



20 June 2006

Mrs H Flynn  
The Acting Headteacher  
Gatten & Lake Primary School  
Howard Road  
Shanklin  
Isle of Wight  
PO37 6HD

Dear Mrs Flynn

## **SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF GATTEN AND LAKE PRIMARY SCHOOL**

### **Introduction**

Following my visit with Susan Rogers, Additional Inspector, and Olson Davis, Additional Inspector, to your school on 7 and 8 June 2006, 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 October 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 acting headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the co-ordinators with responsibility for leading and managing English, mathematics and assessment. Discussions were also held with some class teachers and the attached inspector for the local authority (LA). The views of pupils were gathered informally. Inspectors observed 11 lessons or part lessons.

### **Context**

Since the last monitoring inspection the LA has set up an interim executive board to replace the governing body. This is currently being chaired by the link inspector. Four teachers have left the school, two new teachers started working at the school in April and another new teacher will begin in September 2006. There is currently one temporary member of staff. The changes in staffing have led to changes in the membership of the school's

leadership team; there are also new co-ordinators responsible for English and mathematics.

### **Achievement and standards**

Standards, particularly in writing and mathematics, are rising but the rate of progress is inconsistent within year groups and throughout the school. Pupils in the reception year make good progress and the vast majority are on target to meet the early learning goals. The work provided for pupils in Year 2 is well matched to the different ability groups and this is helping most pupils to make good progress. As a result standards at the end of Key Stage 1 are rising and the school is in line to meet its challenging targets for 2006 in mathematics, reading and writing. However, girls are doing much better than boys in their writing and this has not been identified early enough by the school.

In Years 3 and 4, pupils are taking more pride in their work and the quality of their handwriting has significantly improved. In one of the Year 4 classes pupils are making consistently good progress and the standard of work produced by a significant number of pupils is high. However, the inconsistent quality of teaching at Key Stage 2 is leading to differences in the standards attained and progress made by pupils within parallel classes. In some classes, pupils' basic skills are not being sufficiently well developed and simple errors in spelling and punctuation are left uncorrected. Furthermore, the over use of worksheets is limiting opportunities for pupils to develop and practise their writing skills. The underdeveloped number skills of many pupils at Key Stage 2, is hindering their ability to calculate when trying to solve problems. There are however, early signs of improvement in this area as a result of teachers making better use of daily 'mental maths' sessions.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are making satisfactory progress because of the sound support they receive. However, there are insufficient systems in place for the early identification of pupils with learning difficulties. As a result early intervention strategies are limited and some pupils at Key Stage 1 do not always receive the level of support they require.

Systems for tracking pupils' progress are still in the early stages of implementation and have yet to impact on raising standards and achievement. Assessment data is still not used well enough at a whole school level, to monitor the progress of different groups or to identify key priorities for improvement. The lack of rigour in the interrogation and use of assessment data is compromising the school's ability to identify and tackle underachievement.

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

- Raise standards, particularly in writing and mathematics – satisfactory progress

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

The quality of provision for pupils' personal development and well-being has improved and is now good. This is commendable given the school's focus on improving the key issues. Pupils are more consistently well behaved and there are good systems in place to support pupils in dealing with issues relating to low self-esteem. There is now an effective school council in place and pupils are encouraged to contribute to the decisions which affect them. This includes pupils suggesting how they think their school could be improved. As a result, the pupils were included in the discussions which produced the newly agreed rewards and sanctions. Furthermore, at pupils' request, the school has recently purchased water coolers and dispensers to provide more access to drinking water during the course the school day. The pupils' involvement in the school council is contributing effectively to the development of their social and communication skills and is providing them with good opportunities to contribute to the school community.

Pupils demonstrate a growing understanding of the need to lead healthy lives and how to be safe. The recent improvement in the quality of teaching has led to pupils developing a more positive attitude to learning and a greater level of enjoyment during lessons. The increase in standards of reading, writing and mathematics is contributing well to developing pupils' future economic well-being.

Attendance levels are broadly satisfactory and there has been one fixed term exclusion.

### **Quality of provision**

The quality of teaching is slowly getting better and staff and pupils agree that there have been tangible improvements. Pupils' overall attitudes to learning have improved because they feel more supported, more challenged and more engaged during lessons. The acting headteacher is successful in promoting change and provides staff with good levels of challenge and support. However, not all staff have been equally successful in implementing new initiatives and some are still not secure about how to use planned talk activities or assessment to support and enhance learning. Elements of improved practice are apparent in most classes; a good example of this is the progress that has been made in developing the learning environment.

Where teaching is good there are opportunities for pupils to participate as active learners from the moment lessons begin. In these lessons, teachers make good use of questions which encourage pupils to think and make links with what they already know. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve is high; learning intentions are communicated clearly so that all pupils have a very good understanding of what is expected of them. There are good systems in place to support their needs, including the use of prompt cards and helpful personal targets. However, from the work found in pupils' folders, there is still an over reliance on dull worksheets in some classes.

Where there are weaknesses in lessons, teachers' subject knowledge is weak. Pupils are made to sit passively during lengthy introductions, lessons are not structured well enough to allow for pupils to complete their work within the allocated time and key vocabulary is not sufficiently well taught. Learning objectives are too general and do not identify or convey clearly enough the exact skills or concepts being taught. Teachers do not spend enough time demonstrating or providing examples of what pupils are expected to do. In these lessons there is also a lack of pace particularly for those pupils working independently.

The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum to support teaching and learning, although underdeveloped, is improving. Teachers are becoming more familiar with the technology and the software available, but opportunities to make use of computers are too often missed. Pupils' ICT skills and capabilities are not as good as they should be for their age.

There has been satisfactory progress in developing systems of assessment. Although there are improvements in the marking of pupils' work, the quality of marking is very variable and sometimes weak. Marking is all too often cursory and there are too few comments that help pupils to know exactly how they can improve. Use of data has also improved; it is used to set numerical targets for every pupil; however, not all teachers make sufficient use of this information and most teachers struggle to use the data effectively to identify and plan the next steps in pupils' learning. Furthermore, data at this level has yet to be fully analysed to provide the school with a good overview of strengths and weaknesses.

The overall quality of the curriculum is just satisfactory. Weaknesses in curriculum balance have been addressed and pupils in Key Stage 2 are now receiving the required amount of teaching time. The school is aware of the need to improve consistency in developing skills and knowledge to ensure a

good level of progression in the foundation subjects but has not yet reviewed the curriculum as a whole.

There have been some improvements in teachers' planning particularly in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. As a result, there is a greater level of consistency in planning. However, there is still not enough explicit planning for the teaching of speaking and listening or for the teaching of specific vocabulary particularly in English. The deployment of additional adults is generally clear, but this is not the case for foundation subject planning. National schemes are used but are not adapted sufficiently to meet the needs of pupils. All teachers use their planning to evaluate the impact of lessons; however, they do not all make sufficient use of this information to inform subsequent planning.

Progress on the area for improvement identified by the inspection in October 2005:

- Improve the teachers' use of assessment information to ensure all pupils are suitably challenged, particularly the more able pupils - satisfactory progress

## **Leadership and management**

Under the very good leadership of the acting headteacher the school has made good progress since the previous monitoring visit. The overall quality of leadership and management of the school has improved. However, there is an over reliance on the acting headteacher and the LA to drive improvement, and the role of senior and middle managers is still largely underdeveloped. The skills of newly appointed senior managers are developing well and this is leading to improved levels of self-evaluation in English and mathematics and increased levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils particularly in Year 2. However, the rate of progress made by all senior managers is variable and in some cases is too slow. Furthermore, most leaders and managers do not yet have a clear enough view of the strengths and weaknesses in their designated areas of responsibility. There is still no formal expectation for leaders and managers to produce action plans. Where staff have produced plans these often lack a focus on the intended outcomes for learners and there is insufficient use made of measurable targets. Nevertheless, staff now recognise that they share in the responsibility of helping the school to improve. They are beginning to identify for themselves the areas in need of improvement and what needs to be done. A good example of this has been the recent identification of the shortcomings in the quality of marking.

There is now a line management structure in place which clarifies roles and responsibilities. This has helped senior and middle managers to develop a better understanding of what is expected of them, and staff are beginning to work more as a team. Leaders and managers are becoming more pro-active

in developing and promoting school improvement activities. However, they have yet to monitor and evaluate the impact of initiatives and ensure that new policies and agreed practices are being implemented consistently and equitably throughout the school.

The acting headteacher has worked hard to help improve the management of the school premises and this has contributed well to improving the level of care for pupils' health and safety and well-being. She has ensured that all staff have received clearance from the criminal records bureau to work with children. Staff have also received training in child protection procedures and there is now a named child protection officer at the school. Fire drills are now recorded formally and all fire exits and routes are clearly labelled. Key staff are currently undergoing training to help promote even greater levels of health and safety within the school. There is now a good health and safety action plan which identifies those areas which are still in need of improvement.

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

- Implement rigorous self-evaluation procedures that will enable the school to identify and implement appropriate targets for improvement - satisfactory progress

### **External support**

The local authority is providing the school with good support. The link inspector has continued to support the acting headteacher well through weekly meetings as well as by producing clear and focused reports. The LA has provided good in-service training; a good example of this was the training which promoted team building skills. The LA helped the school to set up an interim executive board and is also contributing well to developing the leadership skills of key members of staff. However, some key leaders are making better progress than others. The support provided by the LA has also enabled the school to make good progress in ensuring that it now complies with most aspects of health and safety regulations as well as legal requirements.

The Primary Strategy team are supporting teachers well. Staff now have a better understanding of the team's role and teachers are becoming more familiar with the Primary National Strategy training and guidance materials. As a result, they are beginning to focus appropriately on developing speaking and listening skills as well as working on assessment for learning.

An additional inspector working for the LA is also providing the school with helpful support. Although the range of guidance has been valuable in helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning, a small number of staff are beginning to feel overwhelmed by the number of different people providing them with support and guidance. Furthermore teachers do not receive formal

written feedback which acknowledges their strengths and areas in need of improvement. In a small minority cases, this is leading to some confusion about key messages. Where the notes of visits lack clarity and sufficient detail this is unhelpful to the school.

### **Main Judgements**

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – good

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Senior Education Officer for Isle of Wight.

Yours sincerely

Gehane Gordelier  
**H M Inspector**