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Mrs Sciachettano
Headteacher
Holland Haven Primary School
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Dear Mrs Sciachettano

OFSTED MONITORING OF SCHOOLS WITH NOTICE TO IMPROVE

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 21 November 2006, for the time you gave to our telephone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during my visit. Please pass on my thanks to the staff and pupils.

As a result of the inspection on 17 May 2006, the school was asked to improve: the quality of teaching and learning, the pupils' progress, teachers' expectations and the use of assessment.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time the school is making good progress in addressing the issues for improvement.

The 2006 provisional results of the national tests at Key Stage 2 are close to the national average for English, mathematics and science. The outcomes in English were noticeably weaker in writing than for reading. However, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level 5 in English has improved significantly. The teacher assessments at Key Stage 1 show similar strengths in mathematics and reading with weaknesses in higher level writing. These weaknesses indicate inconsistencies in teaching methodology over time.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with an increased proportion of good or better teaching now in evidence. Planning is detailed but inconsistent in style. Learning intentions are made clear to pupils but the introductions to some lessons do not always cater effectively for the needs of the different age groups in the class. However, follow-up tasks are generally well matched to the age and ability of pupils leading to satisfactory or better

progress. In the most effective lessons, plenary sessions are being used to assess the pupils' progress. Targets are now being used more effectively to raise expectations of what pupils can achieve and what they need to do next to improve. Stronger links exist between home and school and parents are better informed about their child's progress.

The Foundation Stage curriculum is satisfactory overall with some emerging strengths in the quality and range of learning opportunities offered to children. In other classes teachers are placing a stronger focus on literacy and numeracy skills. Initiatives to develop and extend the pupils' ability to write at length and for different purposes are now being reflected in the achievements of older pupils. Poetry writing and art are emerging strengths. Effective displays in classrooms and around the school provide good insight into the wide range of carefully linked learning opportunities planned for the pupils.

The principles of assessment for learning are being securely embedded. The school makes effective use of a commercial assessment data base to maintain clear records and set appropriate targets. Most pupils know their own targets for improvement. Very good use of peer assessment in some classes enables teachers to adjust the focus of the lesson in order to secure the learning objectives. Marking remains inconsistent; written guidance on how to improve is not consistently found in pupils' books.

The support provided by the local authority is helping the school move forward. However, the agenda for support and change is concentrated in the autumn and spring terms of the 2006/7 school year. The school reports that early post-inspection support was limited.

I hope that you have found the visit helpful in promoting improvement in your school.

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

Yours sincerely

David Jones

Her Majesty's Inspector