, issues such as too much teacher talk and long periods of time sitting on the carpet remain. In addition, in a tenth of lessons, weak teacher subject knowledge and the lack of confidence to adapt and modify planning to suit pupils' needs have a detrimental impact on learning. There is generally a better use of 'working walls' and reference made to them during lessons. Greater encouragement is given to pupils to talk about their work to reinforce ideas and focus their thinking. However, there are occasions when this strategy is over used. In the EYFS, teaching is satisfactory and school leaders know that support is needed to plan for better use of adult intervention. Throughout the school, teaching assistants support pupils well during lessons and actively participate in lesson introductions.

Scrutiny of pupils' books shows there has been some improvement in the curriculum for science and the foundation subjects such as history and geography. There is better coverage and an improving depth of study. Fewer worksheets are in evidence and increasing opportunities are being presented for pupils to develop their writing skills across the wider curriculum. For example, literacy and history are being linked well in the Years 3 and 4 study of the Second World War. There is a shortfall in the amount of time for physical education across the school.

A range of appropriate systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the quality of the teaching, with suitable support provided to improve practice and raise standards. Teachers are growing in confidence to use their tracking data to inform the planning of lessons more appropriately to the needs of their pupils. Where pupils' work is marked well, developmental comments make clear to them how they can improve their next piece of work. Pupils are all familiar with the marking colour code. However, they do not always know their learning targets, and say they struggle with the way they are written, particularly in mathematics.

All adults who work in the school have been appropriately checked and the safeguarding of pupils is robust.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching by developing rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation that pinpoints strengths and areas for improvement, so that best practice is disseminated and support is provided where provision is weaker – satisfactory.

## Leadership and management

The EHT and IHT continue to work together closely and are establishing a learning culture and improved ethos throughout the school. They are successfully focusing staff attention on bringing about the necessary improvements. Increasingly, most staff understand their accountability and responsibility for improving their own teaching practice, increasing rates of pupil progress and thereby raising educational standards. Most appreciate fully the very significant issues that need to be addressed in order to raise standards and improve achievement throughout the school. They are beginning to form a cohesive team.

School leaders have successfully managed to recruit some teachers of high quality and induct them appropriately into the school. The school has a much calmer and purposeful working atmosphere. However, frequent long term teacher absence and the difficulty in recruiting staff of sufficient high calibre have hindered consistent and sustained improvement. Pupils have made limited progress in those classes taught by a number of different supply teachers despite a range of support being provided by senior staff. Pupils say, 'We get loads of supply teachers who really confuse us. It's unfair.' In addition, school policy is often inconsistently applied by temporary teachers.

Since the last visit, there have been positive developments in leadership and management across the school. The deputy headteacher, leading teacher and core subject leaders have begun to fulfil their leadership roles more effectively. For example, the deputy headteacher has provided good mentor support for a colleague in the parallel year group class and has implemented a robust process for monitoring teachers' planning. The leading teacher has swiftly established herself in the school by acting as a good example to other teachers by modelling effective classroom practice and providing professional support for other colleagues. Subject leaders for literacy and numeracy have undertaken a range of monitoring and evaluation activities, including the scrutiny of teachers' plans and pupils' work and classroom observations. Outcomes are increasingly being used to inform practice.

The work of the IEB has been hampered because it was without a chair and has been without a full complement of members for a number of months. The newly appointed chair of the IEB is strong and is beginning to work much more closely with school leaders. The board is now beginning to hold school leaders to account by requiring clear evaluations and precise measurements of success. A change in the school's improvement adviser (SIA) has led to some slippage in the monitoring and evaluation of the school's raising attainment plan (RAP). It is imperative that the LA formal review cycle is brought back on track as a matter of urgency. In addition, the RAP needs reviewing and updating.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- strengthen leadership at all levels by clarifying roles and responsibilities and by developing accountability, robust management systems, rigorous self-evaluation and effective improvement planning – satisfactory.

## External support

Good support has been provided by a number of LA officers including national strategy and EYFS consultants, property services, the special needs team, the behaviour support team and the educational psychology service. The LA has successfully secured the appointment of the IHT until the end of 2010. However, the LA has provided insufficient support in a number of key areas, leaving school leaders feeling vulnerable and unsupported. No support has been provided to secure the appointment of teachers of proven high quality. It has been slow to ensure that the IEB has sufficient members to support the work of the school. The new chair of the IEB has only recently been appointed and taken up post. Strategic issues such as budget and financial issues have yet to be fully addressed. The school is facing significant financial problems despite making considerable staffing cuts. Too many teachers have been appointed previously on high salary scales and budget problems are compounded by the reduction in pupil numbers. A new school improvement adviser has been appointed who is beginning to increase her involvement with the school. However, the programmed LA formal review and review of the RAP have yet to be undertaken.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the IEB has a full complement of members so that they can effectively hold the headteachers to account for the progress made towards school improvement.
- Leaders need to monitor and evaluate the impact of the range of strategies that have been implemented and report their findings to staff, the LA and the IEB.
- Increase the involvement and understanding of the LA by ensuring that the actions contained in the RAP are reviewed, and that the RAP identifies how well leaders are managing change and effecting improvement.
- Improve rates of attendance and punctuality further by continuing to work with pupils, parents and carers and the education welfare officer to promote good attendance.