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Mr G Long
The Acting Headteacher
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Dear Mr Long

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF UPPER HORFIELD
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 28 and 29 November 2007, 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 May 2006. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

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's Services for Bristol City Council.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF UPPER HORFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 28 and 29 November 2007

Evidence

An inspector observed the school's work including 6 lessons and 1 assembly, scrutinised documents, met with the headteacher and a range of staff, representative groups of pupils, the chair of governors and an adviser from the local authority.

Context

The temporary headteacher in charge of the school at the time of the last inspection in May 2007 was replaced by a new advisory headteacher in September 2007. Two part time teachers have left the school and been replaced by one full time teacher since the inspection. There are plans to open a children's centre on the school site in September 2008. The school is located within an area of urban regeneration and this has resulted in a large number of pupils joining and leaving the school since the last inspection, at times other than is normal. For example, 42 pupils out of the whole school population of 111 have joined the school and 41 left since the last inspection in May 2007. The profile of pupils within the school has also changed. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English has increased from 11.5% to 16%.

Achievement and standards

Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 improved in 2007 from the very low levels attained in 2006. Despite this improvement, standards remain well below the national average. Year 2 standards improved in mathematics and reading but remained at a similar level in writing. Boys did relatively less well than girls in all three areas of learning. Standards at the end of Year 6 improved in English, mathematics and science. Within English the improvement in reading was stronger than writing. The overall progress of these Year 6 pupils through the school was significantly below expected levels.

During this inspection, the level of pupils' attainment in lessons was well below the national average. However, standards are improving in English and mathematics as a result of strategies implemented in recent months. There have been improvements in reading and writing, as the result of a very focused approach towards the teaching of phonics. The quality of teaching is improving across the school and this is resulting in pupils making better progress in lessons.

The leadership team have recently introduced an improved system to assess pupils regularly to determine their level of attainment. The information provided by these assessments is now centrally stored in an electronic data system. This information has been used to identify children who are performing below the level expected for

their age. Appropriate intervention and support strategies have now been put in place to support them. This new central system of storing assessment information, combined with more reliable assessments of children's attainment, provides the school with the potential now to track effectively the progress of pupils over time. This will enable the school to identify pupils who are making less than expected progress and evaluate the effectiveness of its intervention strategies. The leadership team have rightly identified this is an important next stage of development for the school.

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

- significantly improve standards by using assessment information to raise expectations, and by improving the quality of teaching and learning – satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

The headteacher has very effectively led the development of the school's new behaviour policy. This policy is based on praise and encouragement to reinforce good behaviour positively. The staff are committed to this approach and it is now being consistently implemented across the school. Pupils rightly say that behaviour in the school has improved since the last inspection. They report that they enjoy school, that there is less bullying and that they feel safe. During this visit the great majority of pupils behaved well both in lessons and around the school. Staff now manage and support well a small minority of pupils whose behaviour is challenging. Records show that the number of pupils using bad language or behaving aggressively has been greatly reduced. As a result, the number of exclusions from the school has been much reduced since the start of this academic year.

The attendance of pupils has improved since the last inspection. This is largely due to the introduction of robust systems to track pupils' attendance and more effective joint working with the school's education welfare officer. The school is now working well with parents to encourage better attendance. Another important factor in improving attendance is the improved learning culture within the school, making it a more enjoyable place to attend. Despite improvement in attendance, it remains well below the national average.

Pupils' moral and social development has improved since the last inspection. The assembly observed during this visit provided good opportunities for pupils to reflect on how their actions affect the feelings of others. A school council, set up since the last inspection, also provides pupils with more opportunities to take responsibility and contribute to the development of the school community. For example, the councillors have been involved in initiatives to improve behaviour around the school. The school has raised the cultural awareness of pupils through the celebration of religious occasions from a variety of different faiths.

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

- create a positive learning environment with an exciting and stimulating curriculum where good behaviour and high attendance levels are the norm – good.

Quality of provision

At the time of the previous inspection teaching and learning were judged to be inadequate. A sharper focus on the evaluation of the performance of all teachers has led to clear identification of areas for improvement. An external teaching coach has worked effectively with some teachers. There is good practice within the school and all the lessons observed during this inspection were at least satisfactory. Lessons are characterised by good relationships between pupils and staff. Improvement in behaviour has led to teachers having greater confidence to use a wider range of active learning strategies in their lessons. This has increased pupils enjoyment and active involvement in their learning. In most lessons good opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills.

A more robust system is now in place to monitor pupils' level of attainment regularly. The levelling of pupils' work across year groups is now more consistent, although the leadership team have identified the need to improve their accuracy further. Assessment information is now being used more effectively by staff to plan work at the right levels to meet the complex needs of pupils in their lessons. However, this remains a continuing area of development for the school.

Staff have increased the number of visits and visitors to the school in order to enliven the learning experience for pupils. Some new extra-curricular clubs have also been introduced, although the school still needs to develop the pupils' commitment to attend these regularly.

Since September 2007 the school has been supported by an experienced special educational needs coordinator (SENCO) who has been seconded to the school for a day a week from the local authority. The process of identification of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is now more robust, with the needs of children identified more accurately. Up to date individual education plans (IEPs) are now in place for all pupils on the special needs register. This was not the case when the SENCO joined the school in September. Pupils are now provided with appropriate support linked to their learning need. The progress of pupils towards the targets on their IEPs is now being monitored by teaching assistants and teachers. The school still needs to develop this process of monitoring to ensure greater consistency or practice.

Since the previous inspection, the percentage of pupils whose first language is not English has increased. The needs of these pupils are now identified on entry to the school and appropriate intervention provision is put in place to support them. The school has rightly identified the need to develop further class support for these pupils. It is now working with the ethnic minority achievement service to improve provision in this area.

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

- ensure that all pupils who find learning or conforming to school expectations difficult, or who speak English as an additional language, get the support they need to succeed – good.

Leadership and management

The experienced advisory headteacher has provided the school with very effective leadership since he joined the school in September. A clear direction for improvement has been set based on high expectations and a strong desire to provide the best for pupils. These high expectations are reflected in the suitably challenging targets that are now set for all pupils. The vision and determination to improve the school are shared by all staff. A more consistent whole school approach to improving behaviour has greatly improved the learning climate within the school.

The headteacher has put in place good plans to develop leadership and management. For example, the creation of a senior leadership team has widened the base of leadership within the school. Subject coordinators for literacy and numeracy have been given greater responsibility to improve provision and outcomes within their areas of responsibility. In the past they monitored pupil progress but little effective use was made of this information. Information gained from monitoring is now used to set whole school curricular targets and focus teaching on areas of learning in need of improvement. Intervention programmes are now more effectively targeted at those pupils in need of specific support. The coordinators do not currently monitor teaching and learning in their subject areas, but the school has plans to address this issue. The literacy and numeracy coordinators provide a good model for the development of subject coordination in all areas of the curriculum.

At the time of the previous inspection governors were judged to take their role of critical friend seriously. This remains the case. Governors are well aware of the school's developing strengths and areas still in need of improvement. They are fully involved in monitoring the impact of actions taken by the school in its drive for improvement.

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

- involve all leaders and managers in promoting high quality care and education by providing clear direction and challenging targets – good.

External support

The local authority's statement of action is satisfactory. It addresses the issues raised by the last inspection and links well with the school's development plan. Those responsible for ensuring that actions take place are identified along with success criteria. The impact of the actions in the local authority's action plan and the school's development plan are monitored well by a progress review group. This group is attended by local authority advisors, the headteacher and chair of governors. The authority has provided the school with good support particularly in developing leadership and management, support for children with learning difficulties and disabilities and teaching and learning.

Priorities for further improvement

- Use the assessment information that is now being collected and stored centrally to monitor the progress of all groups of pupils over time and evaluate the effectiveness of intervention strategies.