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29 January 2015

Toni Davis  
Headteacher  
Pot Kiln Primary School  
Butt Road  
Great Cornard  
Sudbury  
CO10 0DS

Dear Miss Davis

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Pot Kiln Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 28 January 2015, 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 October 2014. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. At its previous section 5 inspection the school was also judged to require improvement.

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:

- improve the quality of pupils' written work by ensuring that it is always neatly presented and that handwriting is of a good quality
- improve teaching by exploiting all opportunities to share the best practice of the school's good and outstanding teachers
- improve the action plan by making the links to the key actions from the previous inspection fully explicit, and by ensuring that all milestones are measurable.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The school improvement plan was

evaluated and you took me on a tour of the school. I checked the school's single central register.

## **Context**

At the time of the last inspection, a number of staff, including the deputy headteacher, were employed on fixed-term contracts for the autumn term. These contracts have now ended and the staff have left the school. A teacher on a permanent contract also left the school at the end of last term. Two classes are currently being taught by temporary staff. A new deputy headteacher has been appointed, from within the existing staff, on a fixed-term contract until the end of the academic year. You have reorganised classes to reduce the amount of mixed-age teaching.

## **Main findings**

The school's action plan is thorough and clear. It includes appropriate milestones, individual responsibilities are identified and success criteria are included. Some of the milestones and success criteria in the plan are measurable. A separate plan provides details of how the actions will be monitored and evaluated. All of the school's senior leaders worked together to write the plan and it is clear that this has given the team a strong sense of 'ownership' of it. The action plan has been shared widely and is a working document that is constantly referred to and updated. You issued business cards – detailing the school's current priorities on one side and strengths on the other – to all staff and governors and this has ensured that everyone knows exactly what the school is working to achieve.

Although the plan covers all of the key actions arising from the last inspection, you chose not to match precisely the priority areas in your plan with the key actions in the report. This means that it is not immediately obvious how and when each key action is to be covered. Although the school is easily able to monitor progress against the priorities it has identified, it is less easy to do the same for the key inspection actions.

At the time of the last inspection the school had a number of mixed-age classes, with some pupils taught in classes that were too small to be viable in the long term. You reorganised classes so that pupils are taught in their year groups, wherever possible, and you have already noticed that expectations are higher as a result of this change.

A new system to track pupils' attitudes and achievement had recently been introduced when the school was last inspected. You showed me the detailed feedback system that the school now uses to ensure that every pupil's progress is tracked closely and that measures are put in place to address promptly any issues that are identified. You told me that parents are also more engaged with their children's learning now that the system is increasingly embedded.

The school's behaviour policy has been revised and is closely linked to the new monitoring system. The expectations and consequences of the behaviour system are clear and pupils are keen to 'stay green' (showing that they follow the school rules) on the school's traffic light system. The impact of the new system is clear; 80% of pupils were 'green' throughout the first half term and this rose to 90% by the end of December.

You have increased the school's focus on improving the quality of teaching through, for example, more focussed professional development meetings, increased use of coaching and raising expectations. You told me that the quality of teaching is improving and the school's local authority adviser agrees. However, the quality of work in pupils' books remains inconsistent across classes and year groups. Although progress is usually clearly evident, in some classes work is untidy and handwriting is not good enough.

The governing body is supportive, well-informed and increasingly able to hold the school to account. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium has not yet taken place despite the school's best efforts to arrange this. The governing body is well aware that the results of this year's national tests are crucial and they know that they need to monitor progress closely and ensure that momentum – in terms of rapid school improvement – is maintained.

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 provides good support for the school. The school's standards and excellence adviser provides you with regular support and this is something that you value enormously. The school buys into the local authority's 'enhanced package' and this enables staff to access a range of training courses, as appropriate. As you joined the school as a new headteacher, the local authority arranged a mentor for you.

The school has made repeated attempts to arrange an external review of its use of the pupil premium, via the local authority, but without success. The local authority now needs to support the school to ensure that the review takes place as soon as possible.

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

Yours sincerely

Wendy Varney  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**