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17 December 2013

Rick Tracey  
Beacon Hill School  
Stone Lodge Lane West  
Ipswich  
IP2 9HW

Dear Mr Tracey

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Beacon Hill School**

Following my visit to your school with Charlie Henry HMI on Monday 16 December, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in September 2013.

### **Evidence**

During this inspection, HMI met with the acting headteacher, the acting deputy headteacher and the acting Chair of the Governing Body. HMI also met two local authority representatives. HMI evaluated the local authority's statement of action and the school's post-inspection action plan. HMI looked at a range of documents, in particular those related to safeguarding and pupil progress.

### **Context**

The headteacher and deputy headteacher left the school soon after the inspection. An interim headteacher was appointed at the beginning of November and an existing senior teacher is acting as deputy headteacher. An interim Chair of Governors has been appointed and five new governors have joined the governing body. A new senior teacher is due to start in January 2014.

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

Following the inspection in September 2013 the school quickly ensured that all members of staff received training in safeguarding children. The single central record has been updated to take new appointments into account. The governing body recently agreed the safeguarding policy. However, it has not been updated with the names of the current designated persons.

Because they are new to their posts, senior leaders do not yet have a comprehensive view of the quality of teaching. They are gaining some information from informal observation but they have not yet gathered a sufficient range of evidence, including lesson observation and information about how well pupils are making progress over time, to evaluate strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning. Senior leaders do not have sufficient confidence in the accuracy of pupils' progress data. The moderation of the assessments of pupils' achievement in mathematics with other special schools in the local area ensures that these assessments are accurate. However this rigour is not yet in place for other subjects, in particular English and science. This weakness hampers the effectiveness of staff performance management because leaders do not have reliable information across all subjects to give a picture of how well pupils are progressing.

The school's post-inspection action plan identifies relevant actions to be undertaken to address the weaknesses that were identified. The success criteria are largely appropriate. The importance of accurate teacher assessment is recognised although targets for the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress are not stated clearly enough in the plan.

Timescales are identified in the school's action plan and some require more urgency if they are to be met. There are risks of slippage because the training of subject leaders in ensuring accurate use of data and effective teaching in their subject is only just beginning. New processes are being introduced to monitor behaviour such as the prejudice-related incident book and the record of physical interventions. The new attendance policy is now on the website. However, parents have not yet been sent attendance booklets to reinforce the school's procedures and expectations.

The local authority has continued to provide support to the school. The statement of action indicates clearly the key priorities for advisers, staff, senior leaders and governors. The local authority provides opportunities for teachers to develop a better understanding of pupil achievement, such as through moderation of teacher assessment. This offer, so far, has only been taken up in mathematics. The local

authority and the school have identified other schools with whom to share effective practice.

There has been significant change to the membership of the governing body. Governors are committed to maintaining rigour in the monitoring of the school's effectiveness. They are aware of the importance of accurate information about progress and teaching being submitted to them for scrutiny.

Following the monitoring inspection the following judgements were made:

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The post Ofsted action plan is fit for purpose.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Marianick Ellender-Gelé  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**