



6 June 2006

Mr Mark Sammes
Manor Junior School
Fernhill Road
Cove
Farnborough
GU14 9DX

Dear Mr Sammes

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF MANOR JUNIOR SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Michael Pye, Additional Inspector, and George Rayner, Additional Inspector, to your school on 17 and 18 May 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 January 2006.

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 visited 13 part lessons, observed behaviour around the school, inspected resources for information and communication technology (ICT), scrutinised documents and pupils' books and met with the headteacher, groups of teachers, a group of pupils, the chair of governors and representatives from the local authority.

Context

The deputy head teacher has resigned since the inspection in January and a new appointment has recently been made for September 2006. The school is fully staffed. A new governor has been appointed. The local authority has investigated the scope for closure of the school and has concluded that this would result in there being insufficient capacity for school places in the locality and that this is not, therefore, a viable option.

Achievement and standards

At the time of the January inspection, progress through the school was judged to be inadequate and standards were insufficiently high. Progress was poor in English, mathematics and science.

There has been no new published performance data since then, but the school's records indicate that pupils in Year 6 are on track to increase the percentage who are performing at the expected levels in English. However, this percentage is still likely to remain below the national average in the end-of-key-stage tests. Attainment in reading is considerably better than in writing because this is where the school has placed the strong focus of its measures to raise standards. The school is now shifting this focus onto writing, in accordance with its raising attainment plan. Year 6 pupils have made satisfactory progress since they were last formally tested in February, especially in reading. In mathematics the same group have also made satisfactory progress since their last test, but current performance suggests that their national test results in mathematics are unlikely to reach the national average. Mental mathematics seen in lessons during the monitoring visit was a strong point, while many pupils find problem solving more difficult.

School data indicates that pupils in Year 5 have made good progress since their last assessment and early, partial test results indicate that they are on track to reach national expectations in a year's time. While the school's measures to raise attainment were put in place too late to have sufficient impact on Year 6, they have the potential to enable pupils in other year groups to make improved progress and attain the standards they should.

In all lessons except one, standards were at, or close to, national expectations and pupils were making at least satisfactory progress. In the good lessons, progress was good. While a few pupils are reaching above average standards there are not enough and there were no lessons where standards were judged to be above average overall, including in the higher sets.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Improve achievement in English and mathematics - satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils behave well both in and out of lessons. There is a happy and calm environment that allows pupils to concentrate on their learning. Good relationships between adults and children contribute to the raising of pupils' self-esteem. The pupils are generally enthusiastic; for example, in their early morning work, and they are reacting positively to the improved teaching. These positive attitudes are undoubtedly having a good impact on pupils' progress.

Quality of provision

The school judges that 90% of teaching is now satisfactory or better. The inspection evidence shows that this is accurate and a significant proportion of lessons was judged good. One lesson was inadequate. The measures put in place by the leadership team on the quality of teaching and learning is now beginning to have a clear impact.

A key area of focus has been to introduce the consistent use of learning objectives and success criteria and this has had a very positive effect on pupils' engagement with their work and their understanding of their own progress. A feature of the more successful lessons was the level of challenge and the way this was planned to meet the needs of pupils across the range of ability. Teachers make effective use of discussion and questioning to challenge pupils' ideas and understanding. In the one inadequate lesson, the level of challenge was too low for many of the pupils, who were impatient to be given more demanding work.

The recent changes in the school's assessment procedures are contributing to the improvements in teaching and learning. Pupils are now encouraged to evaluate their own work. They can do this because most teachers now explain clearly at the start of the lesson the success criteria for the work set. This enables the pupils to make judgements about the extent to which their work meets those criteria. When used successfully, this strategy, together with the better use of assessment data, is allowing teachers to identify clearly the next learning steps for pupils.

With assessment data more accessible to teachers, they are setting work that more accurately matches the needs of different groups of pupils, such as those with learning difficulties and higher attaining pupils. Regular assessments are also enabling the school to track the progress of pupils and

set targets for them. Those requiring additional support, including higher attaining pupils, are now formally identified by their teachers and their particular needs are highlighted. Their progress is tracked by the class teacher and reviewed every half term.

There are inconsistencies in the pupils' knowledge of the levels at which they are working and, as at the time of the last inspection, many pupils do not have a clear and precise idea of what they have to do to improve. Teachers' marking continues to give encouragement and advice to pupils but there are missed opportunities to give them guidance about the next steps.

The school has dealt with the technical problems that were limiting the use of ICT at the time of the inspection. However, while there is satisfactory provision for pupils to develop their ICT skills, they do not yet have enough opportunities to use these in other subjects.

The school has moved swiftly to reintroduce targets for pupils. These have helped to focus attention on what is expected of them, but it is too late for many in Year 6 to benefit fully. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are now encouraged to take a more active part in reviewing their children's progress.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Ensure that teachers use assessment information accurately to provide work to meet the needs of higher attaining pupils and those with learning difficulties - satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Since the inspection a thorough programme of monitoring and development of teaching and learning has been introduced. This was planned just before the inspection in January but at that stage its impact had yet to be seen. Lesson monitoring is carried out regularly by the headteacher, frequently in conjunction with LA advisers. The headteacher's judgements on the quality of teaching and learning are accurate using appropriately rigorous criteria; clear and appropriate written feedback is given to teachers. The school is building a clear picture of the quality of teaching and learning across the school, identifying areas where improvement is needed.

Teachers express strong appreciation of the way in which their teaching has been monitored and developed. This started before the inspection and where

necessary, has increased in frequency since. They know that their teaching will be evaluated rigorously and that they will be offered constructive advice for improvement. The monitoring process has highlighted areas where whole-school development was needed; for example, a whole-school policy on the teaching of calculation, and teachers have found this helpful.

The role of middle managers, especially of the core subject leaders is being developed. They show good commitment to raising attainment and a clear vision of the next steps to be taken in order to achieve this. They have a strong desire to work together as a team in order to share strengths.

The school has now arrived at an accurate picture of its under-achievement and the school's weaknesses have been identified and are beginning to be addressed.

Governors have carefully considered their responsibility for the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. They are aware that they need to increase their involvement and that they are starting from a low point of awareness of how to hold the school to account. A training session has recently taken place to improve governors' understanding of the areas for which they are responsible. Further training is planned to build upon this by increasing their ability to focus on the most important issues when they visit the school, to ask appropriate questions and to seek evidence to verify what the school tells them. The programme is not currently ensuring provision for governors who are unable to attend training sessions, so that they can also upgrade their understanding and skills.

The governors are benefiting from effective guidance and support from the LA who have arranged the appointment of an additional governor to provide a valuable, objective point of view for governors. The quality of records of governors' meetings has improved and is now more helpful in, for example, identifying tasks that need to be carried out and lines of responsibility. The minutes show that, while governors still need to improve the extent to which they challenge the school and the quality of the questions that they ask, they are beginning to become more effective in this.

The school is making progress towards ensuring that senior leaders hold all colleagues to account and in improving the understanding of staff of the areas for which they are responsible. Terms of reference for the senior leadership team have been sharpened up to give a clearer indication of their roles and responsibilities. The school is moving forward in ensuring that all staff understand that they share accountability for the achievement of their

pupils. It has improved the definition of the responsibilities of middle leadership staff, such as subject leaders, and their role in guiding and monitoring the contribution of class teachers. The school is aware that, while the sharing of accountability is beginning to be at least satisfactory in some year teams, it still needs to improve in others.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in January 2006:

- Improve leadership and management, especially in relation to monitoring and improving teaching and learning - satisfactory progress.
- Strengthen the role of governors and senior managers in holding the school to account in all areas of its work - satisfactory progress.

External support

The quality of support provided by the LA is good. It dates from before the school was put into special measures, showing an understanding of the school's weaknesses at that stage. The intervention resulted in an audit of provision and the planning of strategies to raise attainment and improve teaching, the existence of which was noted in the inspection report. This meant that when the school was placed in special measures it was poised to make a prompt start to bringing about improvements.

The LA has made a clear statement of the support which the school will receive during its time in special measures. Their statement of action has been drawn up in collaboration with the school and there is good agreement between school and authority over areas of priority. It has success criteria which are clear and specific and there is some provision over time for the school to take a more independent and pro-active role in bringing about improvements.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measure – satisfactory

The quality of the LA's statement of action is good

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed

Priorities for further improvement

- To extend and sustain the improvements to the pupils' achievement by continuing to identify and deal with areas for development on which to concentrate.
- To use the assessment data, together with teachers' marking, to improve pupils' understanding of how to improve their work
- To ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to use computers to enhance their learning in all subjects.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children Services for Hampshire.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Walker
Additional Inspector