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Friday 12 June

Miss Gill Halsey
Headteacher
St Day and Carharrack Community School
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Dear Miss Halsey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Day and Carharrack Community School

Following my visit to your school on Friday 12 June, 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 February 2015. 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:

- continue training middle leaders to effectively monitor their areas of responsibility and secure further improvements to the quality of teaching
- ensure, through training and robust monitoring, that the curriculum and teaching of mathematics fully meets the requirements of the new National Curriculum
- ensure that all pupils understand how to improve their work in all subjects.

Evidence

During the inspection, I met with you and other senior leaders to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. I also met with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. I spoke by telephone with a representative from the local authority. You accompanied me on a short visit to all classrooms to look at examples of pupils work in literacy. We met with 10 pupils to explore how well teachers' marking was helping them understand their next steps in learning. We also undertook a scrutiny of the school development plan and records of monitoring conducted by local authority officers.

Context

The acting headteacher at the time of the previous inspection has now been appointed as the permanent headteacher of the school. The deputy headteacher has left the school, a new deputy headteacher has been appointed and is due to join the school in September 2015.

Main findings

You and your governing body fully accepted the findings of the recent full inspection which judged the school to require improvement. Your drive to improve the quality of teaching, leadership, and pupils' achievement, identified in the last inspection report, has continued purposefully. You know precisely where the school is on its journey to becoming good and have correctly identified what work still needs to be done to secure further improvements. All staff share in your vision to make things better for the children you serve. This is illustrated in the way staff have adopted your newly introduced approach to improving pupils' writing through the development of their spoken language. You have ensured that governors are fully involved in monitoring the impact of this new approach. As a result of this collective effort, the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected level in writing has risen from 69% in 2014 to 95% this year.

Your careful matching of the individual training needs of staff to pupils' academic and personal needs is resulting in a 'cultural shift' at the school. Stronger teachers are being used well to model and coach the teaching of writing and to further improve teaching across the school. You are supporting and challenging teachers to reflect on their classroom practice and re-shape lessons in light of the feedback they are given. Training for middle leaders is helping them understand the part they play in driving improvements. However, the leaders for English and mathematics are yet to undertake formal monitoring activities such as lesson observations and work scrutiny activities. This hinders their ability to rigorously follow up feedback to staff and contribute fully to securing improvements to the quality of teaching. Further training from the local authority is planned.

Your new policy for 'next-step' marking of pupils work is proving successful. The best marking is detailed and pupils report that, 'it is most helpful when marking is done with us and explained at the same time'. Some clearer and more carefully considered comments from teachers are helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work. For example, comments to Year 2 pupils are prompting them to improve their writing well so they can confidently choose the best words

required for each piece of writing. However, marking and feedback in mathematics is not yet up to this standard. This results in some pupils being unclear about what they need to do next to improve their learning within the requirements of the new National Curriculum for mathematics. The quality and impact of teacher's marking and feedback along with the development of teacher's subject knowledge in mathematics remains a key priority for you.

Your governing body are contributing more purposefully to the direction and leadership of the school. Governors understand the sense of urgency required to become a good school. They are active in monitoring the progress of actions taken by school leaders and have a good understanding of pupils' achievement including the improved performance of disadvantaged pupils. Regular checks on the success of the school development plan help them to track improvements to teaching and those in marking. Governors are aware that the approach used during the termly 'mathematical challenge days', to promote pupils' mathematical enquiry skills in other subjects, requires further development in order to become embedded in teachers' routine planning of lessons.

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

You, your governing body and middle leaders are drawing well on the support provided from a range of external partners. Your local authority officer gives valuable external reports and provides appropriate training to improve the effectiveness of governors. Meetings with your partnership of Trust schools have helped teachers develop an increasingly accurate understanding of the range in quality of pupils' writing. Following visits to local schools the Year 2 teacher is now providing an effective model of high quality marking from which other staff can learn from.

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