



01 December 2006

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

Dear Mr Sammes

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF MANOR JUNIOR SCHOOL

Introduction

Following my visit with Michael Pye, Additional Inspector, to your school on 20 and 21 November 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 January 2006.

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Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, teachers, a group of children, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last visit a new deputy headteacher and a part-time manager for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities (LDD) have been appointed. The school is fully staffed. There are currently three vacancies on the governing body.

Achievement and standards

The results of national tests carried out in 2006 indicate that the percentage of Year 6 pupils who met the expected and higher level in English increased, while in mathematics standards remained very similar to the previous year. In neither subject did the school meet its targets. Standards in reading, where the school's recent measures to raise standards were initially directed, were considerably higher than in writing. The school's own assessments of standards made before pupils took these tests were accurate, especially in English. The school's success in raising standards and meeting their targets in science is commendable.

The school has carried out a comprehensive analysis of their national test results for 2006. This indicates that not enough pupils made the expected progress in both English and mathematics. The most progress was made in reading where about two thirds made the expected progress, although this was not enough to enable the school to reach its targets. Lower attaining pupils made less progress, compared with similar pupils nationally, than did those whose prior attainment was average. Pupils whose prior attainment was above average also made less progress than they should have done. The school used this analysis to identify areas for improvement correctly.

The raising attainment plan is a key instrument in pushing up standards and its provisions are clearly understood, by teaching staff at all levels, learning support assistants (LSAs) and the governing body. Pupils who need additional challenge or support have been clearly identified and their progress is regularly monitored by subject managers and the improving standards team. Much of the in-service training this term has been devoted to looking at ways of identifying and better meeting the needs of higher attaining pupils, problem solving in mathematics, and writing.

Standards in Year 6 indicate that pupils are on course to meet the targets set for them. Since the second half of the summer term lower attaining pupils have made better progress and more are on course to reach the expected levels. In lessons observed, standards were broadly satisfactory. The progress across the ability range, including that of higher and lower attaining pupils was good in response to good teaching which was planned to meet the needs of all pupils. In lessons which were satisfactory, planning did not meet the needs of all pupils and they did not all progress at the same rate.

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' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and there is a calm atmosphere which builds pupils' confidence and helps to foster good relationships. Pupils work well together. Pupils themselves recognise that behaviour is good in lessons and that their work is only rarely interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. As one said, "You can sometimes hear the sound of the pencils on the paper." They express enjoyment of school and their enthusiasm is evident in many lessons. They particularly appreciate the range of learning activities which they are offered in lessons and enjoy doing new and unusual things, such as listening to calming background music while concentrating on their work.

Quality of provision

All teaching seen was at least satisfactory and about two thirds of lessons were at least good. A significant proportion of outstanding teaching was seen. Teaching is now particularly strong in Year 6. In the best lessons teachers plan work to meet the needs of all pupils and make clear their high expectations of them. Lessons are structured to provide a good balance of challenge and support and pupils respond well to the way in which challenge is increased as the lesson progresses. Pupils are appreciative when lessons are planned to interest and inspire them and work hard to meet their targets. In the lessons that are satisfactory, there were missed opportunities in both planning and during the lesson to challenge higher attaining pupils who do not then make the progress of which they are capable. There were also examples of lower attaining pupils not being offered enough support to enable them to make progress.

The current use of assessment information contributes to the clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development within the school that the senior managers now have. At a whole school level such information is well analysed and the findings used to inform the future direction of the school. For example, mathematical assessments helped identify a weakness in the pupils' understanding of fractions. This has now become the current whole-school curriculum target for all staff. Pupils will be assessed on their progress in this area of their work at the end of the term. Assessment data is also used well to identify any pupil whose progress is less than expected. This leads to appropriate intervention strategies being identified and monitored. Under the new manager for pupils with LDD there is a more accurate assessment of the needs and progress of these pupils

There remains more work to be done in ensuring that pupils know their targets and how to improve their work. There has been a satisfactory improvement in this area but inconsistencies still exist in the extent to which this is reinforced in lessons. Similarly some teachers give very good on-going opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own work consistently. From the pupils' written evaluation the teacher can identify any weaknesses and can set individual targets that help pupils identify the next step in their learning. Not all teachers give such clear direction in their marking.

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

The regular and thorough programme to monitor the quality of learning and teaching is having a positive impact. Responsibility for carrying this out is moving from the headteacher alone to include the deputy headteacher and subject leaders, which gives a wider understanding of the quality of teaching, learning and standards across the management team. Lesson monitoring has recently been extended to include all LSAs. They feel, as do the teachers, that it offers a significant enhancement to their in-service training because it is rigorous, informative and identifies areas for development.

Leaders identify areas of weakness in teaching and there is evidence to show that, because of a well-planned programme of support, improvements take place. Evidence seen during the visit shows that teaching is graded accurately and that the quality of teaching and learning is improving over time. The headteacher has made some strong appointments which have done much to improve the quality of teaching.

The management team draws up an in-service training programme to support the school's identified areas for development. Training in planning the teaching of ICT across the curriculum is currently taking place, and there is some limited evidence of pupils making more use of ICT skills to record and display their work.

All members of the senior and middle management team, have an improved understanding of their role and accountability in raising standards, and now analyse and report on pupils' performance. The raising attainment plan is seen by managers as setting a sense of direction for the whole school, at all

levels. The subject leaders of English and mathematics recognise the significant change in their role. Since the school went into special measures they are more accountable for raising achievement and standards, for example by taking part in action research into the effectiveness of methods used in other schools and also abroad.

Team work has been strengthened, for example, between members of the improving standards team and the subject managers, who work together to monitor the progress of children causing concern and jointly plan the next steps in provision for them. LSAs are now more involved in providing regular additional support for small groups of children with LDD.

The governors have much improved their knowledge and understanding of the school. This is the consequence of very good, well focused monitoring visits that are particularly linked to evaluating the raising attainment plan. The governors' heightened confidence in carrying out such visits is the result of some effective training which has been based around their monitoring role. They are now much better placed to identify relevant questions to ask of the school, and what evidence is required when holding the school to account. There are currently three governor vacancies.

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 - good progress.
- Strengthen the role of governors and senior managers in holding the school to account in all areas of its work - good progress.

External support

The quality of the support offered to the school by the local authority is good. The representative of the authority who is attached to the school knows it well and has a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development. She has provided good support to the school in a range of ways, for example by providing whole-school training and in helping to draw up and deliver an effective programme to support weaker teachers. A strength of the support has been the way in which more responsibility for bringing about improvement is being handed back to the leadership and management of the school as its confidence and competence increases. One of the vacancies on the governing body is for a local authority representative.

Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures - satisfactory

Progress since previous monitoring inspection - good

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed

Priorities for further improvement

- In order to establish greater consistency of practice across the school it needs to identify those areas of its work that are particularly effective in improving standards and achievement, and introduce clear strategies for sharing them.

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

Yours sincerely

Patricia Walker
Additional Inspector