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Mr Stewart Gynn
Mevagissey Community Primary School
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Dear Mr Gynn

Short inspection of Mevagissey Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 28 November 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since your predecessor school was judged to be good in March 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. As numbers of pupils increase, you, your staff, the Peninsula Trust and governors are focused diligently on securing the school's continuing success.

The proportion of pupils in the early years achieving a good level of development has been above the national figure for the last three years. Excellent teaching of phonics ensures that very high numbers are successful in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Improvements in teaching mean that pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of each key stage is at least in line with, and often well above, that of pupils nationally. The exception is in pupils' achievement in writing at greater depth, which is lower than other outcomes both in the school and nationally.

Since your appointment in September 2017, you have quickly gained a good overview of your school and your pupils' capabilities. You have developed positive relationships with parents, who would recommend this school readily to other parents and carers. The productive, professional relationship you share with the assistant headteacher forms the core of the school's strong leadership. You are fully supported by a determined and very skilled governing body, as well as by the trust. Collectively, you carry out a range of effective activities to check the work of the

school. This provides rigorous levels of challenge and support to secure effective teaching and pupils' good academic progress.

You have successfully addressed the key areas for improvement raised at the previous inspection. You have developed well the skills of staff and pupils in the use of information and communication technology in the school. Teaching assistants and other adults now provide strong support in lessons which enhances the skills of pupils. Adults skilfully ask questions that promote pupils' understanding. They work successfully with different ability groups so that pupils can keep up in their work. You, along with the other schools in the trust, are working effectively with most parents to improve attendance.

You use your new assessment and tracking system well in order to check on pupils' progress. Your accurate evaluation of the school's work has helped you identify that the most able pupils often lack the challenge needed to make better progress and achieve higher standards. You are also well aware that the skills the pupils have learned in phonics need to be used to better effect in their writing skills. You understand that you need to maintain the consistency of teaching across the school to help pupils make the progress of which they are capable in writing. You are fully committed to taking appropriate action to ensure that this happens. This accounts for the improvements shown in academic results, particularly in phonics and mathematics in key stage 1.

Your dedicated promotion of the school's motto of 'motivating everybody, valuing all' underpins the school's work. Pupils respect their teachers, work hard in lessons and they support each other effectively in their learning. Pupils clearly enjoy school and behave really well as a result. These inspection findings are fully supported by the views of parents. Typical comments are, 'My children love coming to school.'

Safeguarding is effective.

You have developed a strong culture of keeping pupils safe throughout this small village school. Your leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Records are detailed and of high quality. Leaders and administrative staff ensure that checks undertaken on visitors and new staff recruited to the school are stringent and secure.

You ensure that all staff engage in frequent training to keep their skills and understanding of how to keep pupils safe up to date. They have clear knowledge of the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. Detailed records of the training that staff complete are maintained and include an understanding of the 'Prevent' duty to protect pupils from the risk of radicalisation and extremism. Your staff work effectively with parents and external agencies to monitor and support any vulnerable pupils. An online computer system to record such information is shared with other agencies. This ensures that the information can be carefully monitored and prompt action taken to keep pupils safe.

Pupils feel safe and their parents strongly agree that their children enjoy school and are well cared for. When questioned, pupils confidently stated that they have many friends at school and they look after each other. Pupils know how to stay safe, for example when using computers or mobile phones. They said they would approach a teacher or you without hesitation if they had a problem.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to see how effective leaders are in ensuring good teaching, learning and assessment. I explored how good progress is maintained, particularly across key stage 2 in all subjects. Since your appointment as acting headteacher over a year ago, you and the governors have brought about further improvements in achievement. This is particularly evident in the teaching of phonics across early years and through key stage 1. The proportion of pupils successfully passing the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 are well above national averages. A new reading system is improving outcomes for all pupils, encouraging them to read more often and more widely. Pupils say that they love to read and come to school early so that they may use the school library.
- Your effective guidance for new and existing staff has resulted in a strong team who willingly share their skills to ensure more rapid progress for all pupils. However, while reading skills are developing strongly across the school, writing skills have declined. Outcomes in writing for current pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are not as strong as they used to be. Consequently, the school has rightly identified this as an area to improve. Mathematics is a strength of the school, particularly in key stage 1, where outcomes in the 2017 tests were in the top 10% of schools nationally.
- Often, in a small coastal village dependent on seasonal work, children start at Mevagissey Community Primary School at different times of the year, joining classes across year groups. You are highly aware of the need to ensure that these pupils settle quickly. Teachers check carefully what new pupils already know and can do as soon as they arrive. Staff use this information well to ensure that learning matches their needs. Teaching assistants very effectively help these pupils catch up rapidly on any learning that they may have missed.
- My second line of enquiry focused on the progress made by groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils. I also focused on the highest- and lowest-achieving pupils in writing and mathematics to assess their progress from Year 2 to Year 6. To raise pupils' achievement you have strengthened the assessment systems across the school, which are now more consistent. This means that teachers are more able to identify those pupils at risk of falling behind at an early stage and plan appropriate support in order to accelerate learning. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those whose attainment was low at the end of Year 2. Teaching assistants and other adults are used very effectively to help these pupils keep up with others. Disadvantaged pupils now make as much progress as their peers and achieve well. However, while those in need of support to keep up are clearly identified and supported well, the most able pupils are not always identified early enough when their progress slows. This means that they do not

always make the progress needed to achieve the higher standards at the end of Year 6.

- My final line of enquiry was to establish that safeguarding was integral to the school culture. This included assessing attendance levels and safeguarding procedures within the school. You know that attendance has been persistently too low. In response, you have established clear and effective procedures to follow up on the first day of absence. You monitor absences carefully and work extensively with outside agencies, other schools in the trust and families to reduce persistent absence. Leaders and governors routinely monitor attendance figures to ensure that your actions are making a difference.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- learning planned for pupils, particularly in key stage 2, provides greater challenge, especially for the most able, so that more of them can achieve the higher standards
- pupils' writing skills are developed more effectively, so that achievement in writing matches that of reading and mathematics.

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

Julie Jane
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I spoke with you and leaders responsible for literacy and numeracy. I spoke to groups of pupils and individual pupils around the school as well as representatives of the governing body and the Peninsula Trust.

We made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and took a learning walk around the school. We also scrutinised the work in pupils' books across a range of ages and abilities as well as the school's new assessment system.

I scrutinised a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, current progress information and pupil-attendance information. I also evaluated safeguarding referrals, staff-appointment documents and child-protection records, including the single central record.

In addition, I took account of 18 responses to the Parent View online survey.