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2 May 2013

Liz Duffy-Griffiths  
Acting Headteacher  
The Five Islands School  
St Mary's  
TR21 0NA

Dear Mrs Duffy-Griffiths

**Requires improvement monitoring inspection visit under section 8 of the Education act 2005 to The Five Islands School, Isles of Scilly**

Following my visit to your school on 1 May 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report on the findings of my visit. 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 November 2012. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

**Evidence**

During the visit I met with you and another member of your leadership team, 10 members of the governing body, four subject leaders and the school bursar. I also held a meeting with the Director of Community, Children and Adult Services and the commissioning manager from the local authority. In addition to these meetings, I held telephone discussions with the national leader in education supporting the school and governing body, the improvement partner working with you, an associate governor and a representative of the Diocese of Truro. I evaluated the school development plan, subject plans and information on the progress made by pupils. In addition, the plans and records relating to the support provided to improve teaching were reviewed. Two letters were received with information relating to the work of the school and their contents were taken into consideration.

## **Context**

There have been no significant changes in staffing since the inspection in November. Governors have appointed a new headteacher who will take up her appointment in September. The outcome of an investigation by the Department of Education into alleged breaches of education law and procedures by the Council of the Isles of Scilly and governors of the school has not yet been published.

## **Main findings**

Support for teachers in Key Stage 2 to improve their planning and ensure that lessons are at the right level for pupils of different abilities has involved paired work with an experienced teacher 'buddy'. This support is recorded clearly and reviewed regularly so that there is a sequence of tasks building on improvements. Where support programmes are in place to improve teaching, tracking evidence shows that pupils are making better progress in writing and mathematics. A further review of the quality of teaching in the primary department by the school's improvement partner is planned for this term.

The system for monitoring the progress made by pupils has been refined so that it provides clearer information for particular groups, including those who receive the pupil premium funding and pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs. Regular review of pupils' progress by subject leaders includes discussions with teachers about how to support any underachievement detected. Monitoring by senior leaders provides suitable challenge for teachers whose classes are not making at least expected progress.

Support from the national leader in education and an associate governor has resulted in governors having a better knowledge of performance management procedures. This includes a greater understanding of the importance of linking pupil progress and the Teachers' Standards into the performance management process. Teachers spoken to report that the current performance management process is clear with an appropriate focus on pupil achievement. Staff note that governors have a higher profile in the school with the development of a link governor role for subjects and aspects such as the smaller island bases. A recent focus was the work undertaken by pupils with special educational needs, some of whom were 'shadowed' by a governor. This increased governors' understanding of the needs of this group of pupils. A large proportion of governors have taken part in training on achievement data, developing a better understanding of the school's results. This included work on the relative performance of groups within the school.

The school development plan identifies the appropriate actions to improve teaching and raise achievement and has been reinforced by an action plan in response to the inspection. Subjects also have written improvement plans which inform the overall development priorities for the school. Whilst these plans respond to the areas for

improvement in the last inspection report, they do not always give sufficient information on what the school needs to improve further. There is not enough detail on how the achievement of specific groups, for example the more able, pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium, can improve further. In addition, information for governors, for example on the school's progress towards its achievement targets, is not always provided early enough so that management decisions can be made with sufficient time to support improvement.

The governors are working together on a programme to develop their role in shaping the future direction of the school, supported by a national leader in education. They have recently completed a broad self-evaluation exercise on which further work will be developed.

Senior leaders and governors are taking effective action to tackle the areas requiring improvement identified at the recent section 5 inspection. Following this monitoring visit to the school, HMI recommend that further action is taken to:

- strengthen plans to include actions which will raise the achievement of specific groups of pupils including the more able, those in receipt of the pupil premium and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs
- develop a more timely approach for the provision of information to governors so that there is sufficient time for any management decisions to be implemented in order to bring about improvement
- complete the governance review programme and, building on this, undertake further work to ensure that governors have the requisite range of skills necessary to support and challenge the school.

I will make a further visit later in the autumn term to evaluate the impact of the improvement measures for teaching and leadership and to review the school's development with the governors and new headteacher.

Ofsted will continue to monitor the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

The school has benefited from the support of a range of external providers including the local authority, Diocese of Truro and commissioned consultants. This support has been focused appropriately on improving teaching, the analysis of outcomes and improvement planning and governance, together with practical support for finance administration.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body, the Director of Community, Children and Adult Services for the Isles of Scilly and Diocese of Truro.

This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Robert Pyner  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**