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Mrs Catherine Stretton  
The Headteacher  
Marriott Primary School  
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Leicester  
Leicestershire  
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Dear Mrs Stretton

Special measures: monitoring inspection of Marriott Primary School

Following my visit to your school on 4 and 5 March 2009, 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 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 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.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of the interim executive board (IEB) and the Director of Children's Services for Leicester City.

Yours sincerely

Paul Weston  
Her Majesty's Inspector



## Special measures: monitoring of Marriott Primary School

Report from the third monitoring inspection on 4 and 5 March 2009

### Evidence

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, interim headteacher, senior leadership team and representatives of the IEB and local authority. Informal discussions were also held with other staff and pupils.

### Context

Since the last monitoring visit, support from the executive headteacher has been reduced strategically to 1.5 days a week. One teacher has resigned and a newly qualified teacher has been appointed. An additional teacher has completed a therapeutic return to work. The number on roll has increased to 238 following the IEB's decision to reinstate the school's admission procedures. The leading teacher has been released from her class teaching commitment to resume her support and mentoring role. The combination of these factors has necessitated leaders to reorganise classes from January 2009. The IEB has recruited one new member.

### Achievement and standards

Standards throughout the school remain exceptionally low, but internal school data and inspection evidence show discernable improvements. Suitable steps are now being taken to tackle weaknesses and underachievement is being addressed more rigorously. Pupils' progress is being tracked more carefully and other strategies, such as guided lessons, extra support and booster lessons, are beginning to have a positive impact. Better identification and diagnosis of all pupils are enabling teachers to plan better to address pupils' individual needs. Consequently, many pupils are now making the rates of progress expected of them and an increasing number are beginning to make accelerated progress. However, pockets of low achievement remain in most classes. This is because some improvements in teaching and learning are not yet consolidated and some teachers remain overly cautious in their assessments. Additionally, the rates of progress some pupils make are adversely affected by their irregular attendance. Slow progress is further exacerbated by the influx of new pupils admitted to the school since November 2008 because a number have learning difficulties or come with a history of infrequent attendance.

From the work seen in pupils' books and in lessons, standards continue to be much below the level expected in most classes. This is because pupils, particularly the more able, have a great deal of ground to make up after several years of underachievement. Where teaching is good, this is reflected in the progress pupils make. This is particularly evident in Year 6. Standards in English are beginning to improve throughout the school. Regular guided reading and writing lessons, coupled

with increased opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills and write across the curriculum, are beginning to have the desired effect. However, there is still much work to be done to ensure pupils achieve expected levels. The quality of presentation continues to improve with most pupils taking an increased pride in their work.

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 – satisfactory.

### Personal development and well-being

Work to improve attendance is continuing with adequate support provided by the education welfare officer. School leaders are taking a strong line to address the problem of the hard core of families who keep their children off school. More is being done to inform parents and carers to help them understand the importance of regular attendance. However, attendance remains well short of where the school needs to, or would like to, be and further work is required. A breakfast club has been established to encourage pupils to arrive punctually and provide them with a nutritious meal at the start of each day. This is proving popular and beneficial.

Pupils new to the school have been inducted well and most have settled quickly into their new learning environment. In particular, good relationships have been established with the Traveller community. In the main, pupils respond well to lessons and to play, although a small minority find it difficult to learn school routines. Occasionally, this adversely affects the progress they and others in the class make. Teachers and support staff work hard with good understanding and care to help such pupils settle. During break times, a range of structured play activities have been introduced to provide pupils with greater interest and stimulation. This is helping to reduce the number of playground incidents and enables lessons to start promptly because teachers do not have to spend time resolving playtime disputes. Pupils now eat healthy snacks during break.

### Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching and learning is similar to that found at the time of last visit. The majority is satisfactory, with around a third that is good. Inadequate teaching remains in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this prevents children being equipped with the firm grounding they need for their future learning. Throughout the school, there is insufficient consistently good teaching to ensure that standards improve swiftly in every class. A rigorous system of monitoring and evaluation has been implemented which identifies teaching strengths and areas for improvement precisely. Good practice is disseminated and additional support is provided where required. Together, these are beginning to secure the necessary improvements.

Most teachers have clearer expectations about what they want pupils to learn and share this with them at the start of lessons. They are getting better at planning work at different levels. In the best lessons, different groups are aware of what they need to do to succeed and work provides the right level of challenge for them. Pupils are motivated to improve their work and they make good progress. There are still times where work is not matched well enough to pupils' capabilities. As a result, pupils are not fully engaged and their slow pace of learning prevents them from reaching their potential.

Increased opportunities are being provided for pupils to practise their literacy and numeracy skills through work in subjects such as history, geography and science. The use of worksheets and colouring activities, which were previously restricting opportunities for pupils to write at length, have been reduced. There are now more opportunities for pupils to experience and practise a range of writing styles through work in other subjects. However, the quality is often not to the same standard as that found in literacy lessons. School leaders have undertaken a review of the school week which has confirmed a shortfall in Key Stage 2. Decisive action has been taken to remedy this and the changes to extend the school day will be implemented from the start of the new academic year.

Progress since the last visit on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of teaching by developing a 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

Following the required consultation, the management structure of the school has been reviewed and leadership roles and responsibilities at all levels have been clarified. Members of the senior leadership team continue to develop their roles and skills to manage change, although further development is required for these to become routine and fully embedded. The interim headteacher has provided thorough evaluations of progress which have been shared with staff, the IEB and the local authority. Outcomes have been used effectively to inform strategic planning. The school's raising attainment plan has been revised to include additional and appropriate areas for improvement. The plan also identifies how well leaders are managing change and its success in effecting improvement.

The IEB continues to hold the interim headteacher and executive headteacher to account for the pace and progress of school improvement and is successfully building the capacity of the interim headteacher. The chair and vice chair are dedicated and committed to helping the school improve. The board has increased its understanding by receiving clear evaluations and more accurate data from the interim headteacher and by visiting the school. The work of the executive headteacher has been specifically focused on discrete areas of development and an

appropriate exit strategy is now being progressed. The newly qualified teacher appointed last term is receiving appropriate support and her entitlements are being met in full.

Monitoring and evaluation are leading to better assessment and planning which are starting to increase rates of pupil progress. In this regard, good support has been provided by the leading teacher and literacy and numeracy subject leaders. However, although they have undertaken evaluations of their work, these have not always been routinely shared directly with the IEB. Consequently, the board does not fully appreciate the range of work undertaken or its subsequent impact. All staff have worked hard to develop further systems for keeping track of pupils' progress. Regular progress meetings are now established and are a valuable tool for enabling each teacher to be accountable for standards in their class. Following each meeting, appropriate strategies and interventions are being identified and implemented which are starting to lead to improvements in learning.

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

The local authority provides good support to the school in a number of areas. Its advisory staff visit regularly and have helped to improve provision, especially in the quality of teaching and learning. However, further work is needed to help staff meet the needs of some pupils with learning difficulties, those exhibiting challenging behaviour, and Traveller children. The school improvement adviser provides highly effective and timely support. She has a good knowledge and understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and what it needs to do to improve. The School Improvement Partner challenges the school's leaders appropriately and summary reports are detailed and accurate. However, some fundamental issues identified at the time of the last visit remain. Despite its best efforts, the local authority has been unsuccessful in securing the appointment of teachers of proven high quality to help drive up standards. In addition, the IEB still does not have sufficient members to support the work of the school.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- Endeavour to appoint teachers of proven high quality with support from the local authority.
- Increase the proportion of consistently good teaching to improve rates of progress further for all pupils throughout the school.
- Continue to 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.

- Continue to work with local authority officers to provide appropriate training for teachers to support better those pupils identified with learning difficulties and behavioural problems.
- Continue with efforts to secure a full complement of IEB members so that the board can effectively hold the interim headteacher to account for the progress made towards school improvement.