

Monks Eleigh: Education chiefs deny allowing failing school to ‘wither away’

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Monks Eleigh Primary pupil Henrietta Watson has written to Michael Gove to help save the school.

Campaigners who have set up a group in a bid to save their tiny village school have criticised the education authority for “letting the school down”.

But Suffolk County Council told the EADT yesterday it is continuing to do everything possible to prevent the closure of Monks Eleigh Primary School, which has been in [special measures](#) since it was judged “inadequate” by Ofsted inspectors last July.

Several parents removed their children from the school so student numbers plummeted from 30 to just nine. The board of governors resigned and was replaced by an interim executive board (IEB), and a new headteacher was appointed.

A group of villagers, teachers and ex-school governors have now established the SaveME group to stop the school from closing. They have written to the council’s strategic accountability group, which was set up to help Suffolk schools that are experiencing difficulties.

In the letter, ex-school governor Malcolm Every said: “Since we have heard of the possible closure of the school, we have begun to investigate the events which have led up to the current situation. We have found that the LEA has let the school down badly over a period of years. It has not acted in a timely manner to the concerns that there have been. We believe that the local authority deliberately allowed the school to wither and is quite happy for it to close, perhaps to ‘bury its mistakes’ or perhaps to sell off the land for income.”

A spokesman for Suffolk County Council refuted the claims and said the authority had provided intensive support to Monks Eleigh Primary, both before and since its Ofsted inspection, using tried and tested interventions that have proved successful at other primary schools.

He added: “Indeed, the county council has a good track record of helping under performing schools to come out of special measures. Obviously these have not yet proved successful in this case but that doesn’t mean we’re walking away from the school.

“We are also working with the IEB as it continues to investigate various potential partnership arrangements. Closure is the absolute last option we would consider.”