

**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE
(ISI)**

**FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION OF
SANCTON WOOD**

On

9th May, 2006

By

Fiona Mynors

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

FOLLOW-UP INSPECTION REPORT ON

Sancton Wood

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| Full Name of the School | Sancton Wood School |
| DfES Number | 873/6009 |
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| Name of Head and Proprietor | Dr Harriet Sturdy |

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Sancton Wood School is a proprietorial school which was seeking accreditation with ISA. The inspection took place from 9th to 13th May, 2005. The education provided for the pupils is broad and of good quality, with an emphasis on high quality pastoral care. However the management structures were over complex and staff were not always clear who was in overall charge of the school. The director of education was also involved in the management of another school and therefore the managing director, the proprietor, took over management in her absence. This led to confusion. Middle managers were unclear about their responsibilities and curriculum links across the different sections of the school were not consistent to ensure continuity of pupils' progress. The use of assessment to monitor pupils' progress was inconsistent, and the senior library was unsatisfactory. The school had a significant number of weaknesses in their awareness and procedures for health and safety. A number of other less cogent issues were identified in the subject reports.
- 1.2 A follow up one-day visit was carried out by Fiona Mynors on 9th May, 2006.
- 1.3 During the course of the visit, meetings were held with the head and the head of the junior section. The whole school was visited. The head provided a helpful document outlining changes within the school that have taken place over the last year. The documentation scrutinised included samples of departmental handbooks, health and safety policies, procedures and risk assessments, documentation on fire safety, the school visits' policy and assessment information.

2. THE SCHOOL'S RESPONSE TO THE RECOMMENDATIONS

The inspection report contained three main recommendations.

R1 The school should review management structures and curriculum links to ensure a consistent approach to all areas of school life, and in order to enhance continuity in pupils' learning.

- 2.1 The proprietor took over responsibility as head in September 2005, with appropriate delegation to the heads of department, and the former director of education now works at a different school owned by the proprietors. This has ensured a clear line of senior management within the school. A new headmaster has been appointed for September 2006. A new advisory board is being developed to provide additional critical support for the new head as well as an appropriate measure of oversight for the school.
- 2.2 Management structures have also been strengthened by the appointment of a science co-ordinator and a head of humanities has been appointed for September. They have a clear responsibility to monitor their subjects across the whole school.
- 2.3 Job descriptions are now in place for most subject leaders. A number of long-serving staff are retiring at the end of the summer term, so that job descriptions in the senior department will be formulated by the new head in line with his development plans.
- 2.4 Curriculum links have been strengthened across the school. Regular meetings within and across the infant and junior section of the school take place. These are timetabled and minutes taken. In the senior section informal links continue to be strong. In a number of subjects such as science, curriculum planning is well developed across the school. The school is aware that this is an area of development for the new senior managers in September.

R2 Use assessment to monitor pupils' progress consistently and as a means to develop future planning.

- 2.5 The school has undertaken a thorough review of its assessment procedures and the best possible practice has been the subject of a number of whole staff and section meetings. Year 1 and 2 teachers have attended training at Bishop Grosseteste College, and pupils are taking national tests in Year 2. Assessments have been standardised and regular meetings held within the section and with the junior department to discuss pupils' progress.
- 2.6 In the junior section a new assessment grid is under trial. If this is considered to be sufficiently effective, its use will be implemented for all subjects. A number of assessments, both standardised and school-based, are currently used. These are now used systematically to track individual pupils' progress.
- 2.7 A number of senior section teachers teach Year 6, so that links are strong in these subjects. A whole staff meeting was used to discuss the Year 7 and 8 MidYIS results and targets set for all pupils. These will be reviewed after the summer examinations, and each pupil records their targets in their homework planner.

R3 Develop the senior library to provide effective support for the curriculum.

- 2.8 The senior library has greatly improved with the help of a clear action plan. A committee of volunteer parents have culled old books. The display of books is now attractive and subject teachers will give advice on the purchase of future reference material. The decision has been taken to employ a part-time librarian from September, who will be able to give professional support and advice to develop this resource further. As part of the plan to encourage pupils to use the library, time from PSHE lessons are used for pupils to visit the library.
- 2.9 The contents of the junior school library were satisfactory, but access was difficult as it also acted as the staff room. From September the library will be re-located to a classroom, and additional computers will make it even more useful for pupils.

Actions Required for Compliance with the Regulatory Requirements

- (1) Attend to a number of health and safety issues as a matter of urgency. [3.(4)]
- (2) Take appropriate measures to ensure an acceptable level of fire safety. [3.(5)]
- (3) Provide an additional washbasin in the junior department. [5.(k)]

The health and safety issues raised by the team have been addressed. The staff have been made more aware of the potential risks through in-service training. All staff have been instructed to read the policies and all staff have attended refresher first aid courses. All staff in the junior section have attended an extended course to maximise protection on the separate site. Child protection training has been updated. A dangerous branch has been lopped, mesh protection to basement windows has been replaced, a fence has been erected to avoid collisions between young pupils and older ones during break times, a clear notice has been placed on the staff WC door warning staff about pupils queuing outside, and younger pupils are no longer expected to sit on the cold ground in the playground. Registers in the junior building are now stored centrally on the ground floor so that they are easily accessible in case of an emergency.

Advice has been taken from the local fire service. Measures to improve the level of fire safety have been taken. Appropriate fire extinguishers are now in place and staff have had training in their use. A jammed fire exit now works well. Careful monitoring takes place to ensure that bags do not block fire exits. In the laboratory gas, water and the central heating are now earthed properly. Fire notices on exits are in place. They are clear and informative.

Both the main school and the junior buildings have appropriate logs which record fire alarm checks and fire practices.

The junior department has a new washbasin.

Security Issues

The following extracts are taken from the letter about security matters sent to the school at the time of the previous inspection report:

“Easy access to the pupils’ playground through the car park and over fence”.

“No lock or double handles on gate between crèche and main school”.

- 2.10 A new fence, gate and extra mesh have been installed to protect the playground more effectively.
- 2.11 A new bolt is in place between the crèche and main school.

3. CONCLUSION

- 3.1 Sancton Wood School with its new leadership has worked extremely hard during the year since inspection to address all the concerns raised in the inspection report. Management structures are clear and appropriate. The new head will have the opportunity of developing them further, in line with his vision for the school. Curriculum links are greatly improved and assessment is now being used systematically to monitor pupils’ progress well. The senior library is much improved. The commitment to improvement has been demonstrated by the significant funds that have been invested to improve the health and safety, and fire protection issues. In addition, the areas of concern within the subject reports have been remedied.