



16 March 2006

Mr Tony Markham  
The seconded Headteacher  
Herne Junior School  
Love Lane  
Petersfield  
GU31 4BP

Dear Mr Markham

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF HERNE JUNIOR SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Brian Evans AI and Graham Warner AI to your school on 1 and 2 March 2006, 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 September 2005.

This letter 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.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and held discussions with the seconded headteacher, the deputy headteacher, heads of all year groups, the co-ordinators with responsibility for leading and managing mathematics, English, special educational needs (SEN), assessment and the curriculum. There were also discussions held with the chairperson of the governing body, a newly appointed community governor, the attached inspector and the local authority school improvement manager. The views of pupils were gathered informally and through meetings with focus groups, which included the school's young governors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons or part lessons.

### **Context**

Until the temporary appointment of a seconded headteacher in January 2006 the school experienced unsettling turbulence due to leadership issues. The substantive headteacher became absent from the school from October 17<sup>th</sup> 2005 and continues to be absent. The seconded headteacher began working in the school on January 3<sup>rd</sup> 2006. He was appointed initially to provide support and leadership for the school until Easter. However, this period has been extended to the end of the summer term. The governing body has undergone significant changes since the last inspection. There is a new chairperson and the governing body has been reconstituted with new committees and a 50 per cent turnover of its membership.

### **Achievement and standards**

When pupils enter the school in Year 3 overall levels of attainment are above average. The progress that pupils make as they move through the school remains inconsistent. Expectations of what pupils can achieve in English and mathematics is variable and often too low especially further down the school. However, in Year 6 the high expectation of what pupils can achieve contributes to a good level of challenge. Nevertheless pupils in Year 6 are currently unlikely to meet the 2006 targets for English and mathematics.

The school has not made sufficient progress in improving the use of targets to measure the value added to pupils' progress year on year. The work done in collecting data has helped the school to understand the outcomes of the last inspection. Although the school is beginning to make better use of data this is still very much in the early stages of development. There is limited knowledge of national expectations amongst some of the staff and insufficient effective use of targets to help raise standards throughout the school. A few teachers are making good use of helpful targets in pupils' books. However, the lack of consistency in approach is reducing the impact of this strategy.

There has been a lack of cohesion in the advice given to the school and this has further hampered the school in developing an understanding of how targets can usefully impact on raising achievement.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Make sure that targets for improvement are easily measurable and checked for their effectiveness in enhancing pupils' progress - inadequate progress

## **Personal development and well-being**

The school has successfully sustained the good levels of provision for pupils' personal development and well being despite the school's need to pay focused attention to other matters. The Young Governors group of pupils, who represent all year groups meet at regular intervals, make decisions jointly with staff and see positive outcomes to their work. This is contributing to pupils' good understanding about citizenship.

The use of young and adult listeners to support pupils' with difficulties further enhances pupils' sense of well being. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and many enjoy the opportunity of budgeting for their meals at lunchtime.

While pupils enjoy the majority of lessons they would welcome more opportunities to undertake investigative activities and would appreciate some additional challenge.

Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **Quality of provision**

Of the 15 lessons observed, eight were judged to be good, four were satisfactory and three were judged to be inadequate. However, weaknesses were identified in too many of the lessons. In the best lessons teaching took account of the different ways in which pupils learn. Teachers used audio and visual aids effectively to captivate pupils' interests and to support their learning. These lessons were well structured and provided an appropriate sequence of activities, which built effectively on previous learning. This included effective use of cross-curricular links. For example, in a Year 6 lesson pupils used their ICT and literacy skills to research information on the Internet and produced an attractive fact sheet about the Houses of Parliament.

There were some common weaknesses in the least successful lessons. In these lessons the pace of learning was too slow. Teachers made insufficient use of strategies to engage and motivate pupils during lengthy introductions. Pupils were not encouraged to discuss and share ideas before answering teachers' questions and this reduced the confidence and ability of some pupils to respond. Furthermore the activities were not sufficiently well pitched to extend the learning of different ability groups.

The mathematics and English co-ordinators have provided staff with some guidance about how to improve the quality of their planning. Where there are weaknesses within provision, the guidance from co-ordinators has not impacted sufficiently on teachers' ability to make effective use of time during lessons. Medium term planning in mathematics is inadequate. This is impacting negatively on the extent to which there is continuity and progression in the subject.

The overall quality of short term planning has improved and there are pockets of good practice in the school. However, there is not enough joint planning between teachers to ensure continuity in all year groups. Furthermore there is still insufficient use made of assessment information and evaluations to inform subsequent planning. As a result lesson plans do not take sufficient account of pupils' prior aptitudes and skills and the work does not match the range of learning needs sufficiently well.

Support for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities remains satisfactory. The SEN co-ordinator provides staff with appropriate guidance. The learning support assistants observed during the inspection helped to ensure that pupils in their care made at least satisfactory progress.

Although there has been some progress in improving the quality of assessment in the school this is still largely underdeveloped. The overall quality of marking is weak, but there are examples of good practice particularly higher up the school. Where marking is good, comments provide praise as well as practical guidance to help pupils to improve. A good example was found in Year 6.

*"Lovely complex sentences and language. Try to use connective phrases to link ideas in paragraphs."*

Limited progress has been made in reviewing curriculum guidance in order to improve teachers' lesson planning and evaluation. The curriculum developments have not had sufficient impact on raising achievement through a focus on teaching and learning. However, all year groups now have a mathematics lesson each day.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Raise the quality of teaching, ensuring that teachers use assessment information accurately to provide work that meets pupils' differing needs especially in English and mathematics - inadequate progress

- Revise curriculum guidance to give teachers more help in planning and evaluating their lessons and to make better use of time - inadequate progress

## **Leadership and management**

The progress in leadership and management has been very recent and mainly since the arrival of the seconded headteacher. His leadership is helping staff to work more effectively as a team. Up until the arrival of the seconded headteacher there had been insufficient monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning through lesson observations. These are now beginning to take place, which is helping staff to reaffirm their strengths and identify areas in need of improvement. However, lesson observations do not take sufficient account of standards or the impact of teaching on the progress made by pupils.

The English and mathematics co-ordinators have a better understanding of how they can contribute to the school improvement process. However, their roles as well as that of the curriculum and assessment co-ordinators and other key leaders are still underdeveloped. They have not received enough training or guidance in the past and have not yet had sufficient opportunity to influence the overall quality of teaching and learning. Co-ordinators produce subject action plans, but these do not include measurable success criteria in terms of outcomes for learners and have not been sufficiently well informed by rigorous evaluation.

There are currently insufficient systems in place for the school to evaluate correctly its own effectiveness. Although there has been some work towards updating the school improvement plan the school still does not have an improvement plan, which establishes a clear sense of direction. Nevertheless the seconded headteacher has produced a brief but useful, strategic overview with helpful timescales. This has contributed to staff and governors becoming more aware of the direction of the school. Regular updates to parents, staff, governors as well as to the LA are leading to a more open culture in the school.

The significant changes to the governing body since the last inspection have had a very positive impact on strengthening the quality of governance. Governors are now more aware of their legal responsibilities and are providing the school with an improved level of challenge. They are better informed of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have correctly identified the need for the school to review its staffing structure.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in September 2005:

- Improve the quality of leadership and management, ensuring that the school establishes a clear sense of direction through its school improvement plan - inadequate progress

### **External support**

The LA's statement of action is satisfactory. It includes appropriate areas in need of improvement and clear time scales. Those responsible for ensuring that actions take place are identified and success criteria are measurable. However, there is not sufficient emphasis on measuring the progress that pupils make year on year or on evaluating the rate of progress pupils make during the course of a year in every year group.

There is effective external support for the school from the LA and this has been significantly strengthened by the support provided from the school improvement manager. The work of LA consultants and advisers is helping the English and mathematics co-ordinators to develop a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

The LA's target date for the removal of special measures in September 2007 is realistic.

### **Main Judgements**

Although there has been some progress made in the school, this has been very recent and mainly since the appointment of the seconded headteacher. Consequently the progress since being subject to special measures is inadequate.

No additional issues have been added to the four, which were identified at the time of the last inspection.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed until further notice.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chairperson of governing body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier  
**H M Inspector**