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Mrs Ruth Nixon  
Executive headteacher  
Southwold Primary School  
Cumberland Road  
Southwold  
Suffolk IP18 6JP

Dear Mrs Nixon

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Southwold Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 10 July 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave me and for the time you made available to discuss the actions you are taking to improve the school since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the school was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in March 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. The school should take further action to:

- refine the school's action plan to include quantifiable measures of success and clearer milestones, so that senior leaders can monitor and evaluate the impact of the actions taken
- ensure that teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve in all subject areas.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, I met with you and the Chair of the Governing Body to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I also met with a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school's action plan, looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read. I also toured the school with you to observe teaching and learning.

## **Context**

Since the previous inspection the school has federated with Barnby and Northcove Primary School. You are the executive headteacher at both schools and they are governed by a single governing body.

## **Main findings**

You took prompt action to address the issues identified at the previous inspection and some of the changes that you have made are already beginning to have a positive impact. For example, you revised the school's calculation policy and this has led to teachers adopting a common approach to this key aspect of mathematics teaching. A review of the school's approach to marking has also resulted in some improvements, as teachers now provide pupils with better feedback about how to improve their work and move on in their learning. This was most apparent in pupils' writing and mathematics books. In other subjects, less attention is paid to pupils' written responses and too often work of poor quality is accepted without comment.

The action plan that you produced, following the previous inspection, shows how the school intends to address each of the areas identified as requiring improvement. However, the plan lacks clear, precise and measurable success criteria. Consequently, lots of actions are planned, but their intended impact over time is not mapped out, nor have clear targets for improvement been set. This means that school leaders, including governors, will find it difficult to check whether or not the actions are having the desired impact.

You have ensured that professional development opportunities are available to teachers. You have developed links with a local network of schools in order to provide opportunities for teachers and teaching assistants to attend training events and visit other schools to learn from best practice.

The school's own records, and provisional end of key stage results, indicate that achievement has improved significantly in reading, writing and mathematics, with more pupils now achieving higher levels. These assessments were reflected in the quality of work seen in pupils' writing and mathematics books during this inspection. Pupils read regularly at school and at home and are also achieving well in this key area.

Arrangements for school governance have been reorganised in order to provide more effective support and challenge to school leaders. The Chair of the Governing Body has an accurate view of how well the school is doing and understands what needs to be done to be judged good at the next inspection. However, weaknesses in the school's action plan restrict governors' ability to rigorously check how well the school is doing in tackling the areas requiring improvement.

Ofsted may carry out further visits and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The local authority has worked closely with the school since the previous inspection. A local authority officer has visited the school regularly to monitor progress and a mathematics adviser has also provided effective support to the school, leading training and working alongside school leaders. The local authority has confidence in the school's capacity to secure the improvements necessary for it to become a good school within the next 18 months.

The school has developed a partnership with other local schools in order to provide training opportunities for staff and to ensure that teacher assessments of pupils' work are accurate.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Suffolk.

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**