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28 June 2012

Mrs Wilma Hyde  
Headteacher  
Pot Kiln Primary School  
Butt Road  
Great Cornard  
Sudbury  
CO10 0DS

Dear Mrs Hyde

**Special measures: monitoring inspection of Pot Kiln Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 26–27 June 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 second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 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.

Progress since previous monitoring inspection – satisfactory.

Newly qualified teachers may be appointed.

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

Ian Seath  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

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

- Raise achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in writing and mathematics, so that most pupils meet the ambitious targets set for them in this year's improvement plans by:
  - eradicating inadequate teaching and increasing the proportion of good or better teaching to at least 50% by 2012
  - sharing best practice, modelling good teaching and providing additional staff training in the teaching of writing and mathematics for those who need it most
  - embedding newly introduced procedures for assessing pupils' progress so that teachers and managers have an accurate overview of how well all pupils are achieving and are able to intervene early to provide additional support for those at risk of underachieving
  - improving the identification of, and guidance and support provided for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and closely monitoring how effectively teachers use this information to narrow the gap between their attainment and that of similar pupils nationally by 2012.
  
- Improve the quality of the curriculum and its impact on outcomes for pupils by:
  - ensuring it is modified to meet the needs of pupils of different ages, abilities and interests and becomes firmly embedded by July 2012
  - mapping out where and when pupils' writing and numeracy skills will be taught, practised and improved across all subjects, and checking if they are delivered
  - providing more enrichment opportunities, including school visits, visitors and collaborative activities with other schools to stimulate pupils' creative writing
  - making more use of information and communication technology to enhance learning.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management to accelerate the rate of improvement and ensure that outcomes for pupils are significantly better in 2012 by:
  - engaging all leaders and managers, teachers, teaching assistants and the governing body, as a matter of urgency, in an accurate evaluation of the school and the actions needed to address its weaknesses
  - providing clear and coherent senior leadership so that all staff understand fully their roles and the expectations of them
  - increasing the frequency of lesson monitoring, the scrutiny of teachers' planning and marking, and checking of pupils' work

- ensuring all leaders of subjects and key stages make thorough use of assessment data, and are held fully accountable for the standards achieved in their area of responsibility
- reporting improvements made to the governing body as a standing agenda point in its meetings to enable it to provide further challenge for senior leaders and greater scrutiny of the school's overall performance.

## **Special measures: monitoring of Pot Kiln Primary School**

### **Report from the first second monitoring inspection on 26–27 June 2012**

#### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the headteacher, groups of pupils, teachers, and representatives of the governing body and the local authority. The inspector visited all of the school's classes and paid particular attention to the standard of pupils' work.

#### **Context**

The context of the school remains as at the last visit, with preparations proceeding well for the school's expansion as part of the reorganisation from a three- to two-tier system. In September 2012, a total of seven newly appointed teachers will begin work at the school, including an experienced Year 5 teacher for those currently in Year 4 who will remain at the school as part of the reorganisation. Two new governors have been appointed to represent the local authority.

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

No new nationally published and validated data are yet available. Standards remain below the national average. However, the school's own monitoring data indicate that standards have improved further since the last monitoring visit. This improvement has been most marked in mathematics and, although variable between classes and year groups, overall standards in this subject are close to the national average and with a significant proportion of pupils that have attained higher standards. This is particularly so for boys. Standards in English remain below average, though again with an improving trend.

Pupils make generally satisfactory progress, but again with significant differences between groups and years. Overall, the improving trend noted at the last visit has continued. Good use of reliable assessment data has ensured that staff have an accurate view of pupils' progress. The data demonstrates that the gap between the progress of those disabled pupils, and those with special educational needs, and their peers has narrowed since the last inspection. This is because of effective assessment, intervention and support. Girls continue to demonstrate better progress than boys, but this is not the case in Year 2 where boys have met national averages in all subjects and exceeded them in mathematics and writing. The school's data indicate that the gender attainment gap is narrowing. The school has met its own attainment targets for mathematics this year, but has not met them for literacy in every year group.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- raise achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2, especially in writing and mathematics, so that most pupils meet the ambitious targets set for them in this year's improvement plans – satisfactory.

### **The quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching and learning continues to improve. The inspector observed more good teaching and learning than on the last visit. This is resulting in pupils making better progress, although this is improving faster in some years than in others. The use of assessment is now embedded throughout the school and is accurate. It is used well to plan teaching. As a consequence, pupils who are finding a topic difficult are beginning to make progress that is comparable to that of their peers. The marking of written work has improved and more pupils are aware of the next steps that they need to take to improve. As at the last monitoring visit, a few are unable to read the teachers' written comments in workbooks.

In class, pupils demonstrate improving skills of independent learning and application. This is because teachers are now giving them greater opportunity to do so. A noticeable number of pupils now work comfortably and independently at levels higher than those expected for their age, especially in writing and in mathematics. These skills are developing well in the Early Years Foundation Stage and at Key Stage 1, with continued signs of improvement evident in Years 3 and 4 as noted at the last visit.

The teaching of pupils in intervention and one-to-one sessions is excellent. These teachers have a very clear understanding of the needs of those who need extra support and they deliver it with skill and patience. The progress of these pupils is carefully monitored so that support is closely tailored to their needs. As a result, the progress they make is improving. Pupils appreciate the good work of teaching assistants.

Information and communication technology is used in class throughout the school. Teachers routinely use interactive whiteboards to explain and illustrate, and to help with literacy and numeracy. Simple learning packages and software are used extensively. In the best examples, pupils themselves are confident to demonstrate their work using the equipment in front of others.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- eradicating inadequate teaching and increasing the proportion of good or better teaching to at least 50% by 2012 – satisfactory.

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

Leadership and management are improving quickly. The pace of change has increased since the last visit. Systems and monitoring that are now embedded are providing a good platform to enable further improvements to teaching and learning and to achievement.

The school has an ambitious and clear direction for improvement. As at the last visit, self-assessment is accurate and clearly identifies both weaknesses and strengths. Improvement plans remain detailed, with challenging targets that are closely monitored.

Governance has improved. Training on school performance data is ongoing, and governors now challenge performance better, although this is not always translated into clear targets that they can monitor effectively. Two experienced local authority governors have been appointed. Governors are well-informed by senior managers with whom they have a good working relationship.

Teaching and learning are improving because underlying improvement mechanisms are now strong. The school's lesson observation system has improved markedly since the last monitoring visit. It now pays good attention to pupils' learning and as this is fed back to teachers so they are becoming more aware of the change of emphasis. This, in turn, is leading to improving classroom practice. For example, the inspector observed more instances where pupils are able to develop skills of independent and collaborative learning, enabling them to take more responsibility for their own learning.

In addition, the assessment of pupils' progress is now very strong. It is accurate, systematic, and used very effectively to drive up standards. Planning for lessons incorporates this information very effectively. Teachers now monitor standards achieved by individual pupils on a lesson-by-lesson basis, closely matching the teaching to the needs of individuals in a flexible and responsive way. This approach is leading to accelerating learning and progress.

Much professional development has been undertaken, for example the sharing of best teaching practice is now systematic and includes peer observations and visits to other institutions. Training to enhance the management skills of middle managers is underway. Improvements to the curriculum are increasingly enabling pupils to achieve better, often through a thematic approach in which classroom activities cover individual topics rather than subjects. For example pupils in Year 4 are using computer-aided design to construct a 'retirement village'. This has led them to think about aspects of the environment, the social considerations, and its role in the community. The school evaluates the curriculum well. Detailed planning to enable the teaching of literacy and numeracy in subjects other than in mathematics and English is now being implemented and the school is able to point to improvements in mathematics that have resulted.

Progress since the last monitoring inspection on the areas for improvement:

- improve the quality of leadership and management to accelerate the rate of improvement and ensure that outcomes for pupils are significantly better in 2012 – good.

### **External support**

The local authority has provided good support in the areas of lesson observations, assessment, literacy and the development of the curriculum.