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5 July 2013

Ms L. Tamblyn  
Headteacher  
Burraton Community Primary School  
Fairmead Road  
Saltash  
PL12 4LT

Dear Ms Tamblyn

### **Serious weaknesses monitoring inspection of Burraton Community Primary School**

Following my visit to your school with Grahame Sherfield HMI on 4 July 2013, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the outcome and findings of the inspection. Thank you for the help you gave during the inspection and for the time you made available to discuss the actions which have been taken since the school's previous monitoring inspection.

The inspection was the second monitoring inspection since the school was judged to have serious weaknesses following the section 5 inspection which took place in September 2012. The monitoring inspection report is attached.

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

The school is making reasonable progress towards the removal of the serious weaknesses designation.

The local authority statement of action is fit for purpose.

This letter and monitoring inspection report will be published on the Ofsted website. I am copying this letter to the Secretary of State, the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Cornwall.

Yours sincerely

Ian Hancock  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in September 2012.**

- Improve the quality of teaching in order to raise attainment and improve the achievement of all pupils by:
  - ensuring that all pupils are given work that appropriately extends their skills and knowledge, including work for the more able that enables them to reach the higher levels
  - significantly improving the proportion of good teaching by helping teachers to inject more pace and challenge into their lessons and to devise more interesting activities
  - training teachers to make better use of support staff to help the learning of individual pupils
  - improving teachers' skill and confidence in teaching pupils how to read by linking letters and sounds
  - developing teachers' skill and confidence in teaching mathematics to a higher level, through introducing more modelling of good practice.
  
- Improve the effectiveness of leaders at all levels to secure and sustain school improvement by:
  - monitoring teaching and learning more rigorously, focusing on improving basic skills and holding teachers more to account for pupils' progress
  - enhancing the role of subject leaders in analysing progress and monitoring teaching and learning
  - linking professional development more closely to teachers' individual needs by observing each teacher to identify aspects of their work that require improvement and examples of good practice that they can share with others
- ensuring that the governing body as a whole is fully engaged in monitoring progress, ensuring that plans for raising attainment and improving progress are rigorously implemented, and holding leaders and other staff to account.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4 July 2013**

### **Evidence**

The inspectors examined pupils' work, heard pupils reading and visited seven lessons, including a small group session for teaching letters and sounds, (phonics). The lead inspector observed three lessons jointly with the headteacher. Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority. The inspectors talked informally to parents in the playground and took account of 108 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The inspection team looked at a range of documents relating to assessment, self-evaluation, governance and improvement planning.

### **Context**

There have been an exceptionally large number of changes in staffing since the first monitoring visit. In December 2012, the headteacher was appointed to the substantive post after leading the school as the acting headteacher. One teacher has taken maternity leave and two teachers have been absent long-term due to ill health. Nine teachers have left the school and seven teachers have joined on a mixture of permanent, fixed-term and supply contracts. One teacher has been seconded from a primary school in a neighbouring authority to lead mathematics. In September, four teachers will join the school on permanent contracts, including the substantive deputy headteacher. Three governors have left the governing body and have not been replaced.

At the first monitoring inspection, the local authority statement of action was not fit for purpose.

### **The quality of leadership and management at the school**

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, have worked resolutely to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement since the first monitoring inspection. While the effects of the exceptionally high turnover of teaching staff have been lessened, they have not been completely eliminated. Consequently, pupils' rates of progress remain variable and not enough pupils are making the rapid and sustained progress necessary for them to catch up and achieve well.

The school's leaders have continued to check the quality of teaching rigorously and thoroughly document their findings. As a result, the headteacher has a very clear understanding of where teaching is most effective and has followed up swiftly when improvements are necessary. The expected standards are set out clearly so teachers are increasingly held to account for their performance. Lessons are becoming more consistent and new teachers have quickly adopted the agreed ways of working.

The school's most experienced teachers are more involved in improving teaching and pupils' learning. Each one has taken responsibility for an improvement project such as to improve the teaching of reading and to make better use of the outdoor areas to support learning. The outcomes are shared with the governing body and used to plan further improvement. Leaders now track the progress that pupils are making carefully. Individual pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are compared against the levels expected for their age. However, insufficient account is taken of how the school, as a whole, compares against the national averages.

The governing body has a better understanding of what the school does well and where further improvement is required. This is because governors visit the school more frequently and report their findings in greater detail. The school's progress towards tackling the key issues identified at the last full inspection is effectively overseen by a core group of governors. Others have gained a better understanding of the school's work by making repeated visits to monitor progress in a particular subject. At the local authority's request, the governing body has audited the skills of members and produced an action plan in response. While governors report that they confidently hold the school's leaders to account, this is not evident in the records of meetings. The governing body ensures that the statutory arrangements for checking staff and volunteers meet current requirements.

### **Strengths in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- The school has worked energetically to alleviate the disruption to pupils caused by successive changes of teacher. For example, a local secondary school has provided specialist teaching in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6. Where possible, the new teachers have attended handover meetings or participated in staff training before taking up their post.
- The school has communicated positively and effectively with parents. This ensures they understand the changes being implemented, for example in reading, and in the higher expectations demanded. The pace of improvement has been clearly recognised by parents and they are confident that there is a suitable forum for raising questions and securing answers, which is working well.
- Standards are beginning to rise. Pupils in Years 2 and 6 are on track to attain results that are broadly in line with those of most other schools. A greater proportion of these pupils are set to reach the higher national curriculum levels because the tasks in lessons are more challenging.
- Changes to the way that the school teaches reading have improved pupils' knowledge of phonics. Parents of younger pupils are right to be positive about the improvement in their child's reading. The proportion of Year 1 pupils that reached the required standard in the national phonics check has risen by more than 25% this year.
- Teachers have improved their teaching skills by observing each other and teachers in other schools. Individual teachers have also been matched with a colleague to improve a specific aspect of their practice, and those that have received additional support can explain how it has enabled them to improve.

- In the better lessons seen, tasks were well matched to pupils' abilities and teachers briskly moved learning on. Teachers demonstrated important skills clearly, but allowed those pupils that were ready to make an early start on their work to do so. Teaching assistants in these lessons provide capable support to those that need extra help and they feed back valuable information to the teacher.
- Most pupils are interested and keen to learn. The recently implemented 'marking ladders' are beginning to help them understand what they need to do to achieve the next level. Pupils do make more use of the resources on display to help them with their learning.

### **Weaknesses in the school's approaches to securing improvement:**

- Pupils' rates of progress are still too variable and the improvements have not been consistently applied in all classes. Pupils are not making strong enough progress in writing and the pupils in Year 3 need to make much greater progress if they are to catch up and achieve well.
- Pupils that are eligible for the pupil premium are gaining ground on their peers in school. However, too few are on track to make the progress expected across Key Stage 2.
- Despite the best efforts of leaders and managers, several pupils in Year 6 reported that the changes of teacher had been disruptive and that they had repeated some work. One reason for this is because the school's approach to setting learning targets in mathematics is inconsistent so pupils are unclear what the next steps are in their learning.
- The statements used by pupils to check their work are not always well matched to their different capabilities. At times, the statements lack the detail necessary to guide pupils to improve their writing.
- There are inconsistencies among staff about the standard of pupils' behaviour. Questionnaire responses from teachers expressed positive views about how well pupils behave, but over a third of the responses from support staff expressed concern. Pupils believe that behaviour has improved because they have a clearer understanding of rewards and consequences. During the inspection, pupils behaved well and were attentive in lessons.
- Where teaching is less effective, pupils spend too much time on mundane tasks that do not contribute significantly to their learning. Teachers do not always check pupils' understanding carefully enough so pupils' errors are not picked up promptly and their progress slows. Similarly, teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities during the lesson to demonstrate what they have learned.
- Teaching assistants do not consistently support those pupils that need additional help as well as they should. Occasionally, the teaching assistants are too quick to provide the answers and do not encourage the pupils to work things out for themselves.

## **External support**

The local authority's statement of action has been improved and is now fit for purpose. School improvement officers have monitored the school's progress closely and set clear actions for leaders to implement promptly after each visit. As a result, the school has continued to improve at a reasonable pace despite the considerable turbulence in staff. The school has drawn effectively on the external support brokered by the local authority to improve the quality of teaching. The teaching of calculation strategies is now more consistent and teachers have a better understanding of what pupils must demonstrate to achieve a national curriculum level, following support from an Advanced Skills Teacher. Local authority personnel have assisted teachers in the Reception classes to make greater use of the outdoor environment to support children's play and their learning.