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Mr G Long
The Headteacher
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Dear Mr Long

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

Following my visit to your school on 26 and 27 March 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 May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good.

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 second monitoring inspection: 26 and 27 March 2008

Evidence

An inspector observed the school's work including 6 lessons and 2 assemblies, 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 deputy headteacher and one teacher have left the school since the last monitoring inspection. They have both been replaced by new members of staff. The plans to open the children's centre on the school site in September 2008 are well advanced. A children's centre leader and early years curriculum leader have both been appointed. Seven pupils have joined the school since the last visit. The percentage of pupils whose first language is not English has increased from 16% to 18%.

Achievement and standards

Pupils' attainment is regularly checked each term through formal school assessments. These involve the use of tests and teachers' assessment of pupils' work. Improved moderation procedures have ensured that these assessments are more reliable and robust. A very good central data system has been established in which this attainment information is stored. This recently developed system now allows the progress of pupils to be tracked over time. The tracking evidence indicates that the progress made by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics is improving, although there is some uneven progress across the year groups.

Standards observed in lessons during this inspection were well below the national average. This reflects the fact that pupils enter the school with well below average standards and older pupils made less than expected progress during their early years at the school. However, lesson observations confirmed that the progress of pupils is improving and standards are rising due to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. Significant improvement in writing was particularly evident from a scrutiny of pupils' work.

A phonic based intervention programme was introduced for nearly all pupils in September 2007. This programme, along with other reading intervention support, has played an important role in raising standards in reading.

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 – good.

Personal development and well-being

Standards of behaviour and attitudes to learning have continued to improve since the last monitoring visit. These improvements are effectively led by the headteacher and driven by the consistent implementation of the new behaviour policy by all staff. The vast majority of pupils now behave sensibly in lessons and during break and lunch times. Pupils say that the school is a lot calmer than it was last academic year and there is far less bullying and boisterous behaviour. As a result, they feel safer. This improvement in behaviour is contributing to an improved climate for learning within the school. A small minority of pupils whose behaviour is challenging are well managed by school staff with effective external support. As a result of improved behaviour, the number of exclusions has continued to decline.

The school robustly tracks and promotes good attendance. However, although the attendance of pupils is better than it was during the last academic year, it remains at a similar level to that seen at the last monitoring inspection. The percentage of unauthorised absence is similar to the national average, but the percentage of authorised absence is well above average. Improving attendance remains a priority for the school.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements and teachers enrich pupils' learning through the use of visits and visitors to the school. However, there is a need to develop the curriculum in order that it better reflects the needs and interests of the changing pupil population in the school. The school sensibly plans to carry out a review of the curriculum in the summer term.

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 – satisfactory.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning in the school has improved since the last monitoring inspection and this has had a positive impact on pupils' achievement. All the lessons observed during this visit were at least satisfactory, with a higher percentage of lessons judged good than during the previous monitoring inspection. All lessons are well planned around clear learning outcomes for pupils. In most lessons these learning outcomes and success criteria are made very clear to pupils. Due to an improved climate for learning, teachers are more confident to help pupils work independently and this is improving pupils' enjoyment of lessons. Teachers make good use of talk partners to develop ideas and improve pupils speaking and listening skills. Better use is now being made of assessment information to pitch activities in lessons at an appropriate level for all pupils, but this remains an area of development for some teachers. Learning support assistants are now providing pupils with effective support.

Pupils are generally aware of their targets for improvement. Their knowledge of what to do to improve is also being assisted by teachers' marking of their work. Most marking gives helpful 'next steps' advice to pupils.

Improved, robust procedures are now in place to identify those pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD). All pupils on the register of special educational needs have individual education plans (IEPs). All teachers have copies of these IEPs and this helps ensure that appropriate support is provided to pupils linked to their individual learning needs. The local authority is continuing to provide LDD support to the school. However, the leadership team has plans to appoint a new inclusion manager from September 2008 in order that the school can take full responsibility for this aspect of its work.

The school has further developed the level of support provided to pupils whose first language is not English. Pupils who require additional support are identified on entry to the school. Effective working arrangements are now in place with the ethnic minority achievement service (EMAS) to assess the needs of these pupils and clearly identify the support they require. The EMAS service is also working with teachers to develop expertise in supporting pupils whose first language is not English. The phonic based intervention programme used by the school to improve reading has been particularly effective with younger children whose first language is not English.

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 advisory headteacher has continued to lead the school very well. He has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and has set a clear direction for improvement. He wants the very best for all pupils and he has the full support of all staff. These high expectations are reflected in the suitably challenging targets that are set for pupils. A significant improvement in the climate for learning in the school has enabled teachers to concentrate more effectively on pupils' learning rather than focus on managing behaviour. The leadership team has also taken a number of steps to enable and encourage parents to be more involved in their children's education.

The capacity of the senior leadership team has been strengthened by the addition of the new children's centre leaders. The new deputy headteacher has also quickly acquired a good understanding of the central data system and this is being used well to track pupils' progress. The school is now able to identify pupils who are underachieving, something that was not possible in the past. The leadership team is developing its strategy to target specific intervention support at these identified underachieving pupils. The leadership team recognises that it now needs to monitor and evaluate the progress being made by different groups of pupils within the school.

The role of the numeracy and literacy coordinators continues to develop well. The literacy coordinator has successfully led a number of initiatives to improve pupils' reading and writing. Both coordinators have received training on lesson observations and have carried out a series of observations within the school. Outcomes of lesson

observations, scrutiny of work and progress data are enabling the coordinators to evaluate more effectively the quality of provision and outcomes within their subjects. The headteacher aims to share this developing good practice with all subject leaders. A more consistent approach to subject leadership is being promoted through clear and recently produced advice and guidance.

The governors are very supportive of the advisory headteacher. They recognise the many positive steps that have been taken along the road of improvement. They continue to monitor the actions taken by the school well. They are aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are prepared to ask challenging questions when and if they are required.

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

Support from the local authority is good. A wide range of leadership and management and subject specific support has been provided to the school. This has helped develop the school's capacity for self-evaluation and improvement. A local authority review group monitors the implementation and impact of the school's and local authority's action plan and also coordinates and monitors the impact of support.

Priorities for further improvement

- Use the new central data system to monitor and evaluate the progress being made by different groups of pupils within the school.
- Develop the curriculum in order that it better reflects the needs and interests of the changing pupil population in the school.