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14 November 2014

Mr Simon Pollard  
Headteacher  
Carclaze Community Primary School  
St Piran's Close  
St Austell  
PL25 3TF

Dear Mr Pollard

**Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Carclaze Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 14 November 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. 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 2014. 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 school improvement plan by inserting regular milestones which enable governors to clearly evaluate the impact of actions taken to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching
- continue to develop the use of external partners to support the governing body in securing lasting improvement
- ensure that all monitoring activities undertaken focus precisely on improvements to pupils' achievement.

**Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders and four members of the governing body. A telephone call was conducted

with a representative of the local authority to discuss the action taken since the last inspection. A number of documents were reviewed including the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body meetings, new policies and records of the school's monitoring activities. A short visit to every class was conducted jointly with the headteacher.

## **Context**

Since the last full inspection in June 2014 an assistant headteacher and mathematics subject leader have left the school. The leadership team has been re-structured and a new mathematics leader appointed. The school is planning to become an academy on 1 February 2015.

## **Main findings**

Senior leaders, staff and governors are using the findings from the last full inspection as a vehicle for change and a catalyst for development. The school development plan aligns closely with the areas of development in the last full inspection report. Actions link well to the new cycle of monitoring activities which check on the success of changes to planning, the curriculum and teaching. A new set of 'non-negotiables' designed to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement is setting high expectations for staff. Every six weeks teachers sit down with senior leaders to analyse and review information about the progress that their pupils make. Consequently, teachers are now more accountable for their own performance. The meetings are being used effectively as part of a robust system to support and challenge those staff that are not yet performing consistently at the standard expected.

Training for senior leaders is helping them improve their skills in evaluating teaching and learning. Lesson observation records are starting to show greater precision in identifying strengths and weaknesses. A broader range of information is now being used to judge the performance of staff over time and gain a more reliable picture of pupils' everyday learning. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are also focussing their duties more on improving the quality of teaching. As a result they are beginning to contribute strongly to securing improvements across the school. While school leaders have an increasingly accurate view of the quality of teaching, occasionally monitoring activities still focus too much on what teachers are doing rather than what difference their actions are making to pupils' achievement.

Improvements to the quality of teaching are evident in many classes. The introduction of a new policy for marking and feeding back on pupils' work is proving successful. Clearer and more precisely written comments from teachers are helping pupils to understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work. For example, comments on how well Year 2 pupils are using 'arrays' to develop early multiplication skills are enabling them to move on in their learning more quickly. The

approach to ask pupils to 'prove' their mathematical understanding is developing their fluency when using numbers well. Not all marking, such as in some English books, is of the standard expected yet and remains a key priority for school leaders.

A new approach to planning activities in lessons is meeting pupils' different abilities and interests more closely. Teachers are combining this approach carefully with a new focus on developing pupils' sentence construction. Year 5 pupils' work illustrates some good examples of technically accurate writing for Greek myths. Boys reported how positively this new approach is motivating them to take greater thought and vary their sentence choices when writing.

The governing body are contributing more purposefully to the overall leadership of the school. Governors understand the sense of urgency and actions required in order to become a good school. Training from the local authority officer is helping to develop governors' knowledge of how to support and challenge school leaders about the quality of the school's performance. Governors' direct involvement in regular monitoring activities is increasing and their improved understanding of how well different groups of pupils are progressing is enabling them to ask increasingly precise questions. However, regular milestones which identify the expected impact of work to raise achievement and improve the quality of teaching are missing. This hinders the ability of the governing body and the local authority to check how successful the actions of senior leaders have been.

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**

Since the inspection, local authority officers have supported the school effectively to develop the school improvement plan which focuses on the priorities identified during the last full inspection. Governors recognise that the use of high quality external partners would enable them to contribute even more strongly to securing lasting improvement in the school's performance. For example, support from a local outstanding school is being used well to raise teachers' expectations of pupils' handwriting and presentation.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**