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10 April 2008

Ms Tamsin Dyer
The Acting Headteacher
Mousehole Community Primary School
Foxes Lane
Mousehole
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Cornwall
TR19 6QQ

Dear Ms Dyer

**SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING INSPECTION OF MOUSEHOLE
COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Following my visit to your school on 11 and 12 March 2008, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector to confirm the inspection findings.

The visit was the second monitoring inspection since the school became subject to special measures in June 2007. The monitoring inspection report is attached and the main judgements are set out below.

Progress since being subject to special measures – good.

Progress since the previous monitoring inspection – good.

Newly qualified teachers may not be appointed.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be posted on the Ofsted website. Please inform the Regional Inspection Service Provider of any factual inaccuracies within 24 hours of the receipt of this letter.

I am copying this letter and the monitoring inspection report to the Secretary of State, the chair of governors and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Redpath
Her Majesty's Inspector

SPECIAL MEASURES: MONITORING OF MOUSEHOLE COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Report from the second monitoring inspection: 11 and 12 March 2008

Evidence

I observed lessons, scrutinised documents, and met with the acting headteacher, chair of governors, teachers and a representative from the local authority.

Context

Since the last monitoring visit the governing body has elected a new chair of governors and has advertised for the post of substantive headteacher.

Achievement and standards

Achievement and standards are at least satisfactory. The school has a reliable picture of children's levels when children enter in the Foundation Stage which shows that children are broadly at the expected starting point for their age. Data show that pupils make satisfactory progress between Year 1 and Year 6. Pupils are making better progress recently because teachers have a more accurate view of each pupil's level of ability and are matching work more closely to their needs. Assessment information shows that pupils are likely to attain expected levels in national tests at the end of the academic year in 2008. Attainment in English has been higher than in mathematics and science. The school has also correctly identified writing as an area for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make variable progress because their targets are not always sufficiently detailed to enable them to make small enough gains in their learning.

Personal development and well-being

Pupils enjoy coming to school and behave very well in lessons and around the school. Attendance is slightly below the national average, although it has improved due to the school's more rigorous monitoring arrangements. Pupils have a good understanding of keeping safe and use equipment responsibly in lessons. They take regular exercise, eat healthy food during 'snack times' and at lunch, and have access to a water fountain. Pupils have more opportunities in lessons to develop their speaking and listening skills which help to build their confidence. They appreciate the weekly 'star award' assemblies where they receive recognition for their effort and achievement. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils have a very good knowledge of their own culture, for example when they take part in St Piran's Day celebrations or study the origins of Cornish tartan. There are few opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual development.

Quality of provision

The quality of teaching and learning is generally good. Lessons are planned thoroughly and questioning is used well to draw out pupils' ideas. Assessment information is being used more effectively to plan for pupils' different levels of ability. As a result, pupils receive the right level of challenge and lessons are busy and purposeful. Assessment information is more established in mathematics and English than other subjects. Teachers are developing this area of their work and have made good progress given the previous lack of reliable data. Teaching assistants often assume responsibility for running small groups or working with individual pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Much of this work has a positive effect on learning. However, the school lacks expertise in teaching the small number of pupils who have quite complex learning difficulties and, consequently, individual programmes do not always focus sufficiently on the key areas for improvement.

Planning of the curriculum has continued well since the last visit. The school is particularly successful at developing skills across several subjects by studying topics based on local issues, such as wind farms or the proposed building of a marina. Pupils speak knowledgeably about these topics and their learning is supported through attractive displays. The school has recently introduced 'creative writing journals' which show good potential for stimulating pupils' creative writing. Planning for the Foundation Stage curriculum has been extended and the school has plans to introduce an age appropriate system for recording children's achievements. The information and communication technology and personal, social and health education curricula are underdeveloped.

Marking is consistently satisfactory in all classes. Learning objectives and success criteria are displayed in pupils' books which helps pupils to understand the level at which they are working and how their work might be improved.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2007:

- improve systems for assessing pupils' progress and ensure that teachers use the information gained to plan for the range of different abilities and ages in their classes – good
- improve curricular planning to ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically as they move through the school, and pupils know what they will be doing each day – good.

Leadership and management

The acting headteacher continues to provide a strong impetus for improvement. Teaching and learning and pupils' work are monitored regularly and areas for further development identified. The acting headteacher has been particularly successful in securing the involvement of staff in moving the school forward. The roles of subject leaders have been extended to improve their ability to monitor standards and plan their subjects. They have comprehensive job descriptions and have benefited from appropriate training to strengthen their subject knowledge and leadership skills. They are moderating work to provide a clearer picture of pupils' standards and they are using data to set targets and identify weaker areas. Subject leaders have worked hard and much has been accomplished in a relatively short time. Improvements are

more advanced in English and mathematics than in other subjects. The analysis of data to set suitably challenging targets is not yet fully developed.

The governing body contains several new governors and it is improving its knowledge of the school's work. Each governor has oversight of particular aspects of the school's work and several have conducted visits and reported on the school's performance. This is a positive step. A new chair of governors has been elected and various committees have been established with specific responsibilities. It is not yet resolved how the committees and individual governors' roles will work together to provide a systematic review the school's performance and ensure longer term strategic planning. Governors have recently agreed several new policies relating to the work of the school. However, not all the required policies are up to date or in place. The school has a realistic timetable to tackle this. Recruitment of a substantive headteacher is currently taking place and the post is expected to be filled as from September 2008.

Progress on the areas for improvement identified by the inspection in June 2007:

- improve monitoring so the school has a better understanding of its strengths and areas for improvement – good
- develop the governing body to ensure that governors fulfil their roles effectively – satisfactory.

External support

The local authority (LA) continues to provide good support to the school. This includes arranging training for governors and subject leaders and making visits to monitor thoroughly the school's work. The LA is assisting governors in making an appointment to the post of substantive headteacher.

Priorities for further improvement

- Ensure the new governing body structure provides an effective framework for reviewing and challenging the school's performance.