

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



24 December 2018

Ms Susannah Storey
Acting Headteacher
St Day and Carharrack Community School
School Hill
Burnwithian
St Day
Redruth
Cornwall
TR16 5LG

Dear Ms Storey

Requires improvement: monitoring inspection visit to St Day and Carharrack Community School

Following my visit to your school on 10 December 2018, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the monitoring 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 monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and has taken place because the school has received two successive judgements of requires improvement at its previous section 5 inspections.

Senior leaders and governors are not taking effective action because of the prolonged time taken to tackle some of the areas requiring improvement identified at the last section 5 inspection in order for the school to become good.

The school should take further action to:

- improve the consistency of the quality of teaching by raising teachers' expectations to ensure that pupils, including the most able, make strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- refine individual plans for vulnerable pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to meet their needs fully
- ensure that middle leaders have an improved understanding of what pupils need to learn and that they monitor learning closely so as to ensure that these needs are met.

Evidence

During the inspection, activities were completed mostly with the acting headteacher (AHT) and deputy. There was also a meeting with middle leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), early years leader and mathematics and English subject leaders. The inspector also met with representatives from the local authority, including the school improvement partner, and had a telephone discussion with the school effectiveness officer. The inspector also met with representatives of the governing body. Various school improvement documents were evaluated, together with other records, including those relating to governor visits and subject action plans. The inspector completed a learning walk with the AHT and deputy to evaluate the quality of work in pupils' books and spoke with some pupils about their learning. The inspector also scrutinised records and documentation relating to safeguarding and spoke with staff to determine their knowledge in implementing safeguarding practice and policies. Parent View and staff surveys were also considered as part of the evidence base.

Context

The school is part of the Redruth Learning Group Trust, which, along with the local authority, is providing ongoing support for the school. Since the last inspection, the school has been through a turbulent time. This has resulted in a few changes to the teaching staff and, most significantly, to the arrival of the AHT (due to take up the substantive post from January 2019). There have also been significant changes to the governing body, including the chair and vice-chair.

Main findings

Although the AHT and deputy are now working effectively to remedy historical weaknesses, too much lost time and previous turbulence have slowed the rate of improvement since the last inspection. Following the previous inspection in June 2017, the school had a challenging year in 2017/18. This was due to various reasons, including some that were unforeseen or personal to staff and, therefore, beyond the school's control. However, weak capacity and fragile systems meant that the quality of education did not improve enough. As a result, there are some remaining inconsistencies in teaching, learning and assessment which still hold pupils back from reaching the standards of which they are capable.

However, since your arrival in the spring of 2018, and, most significantly, since September 2018 (when you started to work on a full-time basis), there have been marked and accelerated improvements in the school. Together with your deputy, you have had a galvanising effect, raising morale and improving relationships and communication, including with parents and carers. As a member of staff reported through the inspection survey, 'Our headteacher is a person who understands children's needs and also empowers staff!' You understand the needs of the school well. Consequently, you have started to take the right actions to secure the necessary improvements for pupils. These include improving pupils' behaviour and

welfare. For example, you have revisited the school's safeguarding arrangements and procedures to ensure that these are unequivocally robust. Safeguarding is of the highest priority. Your work with other external agencies and partners is effective, and staff have a keen awareness of what to do to keep pupils safe.

The school is also now benefiting from a well-led and organised governing body. Following a full governance review in November 2017, which clearly set out weaknesses at that time, the local authority intervened and took action to make changes to the governing body, including appointing high-quality governors. Over time, additional governors with the right skills and knowledge have been drafted onto the governing body, including a new interim chair and vice-chair of governors. Their experience and knowledge, coupled with the arrival of the AHT, which was initially also brokered by the local authority, have been instrumental in bringing about the recent improvements. There has been much work to ensure that governors now fully understand their roles and responsibilities. They undertake visits to the school to check the progress of the school development plan. However, governors' visits still sometimes lack sufficient depth to probe most effectively, and visits are not followed up stringently, which reduces the impact of their work.

One of your first priorities was to increase the accountability of teachers so as to raise standards. For example, you overhauled the school's approach to appraisal and its monitoring of the quality of teaching. This has ensured that staff now understand the school's priorities and challenges. You have implemented agreed non-negotiables with clear expectations. These are helping to provide clear frames and ways of working to support teachers and pupils. During your time at the school, they have begun to bring about the necessary improvements. However, the quality of teaching remains too variable. In particular, teachers do not consistently check that work given is matched closely enough to pupils' needs or to their levels of understanding, including for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEN support plans. Pupils then sometimes struggle to understand key concepts or make strong enough progress, for example with decimal numbers or fractions in mathematics. In addition, the breadth and quality of writing across the curriculum are still underdeveloped in some classes or situations. Pupils' work in books shows variable quality and standards, including securing age-appropriate editorial skills to ensure that what they are writing is plausible and makes sense. The attention to improving handwriting, while generally working well, also requires more work to ensure a higher overall consistency and quality. Finally, you ensure that teachers take the most able pupils into account when planning lessons or sequences of work. This is seen, for example, in the mathematics 'greater depth' challenges seen in books, which pupils enjoy. However, you recognise that there is more to do to ensure that the most able, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are routinely stretched and challenged to reach the highest standards.

You have also started to work with other leaders to add capacity and develop further strengths and expertise in the school. Some of this work remains in the formative stages. Leaders know their responsibilities and are being challenged to develop subject leadership skills further, for example in mathematics and English.

Leaders have developed their own action plans which align to the wider school development plan. Leaders are also proactive in monitoring and evaluating their subjects or areas of responsibility. However, leaders do not yet have a sufficiently deep enough knowledge of their subjects, in particular of how well different groups and individuals are doing. This includes the leadership of SEND. Leaders can report headline figures but lack a deeper, more critical sense of what the barriers are for pupils and therefore what to do to overcome these. Monitoring records show an over-reliance on focusing on what teachers are doing, rather than pupils' learning and outcomes. Improving the effectiveness of this layer of leadership will be critical before the next full section 5 inspection.

Once you were able to start in the school, you ensured that the school had several necessary health checks and reviews. As well as the governance review, you commissioned an external pupil premium review in March 2018. You have taken note of the findings and have raised the profile of this agenda in school. You have worked effectively with parents, in the first instance, to ensure that those who are eligible to subscribe have been supported to gain access to the additional funding. You have also now identified every disadvantaged pupil and are tracking them to check on their achievement. Your Venn diagrams, along with other tools, are useful aids for having meaningful conversations with pupils, staff and parents. However, at this time, there are still some significant differences among pupils across the school in terms of their reading, writing and mathematics (including among those reaching the highest standards). Also, too many are not attending well enough. However, you are working tirelessly and utilising a range of strategies, resources and personnel to improve attendance. Furthermore, the attendance of a few pupils from particular minority ethnic groups also heavily skews the overall figures. You are, nonetheless, determined to improve attendance for all, without excuse.

External support

You are drawing on support from a range of sources, most notably from the local authority. A lack of sufficient speed in the identification of issues and in intervention has slowed the rate of improvement since the last inspection. However, from around the spring of 2018, the local authority has worked effectively to provide a range of high-quality support and services which are now starting to have a positive impact. Of these, the most notable include the ongoing work to improve provision and teaching in the early years and improving the effectiveness of the governing body. This targeted support in these areas is now securing the improvement needed. The commissioned visits and support of an external consultant and the school effectiveness officer are also continuing to provide well-targeted support and challenge, especially for the AHT, deputy and middle leaders. The local authority's responses to the need for more secure safeguarding arrangements, which include a pledge of funding for site security, have been instrumental in improving key aspects of safeguarding. The local authority is providing additional SEND funding to support leaders in working with the recent influx of pupils with SEND. Many of these pupils are disadvantaged in multiple ways. This funding is being channelled towards the most vulnerable pupils to raise attendance and achievement. The local authority

also commissioned the pupil premium review.

You commissioned other essential reviews, including health and safety, safeguarding and a financial audit, to provide clear direction for improvement following your arrival.

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

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector