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Mrs Samantha Jones
Headteacher
St Meriadoc CofE Junior School
Cranfield Road
Camborne
TR14 7PJ

Dear Mrs Jones

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Meriadoc Church of England Junior School

Following my visit to your school on 24 September 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report 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 June 2013. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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:

- strengthen the post-Ofsted inspection action plan by establishing clear targets in 2014 and beyond for pupils and provide clear interim steps from which governors can evaluate the success of the plan
- attend Ofsted conferences 'Better English and mathematics' and a 'Getting to Good' seminar
- review the roles and responsibilities for senior leaders and those on the upper pay spine to ensure an equitable workload is established for all with leadership responsibilities?
- provide training for teaching assistants to strengthen their contribution towards improving boys progress and attainment.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders and four members of the Governing Body. A phone call was held with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. The post Ofsted action plan was evaluated. A range of documentation was scrutinised including; minutes of Governing Body meetings, staff meeting minutes, pupil tracking data and samples of monitoring activities.

Context

At the beginning of this academic year the headteacher returned from a year-long secondment at a local primary school. One of the two assistant headteachers has also returned from a secondment as an acting headteacher in a different local primary school.

Main findings

The return of the substantive headteacher and the assistant headteacher from secondments have galvanised all staff and governors with a renewed determination to rapidly become good. This ambition is seen in the highly focused monitoring activities, the action plan directly addressing the issues raised at the inspection.

Senior leaders are making better use of the procedures to manage the performance of staff. A range of evidence is now gathered from which to evaluate a teacher's performance over time. This is ensuring all staff are accountable for the performance of pupils in their class and raising teacher's expectations of pupils in lessons. Training needs are being identified more quickly for example, for teaching assistants in how to work most effectively with boys. Robust actions are in place to support and challenge those teachers who are not yet consistently good.

The detailed tracking systems to check on the attainment and progress of all pupils have been appropriately refined. Key Stage 1 outcomes are now taken as the starting points from which to judge a pupils' overall progress. This is providing a much more accurate reflection of pupils' progress over time and enabling individual pupils to be identified as being in need of making accelerated progress much more quickly. Daily, short, quick fire maths sessions have been established to accelerate the progress of these pupils, from the first week of this term.

The curriculum and teaching style for boys has been reviewed and altered. Shorter more focused sessions are engaging boys more with their writing. Exciting topics with an element of choice such as Natural Disasters, are proving popular with all pupils and staff. Boys understand their views are being listened to and taken into account when designing learning activities. These early signs and work in books are

promising but the school recognise there is a wider 'step change' that needs to occur to help boys to aspire to even greater performance within and beyond the school.

Visits to nearby outstanding schools by senior leaders are providing additional guidance in order to strengthen provision for the most able pupils. Lessons are now planned by individual teachers rather than in teams. This is ensuring that the range of needs within a class are being met more closely. Individual learning targets have been re-designed and now relate precisely to learning objectives in lessons. The combination of improved lesson planning and personalised targets is providing a much better match of activities to individual needs.

The Governing Body provide high level and good quality challenge, contributing strongly to the overall leadership of the school. Changes to the system to track the progress made by pupils and attendance at the six weekly pupil progress meetings mean governors have an increasing knowledgeable and detailed understanding about the performance of pupils and staff.

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 school has received good quality support and challenge from the local authority. This includes action to support school to school liaison to improve the quality of teaching and identify good practice in challenging more able pupils. The appointment of a school improvement partner combined with robust termly reviews towards agreed goals effectively challenges the school further.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector