



04 December 2006

Mr Sean Connor  
The Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Connor

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SISKIN JUNIOR SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit with Mary Hoather, HMI and Patricia Walker, Additional Inspector, to your school on 28 and 29 November 2006, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in September 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 including 8 lessons, 1 registration and 1 assembly, scrutinised documents, met with a range of staff, representative groups of pupils, the chair of governors and an adviser from the local authority.

### Context

A new deputy headteacher joined the school in September 2006 along with two new full time and one part time teacher. Two teachers and one higher level teaching assistant left the school at the end of the summer term. A new chair of governors has been appointed since our last visit. Since September

2006 all pupils have been taught in mixed aged classes. The school has three Year 3 and 4 classes and three Year 5 and 6 classes.

### Achievement and standards

Standards in the Year 6 English, mathematics and science national tests in 2006 were well below the national average and pupil progress was inadequate.

Standards observed in lessons during this inspection were well below the national average. This reflects the fact that pupils enter the school with well below average standards and older pupils made less than expected progress during their early years at the school. The progress of pupils is tracked on a termly basis through formal school assessments. This terms assessments were due to take place the week after our visit. During our visit in June school data indicated that progress of current Year 6 pupils had improved and was now satisfactory. Inspection evidence during this visit indicates that this is still the case and Year 6 pupils are continuing to make satisfactory progress.

During our last visit improvement in pupil progress in current Years 4 and 5 was less secure. Inspection evidence during this visit indicates that this is still the case and improvement in pupil progress is not fast enough. The progress of pupils in Years 3 to 5 remains inadequate.

The quality of pupils' handwriting and the presentation of their work remain inconsistent across the school.

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

- Raise standards of achievement in all subjects with a specific focus on basic skills - inadequate progress.

### Personal development and well-being

Behaviour around the school has improved and there is a noticeably calmer atmosphere. Pupils relate well to each other during recreation periods and use the facilities sensibly. There are high levels of vigilant adult supervision with clear routines and pupils show understanding of what is acceptable behaviour. Behaviour in lessons has improved, although there remains some low level disruption when lessons do not fully engage pupils. A few pupils lack the maturity to behave sensibly on more formal occasions such as assembly and are reluctant to respond appropriately.

The school's behaviour management procedures have been revised in order to make them more relevant to the pupils themselves and there is more emphasis on the recognition of improvement. The procedures are applied consistently, they have a high profile in the school and their positive impact on attitudes and behaviour is clear.

Pupils express their enjoyment of school and say they look forward to it. Much of their appreciation is centred on the fact that behaviour has improved because expectations are clear and more rigorously enforced. There is now, they feel very little bullying and general harassment from other pupils. If incidents do occur they are taken seriously and dealt with effectively.

The school has sensibly placed an increased focus on pupils whose attendance is just below average, in addition to continuing to work on poor attendance. Attendance has improved to a point where it is now just below average. The school rightly attributes the success in this area not just to the measures to encourage and reward improved attendance but also to the fact that pupils' confidence is not undermined by incidents of serious misbehaviour.

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

- Improve the pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning – satisfactory progress.
- Improve rates of attendance – satisfactory progress.

### Quality of provision

The overall quality of teaching and learning remains inadequate and not enough progress been made in improving practice since the last visit. The amount of inadequate teaching remains too high and not enough good teaching was observed.

Lesson objectives are shared with pupils although they are not always clearly explained to them. In some lessons learning was well supported by success criteria being shared with pupils so that they were clear about what they should have achieved by the end of the lesson. In some lessons effective use was made of questioning to check and develop pupil learning. Good use was also made of interactive white boards to engage pupils and support learning.

In too many lessons, however, the pace of learning was only satisfactory and in some it was inadequate. Although the behaviour in lessons has improved there still remains low level disruptive behaviour when activities do not fully engage and interest pupils. This, impacts on the rate of learning of those

pupils involved and on some occasions on others in the classroom. In lessons the level of work was not always pitched at the right level for all the pupils in the mixed age classes. The work was either too hard for the less able and not enough structured support provided to them or it lacked challenge for the more able pupils.

The marking of pupils' work is regular and generally encouraging. However, advice on what pupils should do to improve is not given frequently enough and pupils do not consistently understand what their next steps should be. In literacy and numeracy pupils are given targets for improvement over the longer term, but there is some inconsistency in how clearly pupils understand what needs to be done or whether the targets have been met.

There has recently been effective medium term planning to ensure appropriate coverage of all national curriculum subjects in the recently introduced mixed age classes. The delivery is planned for a half term in a number of units each with clear learning objectives. All classes now have one lesson of ICT per week and this is supported by medium term planning. However there is little identification of opportunities for the use of ICT in the planning of other subjects.

As a result of the improvement which has taken place in behaviour, pupils no longer feel threatened by the effects of the serious misconduct of some. They know that the school takes such intimidating behaviour very seriously and because the school has increased the rate of adult supervision there are always adults on hand to offer support.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning and the use of assessment procedures - inadequate progress.
- Improve the quality of care - satisfactory progress

### Leadership and management

The leadership team has been strengthened by the arrival of a new deputy headteacher in September, with the acting deputy headteacher of last year remaining as part of this team. The new deputy headteacher has had an impact on improving the behaviour and attendance of pupils and on the development of curriculum planning. However, the leadership team has not had sufficient impact on improving the overall quality of teaching and learning within the school. The school is aware of the quality of teaching in all classes but prompt and effective support is not provided to those members of staff

who would benefit from this. The school also needs to develop its systems of sharing good practice between staff.

The leadership and management of numeracy continue to improve. However, the effective practice seen in numeracy is not yet evident in the leadership of other subject areas, where a number of co-ordinators are new in post. The school still needs to develop the capacity of middle leadership.

The governing body has been strengthened since the inspection a year ago. A number of new experienced governors have been appointed to the governing body and a new effective chair of governors has been appointed since our last visit. The governors are aware of the strength and weaknesses of the school, and are beginning to provide the leadership team with both support and challenge.

The school, with the support of the local authority, monitors teaching and learning and pupil progress. Through this monitoring it is aware of its strengths and the areas it needs to improve. However, its monitoring processes have not yet been organised into an effective annual cycle of self evaluation linked to clear sustained strategies for improvement. The school has also been slow to develop its processes of performance management. A new system has only just been introduced, is not yet effective, and it is not yet linked into the school improvement cycle.

Each term the school writes a raising achievement plan as part of its involvement in the local authorities intensive support programme. This plan specifies the actions that it intends to take with clearly defined success criteria. The implementation and impact of this plan are monitored by the local authority.

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

- Strengthen and develop the roles and impact of senior and middle managers as well as that of governors – inadequate progress.
- Develop robust systems of self evaluation, which identify weaknesses and the necessary strategies to bring about improvement – inadequate progress.
- Ensure the success criteria are sharply focused on improving the rate of pupils' progress and raising standards – satisfactory progress.

#### External support

Support from the local authority is satisfactory. The headteacher is receiving support from an experienced primary consultant headteacher. The link

adviser makes frequent visits to the school and two reviews of teaching and learning and leadership and management in the school have taken place since our last visit. These have been helpful in identifying areas for improvement. However, the school has not made sufficient progress in responding to the issues raised.

### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – inadequate.

### Priorities for further improvement

- The leadership team need to provide more effective, rigorous support to some teachers and develop effective systems for sharing good teaching practice in order to increase the rate of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning.
- The leadership team need to develop an annual cycle of self evaluation linked to clear strategies for school improvement.

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

Yours sincerely

Peter Sanderson  
H M Inspector