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6 November 2011

Mrs Heidi Hoskin  
Headteacher  
Tywardreath School  
Southpark Road  
Par  
PL24 2PT

Dear Mrs Hoskin

### **Special measures monitoring inspection of Tywardreath School**

Following my visit with Paul Sadler, Additional inspector, to your school on 4–5 November 2014, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings. 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 became subject to special measures following the inspection which took place in February 2014. The full list of the areas for improvement which were identified during that inspection is set out in the annex to this letter. 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 special measures.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers before the next monitoring inspection.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## Annex

### **The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in February 2014.**

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievements, particularly in mathematics and writing by:
  - improving teachers' knowledge and skills in teaching mathematics
  - consistently implementing the school's marking and feedback policy so that pupils understand how well they have done, especially in their writing, and what they need to do next to improve
  - ensuring teachers set work at the right level for all pupils, have high expectations and challenge pupils to do the best they can, including in the presentation of their work and in the accurate spelling of common words
  - making sure teachers check how well pupils understand the work during lessons by carefully questioning them and adapting activities where necessary so pupils progress rapidly
  - providing lessons that capture pupils' interest and encourage them to persevere and behave well.
  
- Improve attendance so that it is at least in line with the national average.
  
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - ensuring leaders and managers evaluate the school's effectiveness accurately and use this information to rapidly bring about improvement
  - ensuring leaders develop the skills necessary to check accurately the impact of teaching on the progress that pupils make
  - making sure leaders take swift action to improve weak teaching as soon as it is identified
  - ensuring leaders use information about pupils' progress to identify any pupils who are falling behind, including those supported by additional funding, and take rapid action to help them catch up
  - making sure governors are able to check effectively on the school's work so that school leaders are held to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress, especially the achievement of those supported by the pupil premium.
  - ensuring leaders plan and implement a strategy to gain the confidence of all parents and carers.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and governance may be improved.

## **Report on the second monitoring inspection on 4–5 November 2014.**

### **Evidence**

Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised documents including the school's plans for improvement, information on pupils' achievement and records of monitoring activities undertaken by senior leaders. Inspectors observed teaching in all classes and some small-group sessions. Five of the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher or senior leaders. Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff, pupils, members of the governing body including the Chair of the Governing Body, and a representative from the local authority. Informal discussions were held with several parents and carers.

### **Context**

Since the first monitoring visit a new headteacher and a Year 5/6 class teacher have been appointed. The deputy headteacher has retired and a further teacher has left. The school staffing structure has been reorganised. New appointments for the posts of English, science and Early Years Foundation Stage leaders have been made. The temporary senior positions of assistant headteacher and deputy headteacher are now permanent. There is a new Chair of the Governing Body. The school has continued with plans to become an academy on 1 January 2015.

### **Achievement of pupils at the school**

In 2014 standards in reading, writing and mathematics at both Key Stages 1 and 2 improved to broadly average when compared to the national figures. This is a significant improvement from 2013 when results were below the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' standards and progress. More pupils are on track to make the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics across Key Stage 2. However, despite some improvement, pupils' achievement in these subjects remains too inconsistent between classes, subjects and year groups. This is particularly so for pupils of high or low ability, or for disadvantaged pupils. Too many gaps in pupils' knowledge of times tables and basic spelling and grammar remain as a result of a legacy of weaker teaching.

Improvements in pupils' mathematical achievement lag behind those in reading and writing. Teachers lack confidence when teaching mathematics, resulting in lessons which 'play safe'. Older pupils say that they prefer English, partly due to the narrow diet of mathematical activities which fail to bring learning alive for them. Recent training for teachers is not yet being used routinely to deliver exciting lessons that help pupils to apply their skills to solve mathematical problems. There are exceptions to this. Pupils achieve well in the Year 5/6 class when they busily solve fraction problems using real-life scenarios and chocolate bars. Similarly, in the Early Years

Foundation Stage, activities effectively challenge children to solve simple addition sums to 5, when using 'fireworks' maths.

In 2014 the proportion of children who reached a good level of development at the end of Reception improved to above the national average. Good teaching, combined with careful checking on pupils' learning to adapt lessons, contributes strongly to these improvements. However, this good start is not built on effectively in the Year 1 class. Pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics check (the sounds that letter make) remains below the national average, especially for disadvantaged pupils. Weak teaching of writing, with limited guidance or opportunities to practise and apply their phonics knowledge, hinders pupils' better achievement.

### **The quality of teaching**

Improvements to the quality of teaching are evident in many classes. The introduction of a new policy for marking and feeding back on pupils' work is proving successful. Clear and precise written comments from teachers are enabling pupils to understand exactly what they need to do to improve their work. For example, comments on language features of poetry in the Year 3 class are helping move pupils on in their learning more quickly. Most pupils report that this new approach is 'far more helpful than the old ticks and crosses'. Pupils welcome the increased personal time they have to talk about their work with their teachers and, in turn, are taking greater care and thought over their own responses. However, not all marking is of the standard expected, particularly for some older pupils. Consequently, pupils cannot identify where marking is helping them to improve or to point out work they are proud of and why it is good.

A new approach to lesson planning is generally resulting in lesson activities being better attuned to pupils' different abilities. Year 2 more-able pupils are moved on quickly to challenging tasks. A clear focus on explaining their mathematical thinking ensures they make good progress in their understanding of the relationship between three- and four-digit numbers. This approach is not yet always evident across the school and in other subjects. For example, lower-ability Year 4 pupils and more-able Year 5 pupils in the same class are provided with the same English work. In the Year 4/5 class, information is not used well enough to set challenging work at the right level and stretch pupils' mathematical knowledge of multiples. This results in an unequal quality and quantity of work being produced by pupils of the same age and ability in different classes.

Teachers are beginning to develop their use of questioning to check on learning and adapt activities during the lesson. Some effective examples exist. Teachers delivering small-group sessions effectively question disadvantaged pupils to accurately identify mathematical misconceptions. A sharp focus on developing their ability to express their thinking using correct mathematical terminology enabled them to partition three-digit numbers successfully.

The small number of higher-level teaching assistants are contributing more to pupils' learning because they are now included in planning and teaching lessons. The same cannot be said for teaching assistants. In too many classes, teaching assistants are not yet being used as effectively, particularly when teachers are working with the whole class. This limits their ability to make a stronger contribution to pupils' learning, especially for lower ability-pupils who often need additional support to help them achieve well.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

During the inspection most pupils demonstrated positive attitudes towards learning. They are polite and courteous. In the Year 3/4 class, pupils responded enthusiastically when exploring ideas for writing a letter to 'Pierre the Neanderthal'. Pupils were fully engaged in their learning because the teacher's lively questioning frequently probed their use of language and elicited some humorous personal thoughts. In the Year 3 class, pupils persevered well to partition two-digit numbers in order to halve them. Most pupils work well in pairs and groups to complete tasks set. Some older pupils are beginning to take more responsibility for supporting the learning of others in their class. Pupils' behaviour falters when activities are not sufficiently challenging and/or they become distracted because tasks take too long to be explained.

Pupils' attendance has improved and is now above the national average. Concerted efforts by senior leaders to liaise with parents and carers have reaped positive benefits. Half-termly attendance certificates have successfully raised the profile of attending school regularly. For example in October 2014, 150 children received a 100% attendance certificate in comparison to six at the same time last year.

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

Although new in post, the headteacher has worked tirelessly to ensure strong foundations are being put in place to ensure more rapid improvement over the coming months. A realistic, honest and precise view of the quality of teaching has been established. Staff appreciate the quality of feedback which is helping them to develop their teaching. They know that swift action is taken to follow up any points that arise.

New systems to manage the performance of staff are providing a clearer framework from which governors and senior leaders can hold staff to account. All staff have been included and involved in the development of this system. Consequently, they feel part of the process and all understand their role in improving the quality of teaching and raising standards. The restructuring of staff roles and responsibilities, following a skills audit by the headteacher, has provided greater clarity of expectation for each teacher at the different stages of their career progression.

Senior leaders are benefiting from working alongside an experienced headteacher. Effective modelling and training are helping them to take a greater responsibility for checking the standards and quality of teaching and learning. As a result senior leaders' skills in evaluating these aspects are improving rapidly. The frequent records of lesson observations and verbal feedback to teachers show greater precision in identifying strengths and weaknesses. A range of information is now being used to judge the performance of staff over time and gain a more accurate picture of pupils' day-to-day learning.

The recently appointed Chair of the Governing Body has been well supported by a dedicated core of governors. Together they have worked hard to continue the improvements that were evident at the time of the first monitoring inspection. The findings from their review of governance and subsequent action plan have been put to good use to utilise the key strengths of members. More frequent meetings with senior leaders and visits to the school ensure that governors have an increasingly accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors reported precisely about the need to improve the deployment and use of teaching assistants in classes. Reorganisation of the school's budget is enabling governors to have a clearer understanding of the impact of pupil premium and sports funding on pupils' achievement. Governors have been involved in making strategic decisions to secure the future success of the school as an academy. They have ensured that throughout this process they remain focused on the core purpose of improving teaching and pupils' achievement, and strengthening the overall leadership of the school.

### **External support**

The local authority continues to provide regular support for the school. Guidance in the Early Years Foundation Stage has been instrumental in bringing about improvements to the quality of its leadership. The brokering of a National Lead Governor with similar experience is helping governors navigate the process of becoming an academy well. Termly monitoring by local authority advisers working alongside members of the senior leadership team continues to build the accuracy and precision in senior leaders' verbal and written monitoring reports. The link adviser has a good grasp of the individual strengths and weaknesses of teachers. Appropriate plans are in place to develop the consistency of teaching further and to support future developments in mathematics.