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Mr Aalders-Dunthorne  
Executive Headteacher  
St Edmund's Primary School  
Heckfield Green  
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IP21 5AD

Dear Mr Aalders-Dunthorne

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of St Edmund's Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 20–21 March 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 in 10 November 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.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed without consulting HMI.

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 Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

John Mitcheson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Annex**

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

- Ensure that governors, the headteacher and those teachers with leadership responsibilities contribute to rapid school improvement by:
  - providing training and time to enable them to fulfil their monitoring roles rigorously and regularly
  - using information gained from monitoring and data analysis to pinpoint and plan exactly what needs to be done to improve
  - ensuring that the headteacher supports teachers and other school leaders but also holds them to account for timely improvements
  - increasing further the governing body's awareness of data provided about the school's performance so that governors can hold the headteacher and staff to account for the pace of improvement.
  
- Improve teaching and the use of assessment to a considerably good level in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment further by:
  - providing staff with training on using assessment information to plan lessons that always meet pupils' different needs and abilities
  - ensuring that teachers set realistic and challenging targets for pupils to attain and make sure these are shared with pupils so they understand what is expected of them
  - implementing a programme of rigorous and regular monitoring of the quality of teaching by the headteacher and subject coordinators
  - using the outcomes of this monitoring to focus support, training and challenge for individual teachers.

## **Special measures: monitoring of St Edmund's Primary School**

### **Report from the first monitoring inspection on 20–21 March 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, and assistant headteacher, a group of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and two representatives from the local authority.

#### **Context**

Following the last inspection, the headteacher retired. A new executive headteacher was appointed in January 2012 to lead and manage the school and its partner school, Mendham Primary School. A teacher has been promoted to assist the headteacher. The school roll and staffing have remained unchanged. Four new governors have joined the school. The governing bodies of both schools have agreed in principle to federate in 2013.

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

Regular lesson monitoring and improved assessment procedures instigated by the headteacher are providing a much clearer picture of the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning and progress. Greater accountability and the commitment of all staff to raise pupils' achievement are beginning to accelerate progress. School data shows that almost all pupils in Year 6 are on track to attain Level 4 in English and mathematics and an increased proportion are expected to attain the higher Level 5, especially in English. Two thirds of pupils in Year 2 pupils are predicted to meet end of Key Stage 1 expectations.

In lessons, most pupils demonstrate high levels of literacy, particularly when reading and using their speaking and listening skills. Pupils in both key stages read fluently and confidently for their ages but their writing skills are less well-developed. Some of the shortfalls in pupils' numeracy are being addressed through additional time each morning to practise mental arithmetic and by teachers' closer adherence to national strategy guidance. However, additional training has not fully extended teachers' subject knowledge and, at times, their low expectations of what pupils are capable of means that the gaps in their mathematical knowledge are not being closed.

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

Lesson monitoring indicates that staff training and additional time to prepare and review their work is beginning to lead to a higher proportion of satisfactory and good teaching, but a residue of inadequate teaching remains.

Recent staff training to increase teachers' understanding of data and how to use it to plan lessons suited to the needs of pupils of different ages and abilities has not been consolidated. Lesson plans include different tasks but they do not always include sufficient challenge. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson, a group of more-able pupils found a calculation task easy and completed it quickly but no additional work was planned for them. Teachers' marking is more regular and pupils are eager to read the comments in their books, but they do not refer to their personal targets or to National Curriculum attainment levels. Pupils know some of their targets but these are not used regularly in lessons to promote achievement and pupils are often unaware of what they need to do to meet or exceed them.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve teaching and the use of assessment to a considerably good level in order to accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment further – satisfactory.

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

Behaviour in lessons and in the playground is good. Pupils cooperate well together and play safely and happily during break-times. In lessons, they engage fully, readily answer questions and respond positively to staff. When asked, pupils said that school is a friendly, safe and enjoyable place to be and that their teachers are helpful and caring. However, they also feel that they could be 'pushed' further in lessons, especially in mathematics.

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

In a short period of time, the headteacher's clear, coherent leadership has given the school a much-needed sense of direction that is welcomed by staff, pupils and their parents. Lesson observations and regular scrutiny of pupils' work are holding staff to account and identifying where the school's strengths and weaknesses lie. As increasing demands are made of staff, care is being taken to support their well-being and provide them with time to prepare and review their work. There are plans to enable teachers and subject leaders to experience good practice in other schools.

Revised improvement plans with clear actions and timescales are regularly reviewed by the headteacher to monitor the rate of improvement being made. Systematic assessment of pupils' progress, based on externally validated teachers' assessments, is being used effectively to plot pupils' progress over time. This data informs half-termly meetings between pupils and their teachers to review how well they are doing. It also enables staff to set personal targets and coordinate additional support for those who need it. However, not all teachers are using this information well enough to plan learning for pupils of different abilities.

The governing body ensures that pupils are kept safe. Training has provided governors with a better understanding of performance data. Their frequent visits to the school are providing support for the headteacher and equip the governing body to hold him to account for addressing the priorities identified in the last inspection. The appointment of an assistant headteacher has added capacity to the school's leadership and ensures that a senior teacher is always present in the school. The capacity of middle leadership remains under-developed. There is a leader of numeracy but not for literacy, and, currently, all lesson monitoring and actions to improve the quality of teaching are led by the headteacher.

Progress since the last section 5 inspection on the areas for improvement:

- ensure that governors, the headteacher and those teachers with leadership responsibilities contribute to rapid school improvement – satisfactory.

### **External support**

The local authority's good range of support is welcomed by the headteacher and governors. Their statement of action is fit for purpose and is reviewed monthly to hold leaders accountable. Their close scrutiny and challenge this term has added momentum by highlighting what else needs to be done to accelerate improvement. The local authority has brokered a number of partnerships with local schools to provide mentoring and expert support for the headteacher and staff.