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Ms Wendy Todd  
The Interim Headteacher  
Saxon Primary School  
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Dear Ms Todd

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF SAXON PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Introduction

Following my visit with Jane Chesterfield, Additional Inspector and Kathryn Taylor, Additional Inspector, to your school on 27 and 28 March 2007, 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 November 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 observed 15 lessons, scrutinised a range of documents and met with the interim headteacher and deputy headteacher, teachers, governors, a representative from the local authority and the headteacher from a local school providing support for Saxon School. Groups of pupils in Years 2 and 6 were spoken to and their work discussed. Pupils' work across the school was also scrutinised.

### Context

Since the inspection in November 2006 there have been a number of significant changes in the school. Several members of staff have left, including the substantive headteacher and more recently the teacher with responsibility for learning difficulties. An interim headteacher has been appointed for the period January to July 2007. One new teacher has been employed to cover teachers' planning and preparation time. Governors are seeking to appoint a substantive headteacher for September 2007. The chair of governors has also recently resigned and a new

governor to the school has been appointed as chair. An additional advanced skills governor has been appointed.

The school roll has fallen over the recent past but this has stabilised since January 2007.

### Achievement and standards

Standards at the end of Year 6 have been well below the national average in the past three years. This is still the case in the current Year 6 class and standards are similarly low in Years 4 and 5. Standards at the end of Year 2 improved considerably between 2005 and 2006, but were still below average. This picture of improving standards has been maintained in the current Year 2 class. However, too few pupils attain the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and 6.

In Years 3 to 6 due to past underachievement there are significant gaps in pupils' learning. Weaknesses in pupils' writing skills, limit their ability to record their work in other subjects. Since the last inspection the school has put in place some sensible measures aimed at raising standards and addressing underachievement, they include regularly setting homework, providing work more appropriately matched for children of different abilities in mathematics, and introducing a science revision programme in Year 6. However, booster classes for Years 2 and 6 are not set to start until after Easter, which is too late in the year to have a significant impact on standards. Plans to introduce more intervention classes elsewhere in the school are part of next term's schedule.

The school has established a termly programme to track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is at an early stage of development but it is beginning to highlight those groups of pupils whose progress is limited and those for whom progress is satisfactory or better. Annual national tests for all year groups have also recently been put in place to provide a clear basis for tracking this progress.

Standards in observed lessons in Reception, Years 1, 2 and 3 were close to those expected, but they were low in Years 4, 5 and 6. Work samples and lesson observations show that in Year 2 progress for all ability groups is good. Elsewhere progress is variable and is sometimes inadequate. In some lessons, the more able pupils were still not well enough catered for and consequently their progress was limited. In a few lessons, a minority of boys made little progress as their attention wandered and they were allowed to do so, without teachers bringing them back on track.

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

- raise achievement and standards, particularly in mathematics and science – inadequate progress

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## Personal development and well-being

Pupils, in the main, continue to behave well in lessons and generally have positive attitudes to their learning even when the teaching is lack lustre. Some pupils lack confidence at speaking aloud to their classmates or to guess or try out answers. Occasionally, pupils were seen putting their heads down or engaging with other activities rather than listening to the teacher and following what was going on. In most instances, pupils are helpful to each other when working in pairs and collaborating. Pupils reported that they enjoy their work and lessons despite the fact that a number are insufficiently challenged.

There is some over boisterous play in the playground at break, especially where boys dominate the area with footballs. When supervised at lunchtime in the dining hall, pupils eat well together and enjoy their school dinners.

Attendance continues to be generally in line with the national average, although a number of pupils regularly arrive late for school. This impedes a good start to the day for these pupils. There has been one fixed term exclusion since the 2006 inspection.

## Quality of provision

The quality of teaching remains inadequate, overall. Good teaching was seen in four lessons, in the Reception class and in Year 2, and unsatisfactory teaching seen in two lessons. The remainder of the teaching observed was satisfactory, but the work in pupils' books indicates that teaching since the last inspection has not improved sufficiently to raise standards and help pupils to regain lost ground.

There was a lack of consistency across the school in the extent to which teachers have tackled the identified need to improve the pace of lessons and match activities to pupils' capabilities. Some teachers have successfully injected pace into their lessons by giving pupils clear time limits for each task. In other lessons, there was a lack of energy and urgency which meant that pupils worked too slowly and did not get enough done. Lesson introductions and starter activities often overran or were slow and this limited the amount of time available for pupils to work independently. The quality, quantity and helpfulness of marking still vary greatly across the school; often indicating that teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations for their pupils. Teachers are prepared to accept low standards of presentation and limited effort from pupils and do not require them to reattempt poor work.

There have been some developments in planning for pupils to make progress year on year, particularly in mathematics and science, but this is not yet sufficiently effective in English. Teachers across the school are planning for different ability groups in their literacy, numeracy and science lessons and in the good lessons seen, this resulted in pupils of all abilities being challenged. During a Year 2 mathematics

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lesson the teaching assistant worked effectively with the higher attaining pupils on more demanding work with the result that they had to think hard about what they were doing and made good progress. Elsewhere, tasks and support were often geared towards the middle and lower attaining pupils, so that the higher attainers were not progressing as well as they should. Sometimes a lack of useful assessment procedures meant that lessons were not well targeted for any groups of learners. Some teachers made better use of their teaching assistants than others, and this had an impact on the quality of support for pupils of all abilities.

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

- improve the quality of teaching by ensuring lessons have a brisk pace and activities consistently match what pupils need to learn next— inadequate progress

### Leadership and management

The interim headteacher has established herself well as the leader of the school and built rapid and positive relationships with the deputy headteacher, teachers and the governing body. An action plan has been drawn up for the school, based clearly on the four key issues of the inspection report and also drawing from the Surrey County action plan. This has helpfully replaced the plethora of action plans that existed in the school prior to her arrival. The school's action plan, however, fails to identify the expected impact that the actions will have on the quality of teaching and learning across the school and what the headteacher's and governors' expectations are in terms of pupils' progress.

Full consultation has taken place on the school's action plan, together with a number of revised policies, including one on teaching and learning. The impact of these guiding documents, whilst providing a firm basis for future development, is not reflected in pupils' progress. Secure performance management structures are now in place and are ready to be implemented for all staff in the school. A clearly identified and a well-targeted continuing professional development plan has been drawn up.

Governors have appropriately reflected on the strategic direction that they need to take. They now have a much clearer view of standards in the school and the urgency of rectifying issues, which have existed in the school for a number of years.

The consultancy support from the local authority is now more suitably taking place during teachers' planning and preparation time and during staff meetings. As a consequence, pupils are now receiving greater continuity in their learning. Particularly good early developments have taken place with key senior staff working alongside colleagues in a neighbouring primary school. This coaching has made a significant impact on the senior staff, who now understand what needs to be done

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and have a clearer idea of leadership expectations. So far, this relatively new initiative has not had time to bear fruit and impact on standards.

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

- ensure strategic plans clearly identify the key steps required to improve teaching and learning and to secure a faster rate of improvement – inadequate progress
- ensure that senior teachers have consistent impact on the standards of teaching and learning in their specialist areas – inadequate progress

#### External support

The quality of the local authority's action plan is comprehensive and appropriately supports all the key issues identified in the November 2006 school inspection report. The action plan sets out key dates for improvement, which are reasonable. Consultancy time is being provided for literacy, numeracy and science, which targets the key elements of underperformance as well as monitoring and evaluating the impact of developments. This provision is identified in the additional support and intervention programme (ASIP). The attached consultant continues to make regular, focused visits to the school. The local authority has secured the services of an interim headteacher and has provided an additional advanced skills governor. The link set up with a neighbouring highly effective primary school augers well for the further development of senior staff and ultimately pupils' progress.

#### Main Judgements

Progress since being subject to special measures – inadequate

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed until further notice.

#### Priorities for further improvement

- extend the school's action plan, so that it identifies more clearly what impact the actions taken will have on teaching and learning and pupils' progress.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Executive Director for Children and Young People for Surrey.

Yours sincerely

Jennifer Smith  
H M Inspector

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