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14 October 2015

Ms Sian Vaughan  
Acting Headteacher  
Stoke Climsland School  
Stoke Climsland  
Cornwall  
PL17 8ND

Dear Ms Vaughan

### **Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to Stoke Climsland School**

Following my visit to your school on Wednesday 23 September 2015, 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 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 May 2015. It was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

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

### **Evidence**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, the assistant headteacher, subject leaders for English and mathematics and seven members of the governing body. A telephone call was held with a representative from the local authority to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. We conducted a joint learning walk to each class and together we scrutinised some key documents, including work from more-able pupils at the school. We also met with some Year 6 more-able pupils to gain their view of the school.

## **Context**

The headteacher at the time of the inspection has now left the school. You were appointed acting headteacher on 1 September 2015. A new teacher has been appointed to Year 3 and a new Year 6 mathematics leader has joined the school.

## **Main findings**

You, senior leaders and governors have started to implement the much-needed changes required in order to rapidly improve the quality of the school's work. You have put the recent inspection judgement behind you and are using the findings as a catalyst for change. New systems are in place to monitor the quality of teaching and check on the progress pupils are making in class. Senior leaders report that they and all staff are being held more to account through specific appraisal targets that are closely linked to the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' achievements.

Training for senior leaders is helping them improve their skills in evaluating teaching and learning. A broader range of information is now being used to judge the performance of staff over time and gain a more reliable picture of pupils' everyday learning. The subject leaders for English and mathematics are also focusing their duties more on improving the quality of teaching. Consequently, they are beginning to contribute more strongly to securing improvements across the school. Currently, monitoring activities focus on whether teachers are following the newly agreed policies, such as marking and planning, rather than what difference they are making to pupils' achievements. You have plans in place to address this.

The post-Ofsted development plan aligns closely with the areas for development in the last full inspection report. Actions link well to the new cycle of monitoring activities to check on the changes to planning, the curriculum and the quality of teaching. A revised set of 'non-negotiables', designed to set a minimum level of performance, are raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of during lessons. Training is helping teachers plan activities that are becoming increasingly matched to pupils' needs. The new policy for marking and feeding back on pupils' work is helping pupils understand what they need to do to improve. Evidence from pupils' books shows that they are responding more thoughtfully to teachers' marking. While these improvements are welcome, you are aware that the content of work in pupils' mathematics books does not yet meet the requirements of the new National Curriculum for mathematics. Further training for staff is planned.

The governing body has responded proactively to the inspection findings. Joint monitoring activities, conducted by members of the governing body alongside subject leaders, are developing their skills at knowing how to challenge the school over teachers' performance. Governors have used the recent findings from an external review to good effect and focus more sharply on the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. A root and branch review of committee structures is also being finalised. The strong willingness to undergo further training illustrates the

collective desire to bring about the actions required in order to become a good school. However, the lack of termly, interim milestones in the post-Ofsted development plan hinders governors' ability to periodically check how successful the actions of school leaders have been.

Ofsted may carry out further monitoring inspections and, where necessary, provide further support and challenge to the school until its next section 5 inspection.

### **External support**

Local authority officers provided prompt support in drafting the initial post-Ofsted development plan to focus on the priorities identified at the last inspection. The headteacher from Burraton School is providing you with valuable mentoring. She has highlighted the need for rapid improvement and brought about a greater breadth of monitoring activities being undertaken. The governing body is receiving useful ongoing training to address the issues identified by the local authority review of governance.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light

**Her Majesty's Inspector**