

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



10 January 2018

Mrs Jan Woodhouse
Cape Cornwall School
Cape Cornwall Street
St Just
Penzance
Cornwall
TR19 7JX

Dear Mrs Woodhouse

Special measures monitoring inspection of Cape Cornwall School

Following my visit with Carol Hannaford, Ofsted Inspector, to your school on 13 and 14 December 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions that have been taken since the school's recent section 5 inspection.

The inspection was the first monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures following the inspection that took place in March 2017.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time:

Leaders and managers are taking effective action towards the removal of special measures.

The local authority's statement of action is fit for purpose.

The school's improvement plan is fit for purpose.

The school may appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Kathy Maddocks
Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection that took place in March 2017

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - acting rapidly to secure the long-term strategic and operational leadership of the school
 - improving the skills of middle and senior leaders to raise standards
 - improving the leadership of teaching, learning and assessment so that expectations of teachers are consistently high and unambiguous
 - ensuring that the pupil premium funding is used appropriately to improve the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - dealing with pupils' poor progress, particularly of disadvantaged pupils, caused by poor teaching
 - raising expectations of what pupils can achieve across the school
 - ensuring that assessment is accurate and it is used to inform teachers of what pupils know, understand and can do
 - ensuring pupils know how to improve their work.
- Improve pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
 - improving the attendance of all pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils
 - eradicating the remaining low-level disruption so that all pupils are able to learn in a positive environment
 - improving pupils' attitudes to learning so that they engage with their learning and make better progress.

External reviews of governance and of the school's use of pupil premium funding should be undertaken to improve these aspects of leadership and management.

Report on the first monitoring inspection on 13 and 14 December 2017

Evidence

Inspectors observed the school's work, scrutinised documents and met with the executive headteacher, head of school, senior and middle leaders, groups of pupils, and the chair of the interim executive board (IEB). Telephone conversations took place with the senior school effectiveness officer from the local authority and the supporting school's education partner.

Inspectors conducted joint visits to lessons with senior leaders to observe pupils' learning and behaviour.

Pupils' work across a range of subjects and year groups was scrutinised. A range of other documentation, including the statement of action, the school's improvement plan and minutes of the IEB meetings, was reviewed. Inspectors checked a wide range of information about safety and safeguarding, including the single central record of checks on staff recruitment.

Context

Significant changes in staffing and governance have taken place since the school was inspected in March 2017. The senior leadership team's roles and responsibilities have been redefined. A number of teaching staff have left the school and replacements appointed. Some started in September 2017 and further appointments will start in January and September 2018.

The executive headteacher, from St Ives School, was appointed in September 2016. A new head of school was appointed and started full time in post in September 2017. A deputy headteacher from St Ives School supports the science department for one day a week and a deputy headteacher supports the mathematics department for half a day a week. Another deputy headteacher from St Ives School has provided a new individual pupil tracking and target setting system. The executive headteacher and the head of school draw on their respective schools' resources to support staff and school leaders to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

An external review of governance did not take place because the governing body stepped down and was replaced with an IEB from 1 May 2017. An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium took place on 17 May 2017. The school is working on the recommendations. The IEB holds senior leaders to account, now, for the performance of all pupils, including the disadvantaged.

St Ives School is part of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust (TPAT). Cape Cornwall School received an academy order on 11 May 2017. The school's

conversion to a sponsored academy is yet to take place.

The effectiveness of leadership and management

The appointment of the IEB by the local authority has been instrumental in providing a more stable position from which to move forward. The IEB's determination to secure stronger leadership at senior level has been successful. The support structure provided by St Ives School, as part of TPAT, and the local authority has been invaluable in determining a positive future for the school. The latter has continued its commitment to the school and is unwavering in its resolve to make it viable.

The IEB has made a good start in implementing the recommendations from the previous inspection report. The changes to the leadership of the school and regular meetings with senior leaders are raising expectations. Several policies have been updated, such as the teaching and learning policy and the marking, feedback and assessment policy, so that the school leaders have secure policies against which better practices can be measured. The IEB has been swift to action the review of the use of pupil premium funding. The IEB has audited the school's current accounts carefully and is ensuring that the funding supports the recommendations of the review. The impact of this is in its very early stages so cannot be measured yet. The IEB is providing the necessary governor expertise and challenge to secure the school's future and maintain improvement. There are smarter targets in the performance management systems that better reflect the pay awards of staff. With so many staff on changed contracts and other staff new in post, this is a vital step towards future security and raised aspirations for the school.

Senior leaders, middle leaders and governors have provided an effective operational leadership system. The strategic long-term plans cannot be finalised until the outcome of the impending academy conversion is ratified. St Ives School's headteacher is the executive headteacher. She works two days a week with the head of school at Cape Cornwall School. The support from the deputy headteachers at St Ives School has been invaluable.

The new head of school is determined and thorough in her approach to improving the outcomes for pupils. She is relentless in seeking higher expectations in all aspects of school life. She shows the same tenacity in holding pupils to account as she does teachers. Her fair and consistent approach has gained the trust of staff, who are keen to support the planned improvements. Teachers are following the school's agreed policies and expectations in the classroom. These determine seating plans, conduct of staff and pupils and a greater awareness of the ability level of pupils, including the disadvantaged.

The leadership changes involved a move from individual subject leaders to directors of learning. The director of learning for English, humanities and languages is new to the post. Training is in place to develop her skills. The director of learning for

science and mathematics takes up his post in September 2018. In the meantime, the deputies from St Ives School continue to support the improvements in these two core subjects. The head of school supports leadership in performing, creative and technical subjects to maintain standards.

Safeguarding across the school is effective. Policies are in place; checks completed on staff joining the school and the culture of safeguarding are well established. The pastoral care team understands pupils' individual needs well. Referrals to external agencies for extra support are timely.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

The head of school is ensuring that teaching and learning are stronger. She is aware of the inconsistency in approaches to encouraging learning and assessing pupils' knowledge. She has prepared a policy for teaching and learning which begins with the basics for better classroom control. As a result, teachers have a more thorough understanding of the needs, challenges and support for the pupils. The impact of good classroom routines is evident in the majority of teaching areas. However, the matching of learning to individual needs is at an early stage.

The teaching in the mathematics department is far stronger and pupils are making better progress in the subject. Schemes of learning from St Ives are in place. These provide teachers with learning that fits the new curriculum. There is better evidence of fluency in mathematics in work books. The development from this into more complex reasoning and problem-solving is less secure and an area on which to continue working.

The progress in science teaching has been hampered by unavoidable long-term absence. Leaders in science have changed. There is no replacement leader at present. The deputy headteacher from St Ives has stepped in and there are glimmers of improvement. There is a better team approach, with teachers working supportively together. The schemes of learning from St Ives are being adapted to suit the curricular needs of the school and support pupils' progress in a more rewarding way.

The new director of learning in English, humanities and languages is raising expectations and urging colleagues to provide more challenge within learning. Most teachers are responding well to the leader's suggestions. The director of learning has used assessment information to plan learning successfully in the past and has the skills to share this knowledge with her new team. There is, as yet, no evidence of the impact of this as the assessment information systems are too new.

Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are taught well by highly skilled teaching assistants. The additional resource base (ARB) sited in the school caters for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities exceptionally well. Although the assistant headteacher in charge of the ARB has been on secondment

to the local authority, the deputy leader has managed the resource base effectively in her absence.

There has been no reliable assessment information in the school for the past two years. Teachers were inaccurate in their assessments. There was limited standardisation and moderation of pupils' work. This is what led, in part, to the poor outcomes in the key stage 4 tests in 2017. A deputy headteacher from St Ives has completed an overhaul of the data and assessment information. Teachers have received training on how and why accurate assessment is essential. Teachers received some tough messages but this helped them to realise the errors made in the past. Teachers are ready to make the changes to assessment practices now. The support of local secondary schools in moderation and standardisation will be beneficial. This aspect of school work is at a very preliminary stage.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

The behaviour management policy has been updated. Its messages are clear to pupils and teachers. Teachers are using the policy's strategies consistently. Low-level disruption is a rarity now. Pupils commented on their appreciation that learning can take place effectively. They enjoy the calmer and more orderly environment that exists where purposeful learning takes place. Pupils are very receptive to teachers' instructions. They listen carefully when new knowledge is imparted. The majority of work books show that pupils are industrious. As yet, pupils are not given enough opportunities to discuss their learning and apply their knowledge in ways that encourage resilience and perspicacity. This hinders the middle-ability and most-able pupils from developing intellectual curiosity that motivates personal ambition and seeking to do their best.

In social time, as well as when learning, pupils behave well. They arrive in an orderly way and move quickly to their classrooms. They show respect for each other and teachers. There was some increase of pupil noise as the school day came closer to the end. This could have been a seasonal aspect as pupils had enjoyed a Christmas lunch with crackers. A point to note was the positive way that pupils interacted with the young children from the nursery who were eating lunch in the school, too.

There are still too many pupils who arrive at school late. Tutors are not taking responsibility for this nor acting effectively at curtailing the issue. Although there are signs of improvement in attendance overall, it is not yet in line with national averages. The plans for improving attendance are not specific and do not clarify who is responsible for what actions. As a result, some actions are ignored and the problems persist. The attendance of disadvantaged pupils is still a cause for concern. The pupil premium funding review explains the actions that need to be taken to change this for the better. As a result, leaders are starting to use the services of the education welfare officer; she is beginning work with families that cause most attendance issues. This work is in its infancy and has not had any

marked impact as yet.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of how to stay safe, particularly when using the internet. They value the change in school rules about not having mobile phones. They were aware of cyber bullying which had taken place previously and said that it no longer exists. Pupils' understanding of other risks such as radicalisation and extremism is poor and not dealt with well through tutor time and the personal, social, health and economic education programme.

Outcomes for pupils

Following the inspection in March 2017, the overall results in the end-of-key-stage-4 tests dropped to below the government's floor standard. The English results were exceedingly poor. This was because teachers had not recognised the significant shift in examination preparation that was necessary. There were weaknesses in science because of poor leadership. Pupils were entered unnecessarily for examinations that did not count towards the English Baccalaureate. The outcomes in mathematics were better than the other core subjects and similar to those in 2016, being broadly in line with the national average.

The difference between the results for disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally, as well as in the school, did not diminish. The differences were greater by half a grade in every aspect, apart from mathematics which showed a slight improvement.

There is no reliable measurement of assessment information currently. Pupils' work shows some progress in languages, history, mathematics and English. Confident pupils are making good notes. The less confident pupils have incomplete, scrappy work that will not benefit them when revising for examinations. Too often, work done by disadvantaged pupils shows the lack of support to help them improve.

The new school leaders, the executive headteacher and the IEB are well aware of the significant improvements that are required. In a relatively short time, they introduced systems to halt the decline. The resolve of the leaders is evident and some small signs of progress are emerging, in particular the realisation and attitude of existing staff that previous practice was not good enough.

The director of learning for English, humanities and languages has introduced additional support for reading for those pupils who enter secondary school with reading ages well below expectations for their age. This work is showing dividends already, with some pupils making as much as two years' progress in a matter of months.

Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making good progress from their starting points because of the good teaching and care shown to them.

External support

The local authority acted quickly and well by implementing an IEB. The members are experienced and have provided valuable strategic expertise. This has led to renewed or new policies that provide a more secure foundation for the work going forward. In addition, the policies provide a good accountability framework for current leaders that they are using successfully. They have made effective evaluations of funding uses. They have made sure that school finances are spent on the pupils as intended to benefit their progress. This meticulous approach is indicative of the way the board has worked, leaving no stone unturned with regard to the safety and security of pupils.

External support is provided by St Ives School. The executive headteacher has implemented change, appointed new staff and monitored the ever-changing situation steadfastly. Every evolving situation, of which there have been and continue to be many, is handled efficiently by this strong leader. Other members of the senior leadership team at St Ives School have followed this determined spirit in seeking to improve the lives of the pupils in the locality. Their expertise and dedicated work is providing some capacity for growth.

Local authority representatives monitor actions regularly. Their reviews are accurate and provide a reliable touchstone of where the school is on its journey out of special measures and what it needs to do further. This provides a valuable external perspective for school leaders from the two respective schools.