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10 December 2007

Mr S Kear  
The Acting Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Kear

#### SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL

Following my visit to your school on 27 and 28 November 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 May 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report 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.

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

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones  
H M Inspector

## SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF WILLIAM PENN SCHOOL

Report from the first monitoring inspection: 27 and 28 November 2007

### Evidence

The work of the school was observed through visiting lessons, scrutiny of documents, and meetings with the pupils, the acting headteacher, other staff in positions of responsibility, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority (LA).

### Context

The headteacher at the time of the inspection has since left and been replaced by an acting headteacher. The LA has also helped the school to find an acting assistant headteacher on secondment from another school to cover a maternity leave as well as an advanced skills teacher for curriculum development. The LA has also appointed an additional governor.

### Achievement and standards

Most of the children enter the Reception class with skill levels that are well above what is typical for their age. The 2007 teacher assessments of reading, writing and mathematics for pupils at the end of Year 2 showed that they did not make enough progress as standards fell in all areas from previously high levels to be broadly average in reading and writing and below this level in mathematics. Current standards seen in lessons are now rising. Pupils make at least satisfactory progress due to developments in teaching, assessment and a new curriculum that excites and engages the pupils, whilst involving and strongly emphasising their learning.

Standards at the end of Year 6 rose slightly in 2007 in all subjects and were overall above average. This represented inadequate progress from previously high levels in Key Stage 1. Lesson observations and analysis of information provided by the school indicate that progress has much improved this term and pupils are now more close to fulfilling their potential, although mathematics and writing are weaker areas. Pupils with learning difficulties, and those for whom English is not their first language, make progress that is at least in line with their peers.

### Personal development and well-being

These aspects continue to be at least good. Pupils are confident ambassadors for their school and speak highly of the care and education they receive. Where their teaching is stimulating they are avid learners and take a full part in lessons. In less engaging lessons they try their best and focus on their tasks with good humour. They are very tolerant towards each other and behaviour continues to be excellent both in lessons and around the school. Pupils listen closely to their teachers and do what is asked of them. Even in a lesson where coloured sweets were being used as counters, none succumbed to the temptation to quietly eat one!

## Quality of provision

The acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher have worked hard to improve teaching and learning and they are now satisfactory overall and improving the progress pupils make in all subjects.

This progress is founded on the good start that has been made to improving the curriculum. Many lessons are now more engaging and interesting as they are relevant to the pupils' interests. Learning objectives are clear and take account of individual learning needs, although this would be strengthened by closer linking to the individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Pupils are given many opportunities to think about what they have learnt and assess their own work.

The classroom environment has improved in many ways and there is now a good learning atmosphere in most lessons. Some rooms make better use of displays of pupils' work than others and resources are not always used well enough to support learning. Teachers now assess pupils' progress much more regularly and make it clear how well performance targets are met.

The curriculum is being reshaped to strengthen learning by making links between subjects, including literacy and numeracy. Planning is now more focused on the needs of pupils in each key stage and success and impact are evaluated more closely. Planning is based on themes that are more appropriate to the age and needs of the pupils and they are enjoying the new approaches. These changes are still in the early stages of implementation and are just starting to impact on pupils' learning. Pupils' progress is now tracked much more closely and accurately by the teachers and underachievement identified. Through this, the school can now show more easily that standards and achievement are rising and identify areas where extra input is needed.

There is good improvement in provision in the Foundation Stage. Teaching has been re-energised by new staffing and planning is now much more closely focused on children's learning. Children are given a good balance of activities that not only encourage them to show initiative but also to follow instructions and respond to questions. They behave extremely well and enjoy their learning. Even the youngest children are showing that they can concentrate on tasks and finish activities – and understand that they have to tidy up and clear away their own things afterwards. Activities have clear learning objectives and children are given every opportunity to judge their own progress to see if they have met their targets. Foundation Stage leadership now sets a clear direction for future developments and this is leading the way to improvements in other year groups.

Pupils continue to be well cared for by the school. Assessment procedures and monitoring of pupils' progress and evaluation of standards are much more systematic and give a clearer view of current achievement. Child protection procedures have improved and there is now a named child protection officer. Some staff training has already taken place and more is planned.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- create a rich and exciting curriculum which matches the high abilities of the majority of children – satisfactory
- improve the provision in the Foundation Stage by challenging the children to think and make choices for themselves – good
- ensure safeguarding procedures are in place – satisfactory.

### Leadership and management

The local authority and the governors have taken good steps to bolster leadership and management at senior level. Although the situation is not permanent, the acting headteacher and acting assistant headteacher provide a good measure of stability and are improving staff morale. They have made a lot of progress in moving the school forward rapidly through implementing an improvement plan that is well focused on the issues. As a result, the learning environment has clearly improved along with teaching, provision and current achievement and standards.

Leadership and coordination of subjects are improving. The grouping of subjects into three areas, each managed by a mixed group of staff and governors, is helping to raise awareness of the need to strengthen subject leadership. However, these groups have yet to work in depth on their areas of responsibility and show impact on developing the curriculum. The acting senior team have strengthened their understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through in depth data analysis and accurate lesson observations.

The governors now have a much clearer understanding of their roles in monitoring the school and holding it to account for its performance. The information they now receive from the school is much improved, and they are now much more active in fulfilling their role. They are receiving appropriate training and have a better understanding of the need to challenge the school and hold it to account for its performance.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in May 2007:

- establish a secure leadership team which can work together effectively to bring about improvement and ensure all pupils receive consistently good teaching – satisfactory.

### External support

Support from the LA is good. It is strongly focused on supporting the acting leadership team, other staff and governors. The school has benefited from working with the consultant headteacher and the LA's attached advisor, who gives much appreciated support. There is a good sense of common purpose amongst staff, governors and LA personnel that is moving the school forward in all areas. The school is very receptive to the guidance given by the LA's advisors, especially in assessing the effectiveness of improvements and deciding on the next steps. The actions in the LA's statement of action have been effective in helping the school to improve.

## Priorities for further improvement

- Increase the emphasis on raising standards in mathematics and writing.