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21 May 2013

Mrs Becky Crispin  
Headteacher  
Pensilva Primary School  
School Road  
Liskeard  
PL14 5PG

Dear Mrs Crispin

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to Pensilva Primary School, Cornwall**

Following my visit to your school on 20 May 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 March 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit, meetings were held with you and other senior leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and four other governors and a representative of the local authority. I evaluated the school's post-Ofsted action plans, together with other documentation, including the local authority support plan and the most recent analysis of pupils' achievement. Documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching and the management of teachers performance was also discussed.

**Context**

There have been no significant changes to staff or the school's organisation since the inspection.

## **Main findings**

The headteacher has made good use of the recommendations from the section 5 inspection and support from the local authority to refine action planning and raise expectations of pupils' achievement. Senior leaders, staff and governors recognise that a relentless and successful focus on raising achievement of pupils who have fallen behind will be crucial for the school to be judged good. All know that achievement across the year groups remains inconsistent, particularly in Key Stage 2. Consequently, procedures to track the progress that pupils make as they move through the school have been significantly strengthened and staff are more accountable for the progress their pupils make. However, tracking information is not updated or clearly summarised regularly enough. This is hindering the ability of staff and governors to evaluate precisely the impact of teaching and additional programmes of support on the learning and progress made by different groups of pupils.

There is clear evidence of the impact of work to accelerate the progress that pupils make, particularly in reading and writing. Classroom displays have been redesigned so that they are used to model what high quality writing looks like and how pupils can use this to develop their own work. School leaders' analysis of pupils' performance in the recent optional tests is enabling teachers to plan lessons with a much sharper emphasis on addressing any identified misconceptions and tackling gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Nevertheless, school leaders recognise that some teaching still requires improvement in order to be good. Middle leaders are not yet playing a full role in evaluating the effectiveness of teachers and ensuring that all staff are implementing the lessons learned from training.

Governors are beginning to ask probing questions of leaders and managers and as a result, demonstrate a greater understanding of the effectiveness of the school and the levels of progress that pupils make. Nevertheless, governors have yet to securely establish their important role in routinely challenging the school for tangible evidence of the impact of actions taken and the difference it has made to pupils. This is because governors have identified that there are gaps in their knowledge, particularly with regard to the use of school performance data and how it can be used precisely to drive more rapid improvement. Local authority training has been commissioned to improve this aspect of their work. An external review of the governing body was identified during the visit as a positive next step to strengthen their impact even further.

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:

- ensure that the identified training in literacy and the support to develop the skills of leaders and managers has a clear and measurable impact in raising the achievement of those pupils who have fallen behind
- broker an external review of governance and use the Ofsted survey report, *School governance: Learning from the best* to support the work of the governing body in evaluating the performance of the school and holding school leaders to account
- ensure that the summary of tracking information is used routinely to check and assess the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection. HMI will arrange to visit the school and work with leaders and managers to evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on the progress of different groups of pupils.

### **External support**

The school benefits from good quality support from the local authority. The school improvement officer has brokered a comprehensive plan to support improvement in the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of leaders and managers. As well as targeting literacy support and training for teachers, the plan also provides a day a month for school leaders to visit and work alongside leaders in other similar, but good, schools. The school has drawn effectively on support from the Cornwall Education Library Service. A good start has been made raising the profile of reading in the school and in replenishing the library stock so that it appeals to the interests of all learners.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Karl Sampson  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

The letter will be copied to the following:

- Appropriate authority - Chair of the Governing Body/Interim Executive Board
- Director of Children's Services for Cornwall