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19 September 2013

Mr Graeme Garthwaite  
Interim Headteacher  
Cage Green Primary School  
Cage Green Road  
Tonbridge  
TN10 4PT

Dear Mr Garthwaite

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Cage Green Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 17 and 18 September, 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 previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the third monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in October 2012. 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.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of special measures.

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

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published 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 Kent.

Yours sincerely

Jane Wotherspoon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in October 2012

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least consistently good by:
  - making sure that lesson activities extend and challenge all pupils, especially those of higher ability
  - creating frequent opportunities for pupils to work independently, especially in applying their literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects
  - making sure that teachers quickly identify pupils who are falling behind in their work so they can be given extra help to catch up
  - making sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn in lessons and are clear about whether they are reaching their targets.
  
- Ensure that all pupils make good progress in mathematics, reading and writing by:
  - providing training for teachers so they are effective in teaching these subjects
  - giving pupils regular opportunities to practise their mathematics skills
  - making regular checks about how quickly pupils are learning letters and sounds.
  
- Ensure that leaders and managers are effective in tackling the school's weaknesses by:
  - tracking pupils' progress so that those falling behind are identified quickly and given extra help to catch up
  - making self-evaluation rigorous and accurate.
  
- Ensure that governance is effective in driving improvement by:
  - providing training for governors so they can hold senior leaders and staff to account for the achievement of different groups of learners
  - making certain that governors play a full role in analysing the school's strengths and weaknesses and deciding on priorities for improvement.

## **Report on the third monitoring inspection on 17 and 18 September 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspector observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the interim headteacher and other key staff, the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. She spoke informally with staff and pupils during the course of the inspection and looked at the results of Ofsted's on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View). The inspector observed ten parts of lessons, of which nine were observed jointly with the headteacher, and sampled teaching and learning through several short visits to other classrooms, including to those in the Phoenix Centre.

### **Context**

The four teachers that left the school in July have been replaced for the start of the new academic year. The number of pupils at the school has increased from 380 at the time of the inspection to 405.

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

The results of statutory tests for pupils in Year 6 in the summer of 2013 dipped from the previous year and were lower than teachers expected. The targets set by the school for this year group were missed. Despite the catching up that pupils did during the year, not enough reached Level 4 in reading and mathematics. Results in writing were better, with most pupils making the progress expected from the end of Key Stage 1. However, boys' results were lower than girls', and pupils eligible for pupil premium funding did not do as well as their peers. The teacher assessments undertaken by pupils in Year 2 showed some improvement on the previous year and were broadly in line with national figures from 2012. Between 80% and 90% of children met the early learning goals in most areas of learning at the end of the Reception Year. Outcomes were strongest in personal, social and emotional development and physical development and weakest in literacy. Nonetheless, 70% of the children reached a good level of development<sup>1</sup> and are well prepared to face the challenges of Year 1. It is vital that the gains made by pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 are built on quickly as they start their new classes and that their progress is sustained.

The school's information on pupils' attainment and progress during the last academic year shows some positive progress in Key Stage 1, weak progress in Year 3, a mixed picture between subjects in Year 4 and some good progress in Year 5. The latter

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<sup>1</sup> A good level of development means that children reached the expected level in all the early learning goals in communication and language, personal, social and emotional development, physical development, literacy and mathematics.

augers well for the current Year 6 and points clearly to the work that must be done to speed up the progress and close the gaps in attainment of pupils in the current Years 4 and 5. The picture of progress for pupils in the Phoenix Centre is also mixed but improving. Importantly, 19 out of the 29 pupils in the centre – a higher number than in the past – spend some of their time in mainstream classes learning alongside their peers where the level of the work is appropriate to their level of attainment.

In lessons, pupils were observed learning a range of strategies for calculation in mathematics, and the features of writing used by different authors in English. In pupils' own writing, the school's focus on encouraging pupils to use a wide range of adventurous vocabulary was evident but, for many, the work is marred by weaknesses in spelling. Some older pupils are slow to get going with their writing. The quality of presentation is improving across the school, with a consistent focus from teachers on setting expectations of how work should be set out and presented. In mathematics, this is aiding the accuracy of pupils' work. Pupils' handwriting is improving too. The school's focus on improving reading is not supported consistently in all classes. Although teachers give pupils a good model of how to read with expression, the time available for reading is sometimes squeezed. The love and enjoyment of books is not given a high enough profile through displays and appropriate resources.

### **The quality of teaching**

The weaker aspects of teaching noted in the previous monitoring inspection are not so widespread. However, there is still work to do to ensure that pupils, especially the more able, have a consistent level of challenge. While some teachers are gaining confidence in starting pupils off at different levels of work to match their ability, some still hold dear to the practice of starting all pupils at a similar point. In the most successful examples, teachers provide different challenges at the start and end of lessons as well as when pupils are working on their individual or group tasks. Teachers are also embracing the practice of giving pupils different aims for a lesson. Pupils are then asked to check for themselves whether or not they have met the aims by the end of the lesson – a strategy which is working well to help pupils to recognise what they have achieved.

The positive aspects of teaching noted previously have been sustained despite changes in staff. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful, with clear boundaries and expectations of behaviour that set a positive ethos for learning. Teachers try hard to ensure that pupils have interesting activities with well-prepared resources and that learning is joined up by making appropriate links between subjects. For example, opportunities for writing and the content of the class reading book are frequently linked to the termly topic.

Classrooms are set up to aid pupils' independent learning. Displays of pupils' work celebrate their achievements and provide a model of expectations. Almost all

classrooms have working walls that support pupils' learning through prompts and key vocabulary and targets that remind pupils about what they are trying to achieve. However, at present, not all targets are appropriately challenging, given what pupils have already achieved.

At present, the provision in Year 1 is based on approaches to learning used in the Reception Year. Although this may be appropriate for some pupils to support the transition from Reception to a more formal approach in Year 1, it is clear from the levels achieved by many at the end of the Reception Year that they are ready for more formal approaches to learning. Provision for pupils in the Phoenix Centre is improving as more accurate and precise information on how well they are doing helps staff to make sure they target input at the right level to help them make better progress. This includes those occasions when they are taught in mainstream classes.

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

In the majority of classes, there is a calm, settled atmosphere that helps pupils to maintain a clear focus on their work. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and a sense of pride in their achievements. Good levels of concentration and effort are commonplace because pupils are keen to work hard to please their teachers. Pupils' conduct around the school and their behaviour towards each other are positive. The need for overt behaviour management in lessons is rare in the main school. The behaviour of pupils in the Phoenix Centre, some of whom may find it difficult to conform to the school's expectations, is managed effectively by staff to reduce the disruption to the learning of other pupils. Nonetheless, incidents of poor or unacceptable behaviour are rare and there have been no exclusions since the previous monitoring inspection. A small number of pupils from the centre socialise with their peers at break times and some are attending school clubs for the first time this year.

Attendance figures are broadly average, although the attendance of some individuals and groups of pupils falls below the school's average figure. This requires careful monitoring.

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

The school's improvement plan sets out clearly the actions the school needs to take. By and large, these are the right actions. The plan is reviewed regularly, following reliable and honest evaluation of how well actions taken so far have worked. Next steps are identified and incorporated into the plan, which evolves accordingly. Alongside the main improvement plan, a series of action plans for subjects and aspects of the school's work have been devised and are overseen by other leaders. In this way, more staff are taking responsibility for leading developments. The Phoenix Centre, for example, is well led and the action plan provides clear direction for the next steps for improvement.

Leaders of learning are more aware of their role in checking the quality of provision in the areas they lead, with plans for them to be trained in observing lessons so that they can help their colleagues develop their teaching. Leaders of learning have devised systems to help them check that practice is consistent across the school but, to some extent, they still check that teachers are following agreed actions rather than checking the quality and impact of actions. For example, they have checked that all teachers have set targets for their pupils rather than checking if the targets are the right ones.

Information on pupils' attainment and progress is increasingly accurate and helping the school's leaders to see which pupils need more support and/or intervention programmes to catch up. The information also forms the basis of regular meetings between senior leaders and class teachers about the progress of individual pupils. However, there is more that can be done to analyse what the information shows about the progress of different groups of pupils and more to do to check that programmes of intervention are having the desired impact on pupils' outcomes.

Governors are increasingly confident to question the school's leaders and to challenge the information they provide. For example, the data group asked the headteacher and senior staff numerous questions about the information provided on pupils' attainment and progress. Such in-depth questioning enables governors to really know what the school needs to do next. Each governor has been assigned a specific responsibility and some have visited to attend staff training, meetings about pupils' progress, and meetings where pupils' work is checked. The strategy group has been set up to help set the agenda for improvement that feeds into the actions the school takes. Governors plan to have more meetings than in the past in order to get through essential business and in recognition of the urgent need to review and update some statutory policies.

The school's leaders have carried out a survey of parents. Like the results of Parent View, it was positive about many aspects of school life. The results also show clearly that parents would like more information about how well their children are doing at school and more guidance about how to help them at home.

### **External support**

A high level of support for staff at The Phoenix Centre has helped to strengthen the effectiveness of systems for assessing pupils' needs and for tracking their ongoing progress. In the main school, training for teaching phonics and teaching mathematics is helping to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve, as well as increasing teachers' confidence. Collaboration with staff in other schools is helping teachers to improve the accuracy of assessment of pupils' attainment and progress.