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Mr G Sweet
Acting Headteacher
St Levan Community Primary School
The Bottoms
Penzance
Cornwall
TR19 6HD

Dear Mr Sweet

Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 to St Levan Community Primary School

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 23 January 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with the acting headteacher, representatives of the governing body, a class teacher and a representative of the local authority. The school's action plans were evaluated. Records of monitoring activities were also examined.

Context

Since the inspection, there has been one staff appointment, to a teaching assistant post. The school is part of the Penwith Education Trust, a partnership of local schools.

Main findings

The acting headteacher and staff have responded positively to the judgements of the November inspection and are determined to improve the school's performance to good. The school's action plans have been revised to address the areas that need improvement. There is a clear focus on improving teaching by working to refine assessment and planning, including in mathematics, although strategies for developing pupils' number calculation skills are at an early stage. The quality of teaching is closely monitored through 'drop-in' visits to lessons, checks made on teachers' planning and pupils' books, and through discussions with pupils about their learning. However, teachers do not receive detailed advice on how to improve their practice, including through regular lesson observations. Teachers are not held properly to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes.

Governors are aware of the strengths and weaknesses in school and are active in planning to stabilise the long-term leadership of the school. They are keen to improve their skills and are welcoming of further support. Nevertheless, governors are not yet fully involved in evaluating the school's improvement work. Whilst action plans do include criteria for governors to judge success, these are not closely linked to intended improvements in pupils' achievement.

Senior leaders and governors have begun to take effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following the visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- develop effective approaches for developing pupils' number calculation skills in mathematics
- ensure that teachers receive regular feedback on how to further improve their teaching and are held to account for the achievement of their pupils
- sharpen action planning by including numerical targets that help governors judge whether actions have been successful in raising pupils' attainment
- clearly identify how governors will play an effective role in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's actions
- review, with HMI, the impact of the school's improvement work.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The local authority has provided clear support over time in establishing interim arrangements for the school's leadership and consultancy advice to the acting headteacher. The local authority has also actively brokered effective links with other schools and provided consultancy advice in regards to early years provision.

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

Yours sincerely

David Townsend

Her Majesty's Inspector