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Mr Thomas Harman
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Thomas Harman

Short inspection of Coverack Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 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 April 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You are working with vision and determination to secure the long-term future of the school. Since the previous inspection in 2013, the school has gone through a period of uncertainty as a result of organisational change and falling pupil numbers. Along with your directors you have been instrumental in working with other local primary schools to form the Keskowethyans multi-academy trust (MAT), inviting this school to join with you.

Becoming part of a MAT was greeted with an initial suspicion from parents. However, their anxiety has been ameliorated through the school's good communication networks and, as parents have seen, pupils making friendships with other pupils from other MAT schools.

You and your directors are continuing to explore ways to secure the future of the school. The recent restructuring of classes as a result of falling numbers has been carefully managed. Parents were kept well informed and were eventually accepting of changes. Staff and parents who spoke with me confirmed the conversion has brought a welcome stability in leadership. Similarly, nearly all the parents who completed the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire agreed they now have greater confidence in the leadership of the school and its future. 'My child is

really happy to come to school,' was typical of the comments made. All agreed, despite being in a small school, their children are being prepared well for their next stage in education. Teachers ensure that pupils are well prepared for their end of year assessments. Homework, when it is set, is well planned and not too pressurised. Transition visits to secondary school start early and frequent visits to other schools within the MAT mean that when the time comes pupils have the confidence to transfer seamlessly on to their secondary school.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders, including directors, have successfully established a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff are regularly trained in ways to keep pupils safe. They possess a comprehensive knowledge of the pupils in their care and are particularly vigilant to spot any child who might be at risk from harm. The school records show examples of how leaders take swift action to address safeguarding concerns. Staff work closely with external agencies, when needed, to ensure that pupils are well looked after.

Pupils who spoke with me said that they felt safe in school at all times. They enjoy being part of a small school because 'everyone knows each other'. Pupils know there is an adult in the school to whom they can turn if anything is worrying them. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are compliant with current regulations and are fit for purpose. Records of any behaviour concerns are clearly recorded and monitored so that trends in behaviour can be spotted and appropriate action taken. However, although records for any pupils that cause concern are carefully kept they do not record resolution or closure.

Inspection findings

- A strong sense of community has developed among staff, pupils and families within the school. You have appointed experienced and knowledgeable teachers which has further strengthened the quality of teaching and learning. You actively look for opportunities to work with other partners in education. For example, you are working successfully with an initial teacher training provider. This has brought benefits in the form of additional adult support for pupils in classes as well as establishing a culture of ongoing professional development opportunities for staff.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and expertise is being successfully shared within school and across the MAT to strengthen teaching and learning. For example, staff have received training in order to improve the quality of feedback that teachers offer to pupils, and a mathematics leader has worked alongside colleagues in other schools within the MAT to strengthen their subject knowledge.
- Teachers know their pupils' social as well as academic needs really well. They have successfully risen to the challenge of teaching mixed-age classes and pupils with a broad range of abilities. As one teacher commented, 'there is no ceiling to pupils' learning because of the mixed age range. The social mix

means that all pupils are exposed to more challenging work'. This is a very positive strategy which is clearly working well. In 2016, pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 identified your school as one of the highest performing schools in the South West region.

- The learning and progress of individual pupils and groups are regularly monitored by you and senior leaders. This ensures that teachers and directors possess an overview of how well pupils are achieving. You ensure that regular checks are carried out on teachers' planning. A system to track pupils' progress and learning outcomes is embedded within the school. This allows you to identify 'pupils on alert', such as those who are disadvantaged, have special educational needs and/or disabilities or require greater challenge in order to achieve the higher levels. Teachers use this information well to plan lessons that provide for the mixed ages and abilities in their classes.
- The most able pupils are provided with suitably challenging work that is allowing them to achieve at the higher levels. For example, pupils are provided with regular opportunities to write at length and for a range of audiences. In the key stage 2 class, pupils were confidently converting a previously written descriptive text into a play script. Similarly in the key stage 1 class, pupils show good attitudes to learning. They have plenty of opportunities to learn alongside children of different ages. Handwriting is taught regularly and as a result, pupils' presentation skills in both classes are generally of a high standard.
- You have invested in additional, good-quality reading resources to challenge as well as stimulate the more able reader to achieve the higher reading levels. However, the monitoring of the most able pupils as a priority focus group is not carried out with the same rigour as it is for other focus groups. This information is missing from any formal evaluation of pupils' progress and senior leaders are less able to demonstrate how well the most able pupils are achieving.
- Your self-evaluation and written reports shared with directors are overly descriptive. They lack concise evaluation of the impact of any school improvement work. Targets within the school improvement plan lack precision because they do not clearly identify priority or vulnerable groups, such as the disadvantaged or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Directors are not provided with sufficient detail of how all groups of pupils are doing. As a result, they are not able to fully demonstrate their capacity to drive improvement by holding the school rigorously to account.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- directors gain a clearer understanding of how well individual pupils and focus groups are achieving and so demonstrate greater effectiveness in holding the school to account
- self-evaluation reports contain concise evaluations of school improvement work

- the monitoring of the most able pupils is carried out with the same rigour as it is for other focus groups
- the records for any pupils that cause concern are monitored until resolution or closure.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the executive board, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

David Edwards
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met regularly with you and the assistant executive headteacher as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with members of the directors' governing body, including the chair. I met with subject leaders and talked to other staff and pupils informally during the day. I undertook observations of learning in lessons, either with you or your assistant headteacher. I examined pupils' work, focusing on writing and presentation. I heard pupils read. Before the inspection, I examined a variety of documents made available by the school, including the school's website, published performance data and a summary of its self-evaluation. I made myself available to speak with parents at the start of the day and also took into account the online survey, Parent View.

In particular, the inspection focused on the following key lines of enquiry:

- how well has the school addressed the areas for improvement identified at the time of the previous report and in particular:
 - how well teachers provide for the broad range of pupils' academic abilities
 - pupils' progress in developing their ability to write for a range of audiences and at length
 - how well directors and senior leaders hold the school effectively to account and thereby demonstrate the capacity to drive further improvement
 - does the school keep its children safe?