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3 November 2017

Mrs Julie Simpson  
Principal  
Quethiock CofE VA School  
Quethiock  
Liskeard  
Cornwall  
PL14 3SQ

Dear Mrs Simpson

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Quethiock CofE VA School**

Following my visit to your academy on 19 October 2017, 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 academy since the most recent section 5 inspection.

The visit was the first monitoring inspection since the academy was judged to require improvement following the section 5 inspection in September 2016. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders and directors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection in order to become a good academy.

The academy should take further action to:

- send a copy of your half-termly reports and updates of improvement plans to me on a half-termly basis.

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you and the lead practitioner. I also met with the St Barnabas multi-academy trust early years leader and with two directors, the chair of the board and the chair of school improvement. Together,

you and I visited both classes to observe the pupils at work. We also looked at pupils' books. Your early years leader joined us in observing children learning in the early years and Years 1 and 2. I conducted a mathematics book scrutiny with your lead practitioner. I also considered the outcomes of the external governance review and the external pupil premium review that were undertaken shortly after the inspection. I reviewed any additions made to your single central records since the section 5 inspection.

## **Context**

There are no teachers in post from the last inspection. There are two new class teachers, one of whom is a lead practitioner and takes responsibility for the day-to-day running of the school in your absence. The governing body has been disbanded, a parent advisory board formed and the board of directors restructured. Four new directors have joined the board, including a new chair of the board and chair of school improvement. The early years foundation stage now offers places for children from the age of three.

It has taken almost a year to secure permanent staffing in Quethiock. In the meantime, you deployed middle leaders from other schools in the trust to stabilise the school. Their work established the foundations for getting pupils' learning back on track. Your insistence on recruiting high-calibre staff has paid dividends. Your new staff are driving standards up and have won the hearts of parents and pupils already. One parent, typical of many, told me: 'The school has improved tenfold. I loved it before but now my daughter is making phenomenal progress.'

## **Main findings**

You have been swift to act in setting the school on its path to be good or better at the next inspection. You have not gone for quick fixes but instead have made fundamental changes. All staff and directors share in your commitment and drive to improve the school's effectiveness. Parents, although initially unsettled by the changes made, are fully supportive.

You know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. Your development plans tackle the areas identified for improvement in the inspection in 2016. You have set clear and appropriate timescales. Consequently, directors are able to check the impact of your work in a timely manner. Directors ask probing questions to ensure that they are better informed. They are holding you to account and, in turn, this has supported you in challenging the underperformance of others. Following the external review of the school's use of the pupil premium funding, the directors have an improved understanding of how this funding should be spent to gain the

maximum impact on outcomes.

You have established new systems to check and record pupils' progress. You and your middle leaders have ensured, through staff training and rigorous checks, that teachers follow these procedures closely. Teachers know, in detail, how well pupils are achieving. The lead practitioner is the key stage 2 teacher. Nonetheless, her knowledge of practice and standards in the other class is equally strong. Together, the two teachers are resolute in ensuring that pupils enjoy and achieve. Consequently, the legacy of under-achievement is diminishing.

You are sharply focused on improving the quality of teaching in mathematics. Your middle leaders have introduced strategies to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. This is helping pupils to use and apply the skills they learn more effectively, particularly when solving problems. Work in books shows that teachers plan work precisely to stretch and challenge pupils' thinking. In particular, the most able pupils are now receiving the support and challenge they need. Teachers are filling in gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Changes to teaching and learning in the early years have had a positive impact on children's rates of progress. The ethos of the early years provision is now one of high expectations. The new early years teacher and teaching assistant have a detailed understanding of each child's needs. They target support precisely to ensure strong progress. The teacher's accurate use of assessment is systematically building on children's early writing and mathematical skills. The early years team has made sure that both indoor and outdoor learning environments provide bright, safe and inspirational areas to encourage children's curiosity. Children enjoy the activities on offer and sustain their levels of concentration well. Your new Nursery children are settling in well.

### **External support**

The board of directors was proactive in seeking appropriate training, following the external review of governance carried out shortly after the inspection by a representative of the diocese of Truro. The board now provides valuable challenge to leaders. An early years educational consultant's support has been effective in ensuring that assessments in the early years are accurate. Directors have also swiftly put into place recommendations from a pupil premium review carried out by the academy school improvement partner. Comprehensive reports written by all external consultants detail the school's progress. They provide clear guidance to drive improvement further.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board, the director of education for the diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of

children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Tracy Hannon

**Her Majesty's Inspector**