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10 December 2013

Mr C Martin
Headteacher
Redruth School
Tolgus Vean
Redruth
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Dear Mr Martin

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Redruth School

Following my visit to your school on 9 December 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 October 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:

- ensure mathematics staff and senior leaders are familiar with the findings of the Ofsted report, *Mathematics: made to measure* and its supporting good practice tools in developing teaching and raising standards
- ensure, through robust and frequent monitoring, that the agreed characteristics of high quality marking and feedback are secure and visible in all subjects
- use the outcomes of the forthcoming external review of governance and 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.

Evidence

During the visit, meetings were held with you, other senior leaders, three members of the Governing Body and a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. I evaluated the school's post Ofsted action plans, together with other documentation including governing body minutes and your changes to the marking and assessment system. Documentation relating to the monitoring of teaching and the management of teachers performance was also discussed. We also visited four lessons and looked at a sample of students' books.

Main findings

Senior leaders, governors and staff have responded very positively to the judgement of the section 5 inspection and show determination and ambition to improve performance quickly to make the school good. Overall, the climate in the school is positive, the need for further change has been accepted and expectations have been raised. You and your senior leaders are working more effectively to strengthen middle leadership through support and training so that variation in the quality of teaching is quickly reduced. Greater clarity and higher expectations about how teacher's performance is managed means that middle leaders and teachers are more accountable for the progress their students make. It is vital that school leaders and governors regularly revisit this process to ensure that teacher's practice can be adjusted swiftly where concerns arise. You have made good use of the findings from the section 5 inspection to devise well-considered action plans. The action plans set out clearly what needs to be done. They are regularly reviewed so that you and your colleagues can check if the actions are making a difference. Not all of the success criteria are linked enough to establishing and evaluating how well students make progress over time.

You have raised expectations with regard to increasing the level of challenge in lessons and improving the quality of marking and feedback. It was clear from our visits to lessons that staff were incorporating these 'principles for practice' into their teaching. However, variation remains with regard to teachers' expectations that all students demonstrate they have understood and acted upon the teachers' comments to extend, develop or reinforce their learning. Weekly scrutiny of students' work led by school leaders is reinforcing the high standard of work and marking expected in all subjects. You have rightly reviewed marking in mathematics more frequently than other subjects and while books show some examples of students taking immediate steps to address the teacher's comments this practice is far from embedded. You and the senior team recognise that the 'principles for practice' you have established now need to be fully developed in all lessons across the school if students are to achieve in line with their capabilities.

Discussions with governors and a scrutiny of the latest minutes of meetings demonstrate the focused approach that governors are taking to hold school leaders

to account and ensure that weaknesses are tackled promptly and decisively. Consequently, governors are developing a deeper understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The Chair of the Leadership and Management Committee utilises his expertise in secondary education to ensure that where concerns are identified the school's systems to drive up performance are adjusted appropriately. Governors recognise the need to ensure that provision in mathematics improves at a more rapid pace if the school is to be judged good at its next section 5 inspection. They have brokered an external review of their procedures to sharpen how they evaluate the school's work and hold school leaders to account.

I will carry out a return visit specifically to monitor the impact of your work to improve the quality of teaching so that all students make the progress of which they are capable. Where necessary, I will provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

External support

The governing body have brokered an external review of governance led by a school improvement partner and this is due to take place next term. Arrangements are being finalised by the local authority for a number of middle leaders to work with lead practitioners from local schools. The school improvement officer also has plans to support leaders and managers in evaluating the progress that students make in lessons and over time. The school is working closely with local authority officers to address the financial and budgetary restrictions that currently exist.

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

Yours sincerely

Karl Sampson
Her Majesty's Inspector