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18 March 2014

Ms Janey Denton  
Headteacher  
Saxon Way Primary School  
Church Path  
Ingram Road  
Gillingham  
Kent  
ME7 1ST

Dear Ms Denton

### **No formal designation monitoring inspection of Saxon Way Primary School**

Following my visit to your academy on 17 March 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

The inspection was a monitoring inspection carried out in accordance with no formal designation procedures and conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was carried out because the Chief Inspector was concerned about behaviour at the academy.

### **Evidence**

Inspectors gathered a range of evidence including:

- observations of pupils' behaviour and their attitudes to learning in lessons
- observations of pupils' behaviour throughout the day, including discussion with pupils
- scrutiny of documentary evidence
- discussions with leaders and staff.

Having considered all the evidence I am of the opinion that at this time:

Behaviour and safety require improvement.

## **Context**

The academy is an average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is well above average. The number of pupils from various minority ethnic groups is rising, although still below average, and includes a small number who speak English as an additional language. Very high numbers of pupils have special educational needs and are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The majority of this group have speech, language and communication needs or emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Just above average numbers of pupils arrive or leave during the school year. There have been difficulties in recruiting suitable staff and not all teachers are permanently employed.

The predecessor school required special measures and at the last monitoring visit in June 2013, Her Majesty's Inspector judged that insufficient progress was being made towards the removal of special measures. The school became an academy in September 2013, sponsored by the Griffin Schools Trust. You joined the academy as headteacher in January 2014.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour requires improvement although the evidence suggests that it was inadequate in the recent past. You have taken swift action to address some of the most important difficulties. You have replaced one of the teachers and strengthened the quality of provision in one of the classes where there are a number of particularly challenging pupils. You have also set up a nurture group in the mornings for a small number of Year 1 pupils who are finding it difficult to access mainstream education.

All of the pupils I spoke to during the visit were keen to explain the new behaviour management system to me. They understand how it works and those who reached the 'top of the diamond' during the day were very pleased with their certificates and showed them proudly to their parents and carers at the end of the day. Pupils appreciate that the new system gives individuals credit for good behaviour and also gives them the chance to gain house points for their new school teams. As part of the system there is improved recording of reasons for pupils moving down the diamond as well as recording particularly serious incidents of poor behaviour. This is relatively recent. There now needs to be close analysis of this information in order to identify triggers and take action to pre-empt the reoccurrence of incidents. These systems are relatively new and some staff are using them more effectively and consistently than others.

Most pupils arrive promptly in the morning and, during the visit, they came into the hall for assembly in a very well-ordered way. They listened attentively and joined in enthusiastically when encouraged to give rousing cheers for their new school teams. When pupils move around school to go out to, and return from, play or at home time, they are accompanied by adults who remind them to move sensibly around the school. Nearly all of the pupils respond very sensibly and smartly. At less structured times, such as during lunchtime in the hall, the behaviour of a minority of pupils becomes loud and boisterous. The adults in the hall do not do enough to remind the pupils about what is acceptable behaviour when eating a meal together.

When the pupils are playing outside the vast majority enjoy their time together and get on well. Pupils say that most children are friendly and it is just a very tiny minority who sometimes spoil things for everyone else. There is a good level of supervision and the pupils seem confident that adults will be able to help them if necessary. Some pupils were slow to respond to the whistle calling them in and that meant it took too long for classes to gather and to be led inside. There were a few instances of unacceptable behaviour outside, for example, pupils refusing to cooperate and return to class at the right time. If these are regular occurrences, it would be useful to consider what could be done to avoid the situations arising in the first place.

Behaviour in the classrooms is improving although there is some variability between lessons. In the Early Years Foundation Stage classrooms, the atmosphere is peaceful but there is a lovely buzz of purposeful and cooperative activity. Children in Reception play happily together and, during the visit, they were keen to come in from lunchtime and talked excitedly about what they might try out during the next session. In several other classes, particularly the Year 6 class, pupils worked well and sensibly together. In all the lessons I visited, the vast majority of pupils were keen to learn and listened well. When the vast majority of the pupils are interested, understand what is expected of them and are kept busy they behave well. Two Year 4 pupils hit the nail on the head when they told me that 'when the lessons are interesting, practical and fun, nearly everyone behaves'. In lessons where expectations are not high enough or the activity is confusing or boring, pupils do not set to work with enthusiasm, start to chat and in a very few cases become disruptive.

The detailed recording of behaviour, both positive and negative, is relatively recent but it is clear from these records that the vast majority of pupils usually behave well. Some pupils who have behaved badly in the past are responding very well to the new behaviour system. Although the number of exclusions remains too high, the impact of the improvements can be seen in the reduction in the number of exclusions for this group. There are a tiny number of pupils with very challenging behaviour and there is an urgent need for all staff, particularly those who work closely with this group, to receive training to enhance their practice and better support the individuals concerned and their classmates.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Embed the recently introduced behaviour management system and ensure that all staff implement the system effectively.
- Improve the quality of lessons so that they are more interesting and enjoyable.
- Carefully analyse the information being gathered on incidents of poor behaviour to identify triggers and difficult times of day, and take action to minimise the impact of these.
- Ensure that staff are trained to manage behaviour, particularly very challenging behaviour, so that pupils' time can be used more productively than at present.

I am copying this letter to the Director of Children's Services for Medway, the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Local Governing Body and the Academies Advisers Unit at the Department for Education. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Sheena MacDonald  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**