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24 February 2012

Mrs N Barrand  
Headteacher  
Thomas Willingale School  
The Broadway  
Loughton  
IG10 3SR

Dear Mrs Barrand

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Thomas Willingale School**

Following my visit with Ruth Frith, additional inspector, to your school on 22–23 February 2012, 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 the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place on 21 September 2011. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – satisfactory.

One newly qualified teacher may be appointed in either Year 1, 2, 3 or 4.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Essex.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2011**

- Improve standards in English and mathematics by:
  - making sure all groups of pupils and especially boys make consistently good or better progress in all lessons to eradicate underachievement
  - ensuring that tasks in lessons are sufficiently challenging and fully meet the needs of pupils
  - providing clear targets for pupils on what they need to do next to improve.
  
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school by ensuring that teachers:
  - use assessment information effectively to plan lessons that fully cater for the needs of all pupils
  - use time, resources and information and communication technology effectively to motivate and inspire pupils in lessons
  - provide opportunities for pupils to work with each other and be more active in their learning.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - developing leadership expertise across the school
  - establishing effective monitoring and evaluation practices by all those with leadership and management responsibilities
  - using data effectively to track the progress of pupils and set challenging targets for improvement
  - implementing plans for the promotion of community cohesion within a local, national and international context
  - fully engaging members of the governing body in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and holding school leaders to account.
  
- Ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled related to the staffing arrangements for provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Thomas Willingale School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 22–23 February 2012**

#### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, staff, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body, a parent governor and a representative from the local authority.

#### **Context**

The school is above average in size. The majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds with around a fifth of pupils from minority ethnic groups; a growing number are from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below that seen nationally. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is broadly average. The school continues to hold Activemark and Investors in People. Since the beginning of September 2011 a new special educational needs coordinator has been appointed.

#### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

Children join the Nursery with abilities that are similar to other children of their age. They make satisfactory progress and this continues through their Reception Year, although progress is uneven across the two Reception classes. The school's current data indicates that progress has improved since the last inspection and that all pupils are making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' work scrutinised and lesson observations during the monitoring inspection support the school's evaluation of progress. Although attainment remains slightly below age-related levels, particularly in mathematics, it is clear that the rigorous focus on improving pupils' achievement is beginning to close this gap, including between the attainment of boys and girls. All pupils have challenging yet realistic learning targets and know and understand what they need to do to achieve these. Disabled pupils and those identified with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress although they do not always understand the very specific targets in their individual education plans because they are written in adult terminology.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve standards in English and mathematics – satisfactory.

#### **The quality of teaching**

All teachers were observed during the inspection and, overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. Almost half of lessons seen were good, with an example of

outstanding teaching. This matches the school's own evaluation of teaching from its monitoring but shows satisfactory improvement since the last inspection because there remains a very small proportion of inadequate teaching. In the good and outstanding lessons, teachers encourage effective learning through their clear explanations of what the objective for the lesson is and how pupils can be successful learners. Resources are used well, including information and communication technology where this is available, and teachers inspire through their interesting teaching styles; as seen, for example, in an outstanding mathematics lesson, where pupils took on the role of explorers to find out about different non-standard measures.

In the best lessons, pupils are highly enthusiastic about learning throughout and make good progress. They talk to each other to share ideas and work collaboratively, saying this helps them to think of different ways to solve problems. They are focussed on producing their best work. Pupils say that lessons are much more interesting now and they particularly like the way teachers encourage them to act out their ideas, for example before they write a story. Teachers are beginning to use assessment information to accurately assess pupils' achievement and are keeping careful track of how pupils are getting on. Where they identify a lack of progress, additional support is given to ensure all pupils make as much progress as possible. Where teaching remains inadequate, there is no clear purpose to pupils' learning and tasks are not well matched to their abilities.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school – satisfactory.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and on the playground is good. They say there is no bullying and, if there is an incident of unkindness, this is rapidly dealt with. Their behaviour in lessons is best when teaching is good or outstanding because they are all fully absorbed in the learning activities and greatly enjoy the exciting curriculum offered to them. Safeguarding processes and procedures fully meet regulatory requirements.

### **The quality of leadership in and management of the school**

The headteacher is unrelenting in her emphasis on improving the school and her good leadership has inspired staff and pupils. The deputy headteacher supports her well and already has a good grasp of the new and robust tracking system that has been introduced. The high expectations and ambition of the headteacher has brought about improvement in teaching and learning because teachers say how much they value her support and the excellent training and development they have

received since the special measures judgement. One teacher said, 'In the last term, I have had the best professional development since I started teaching.'

The school has improvement plans to address the key issues from the last inspection. However, whilst these are detailed, they are unwieldy and not readily accessible to teachers or the governing body. The school's self-evaluation is rigorous and satisfactory because its judgements on improvement with the key issues, based on rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning, agree with the judgement of the inspection team. However, the quality of Early Years Foundation Stage provision has not been reviewed with as much rigour as that for Key Stages 1 and 2 and the statutory requirement for staffing in the Early Years Foundation Stage has still not been resolved.

Phase leaders are beginning to take on a more significant role within the school and have been involved in giving training to teachers. The deputy headteacher and inclusion manager have led pupil progress interviews. Teachers say these have provided a good level of challenge and made them think about exactly what they are doing to ensure all pupils in their class make the progress expected of them. The governing body now provides a satisfactory level of challenge to the school as well as giving support. It has an action plan and members say they have a better understanding of the kind of questions to ask so they are fully informed about pupils' achievement.

The school has made satisfactory adaptations to the curriculum and this has resulted in topics that inspire boys as well as girls to learn effectively. For example, Year 6 boys talked with great enthusiasm about writing a diary as if they were a character from a Roald Dahl novel. These were shared with the inspection team and illustrated good achievement. The school is beginning to teach pupils about other cultures and to celebrate those within the school community. They have not secured links with another school in a different area of the United Kingdom or established links with another country, although this work is underway.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection:

- improve the quality of leadership and management – satisfactory
- ensure that all statutory requirements are fulfilled related to the staffing arrangements for provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage – inadequate.

### **External support**

The local authority has given the school good support. They have facilitated a highly successful link with another local school, giving teachers the opportunity to observe good and excellent teaching. This has had a good impact on improving the quality of teaching, resulting in improved pupil achievement. The local authority is to be

congratulated on the careful and well-considered match between the two schools which has ensured this improvement. Mathematics and English consultants have worked with teachers and have facilitated improved practice in these subjects.

The local authority's plan of action whilst fit for purpose is not fully personalised to the individual requirements of the school.