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Mr Matthew Shirley  
Headteacher  
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24 Saltash Road  
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Dear Mr Shirley

### **Short inspection of Callington Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 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 January 2011.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

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

The school converted to academy status in 2014. You remained headteacher of Callington but became chief executive officer across the three schools in the trust. You lead with a steely moral purpose while gently guiding staff and pupils to achieve. You have developed a highly skilled and formidable leadership team that share your conviction to empower staff and pupils. You and your team nurture and train teaching staff effectively. Consequently, staff morale is high and subject knowledge strong. Good teaching inspires pupils to work hard and achieve well in both their personal and academic development. In 2016, progress measures in reading, writing and mathematics placed Callington Primary School in the top 5% of all schools nationally.

Your acute understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school is pivotal to continuous school improvement. Staff training has supported teachers to plan learning that ignites pupils' interests. Pupils told me that 'teachers listen to what we want to learn and plan activities to match'. Consequently, the broad curriculum motivates and excites pupils to learn effectively. You and your team are not complacent and recognise that there is still more to do. In particular, you aim to help children to achieve well sooner in their school career.

This is a happy school community. Typically, parents comment on 'the enthusiasm and energy of the staff'. Teachers encourage pupils to play their part

and develop the attributes they need to make valuable contributions to society. For example, they ask pupils questions such as 'What are the similarities and differences between the way society is treating Muslims now and how Jewish people were treated in the past?' and 'What is the potential impact of western technology on a remote African village?'

Three members of the governing body are also on the board of directors. Consequently, the trust's understanding of the school is strong. Governors' strong skills set means that they support and challenge you and other leaders robustly. They are assiduous in checking progress towards the school priorities and are always searching for further ways to bring about improvements. As a result, there is no complacency in this high-performing school.

At the start of the inspection the school's website did not comply with publication regulations. It does now.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Governors make sure that policies and procedures are thorough and comply with the most recent government guidelines. They reflect on lessons learned from recent national serious case reviews to enhance safeguarding procedures in the schools. Staff recruitment is rigorous. Leaders train staff thoroughly so that they can spot and act on signs of risk or harm, including child sexual exploitation. Leaders are resolute in working with external agencies to ensure that families receive the support they need. They are vigilant in acting on any concerns they have over a pupil's welfare.

Pupils are universally appreciative of the work of a family support worker for them and their families. Typically, pupils told me that the support 'really helps'. They say they are happy in school and that there is 'always someone to go to if we have worries'. Close work with families has led to pupils' much-improved levels of attendance.

The welfare arrangements for children in the early years are good. Governors are diligent in ensuring that leaders implement robust risk assessments and policies. As a result, children's health, safety and well-being are enhanced. For example, protocols for nappy-changing are closely followed and all events logged.

### **Inspection findings**

- To establish whether the school remained good, one of my key lines of enquiry was to explore how effective leaders are in using resources to support those pupils who need to catch up. Pupils who need additional support are catching up quickly. Teachers use finely tuned assessment procedures to check pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills. Teachers quickly identify misconceptions and help pupils to learn from their mistakes. Highly skilled teaching assistants provide additional support. They help pupils to develop strategies to overcome barriers to learning. Consequently, pupils gain in

confidence and ability. In particular, I checked on the current progress of Year 3 pupils. When they were in Year 1, fewer pupils than nationally met the expected standard in phonics. By the end of Year 2, these pupils met the standard. Now in Year 3, almost one quarter of the pupils are exceeding national expectations for their age. Published information shows that by the end of Year 6, previously low-attaining pupils make better than expected progress. Some achieve the highest standard.

- A further line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of leaders in deploying additional funding for disadvantaged pupils across the school. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that the differences between disadvantaged pupils and others in the school are diminishing over time. In 2016, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 show that disadvantaged pupils make strong progress, particularly those with lower starting points. Their progress put them in the top 10% of all pupils nationally.
- My next line of enquiry focused on the effectiveness of the early years and whether children are well prepared for Year 1. It applied in particular to disadvantaged children and those who are most-able. More of the disadvantaged children are achieving a good level of development than in previous years. As with other disadvantaged pupils in the school, the gap between disadvantaged pupils' achievement and that of others is diminishing. This represents good progress from children's starting points. However, for some disadvantaged children, reading skills are less developed than other aspects of their learning. Fewer exceed expected standards. Staff in the Nursery provide a safe and nurturing environment for children and foster a sense of belonging. However, not all children who join the Reception classes have spent time in the school's Nursery. More work is needed so that leaders develop closer links with other early years settings to help more children get off to an equally good start.
- My final line of enquiry focused on the quality of teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling across the school. Pupils achieve well in writing. In 2016, outcomes in writing belonged with those of the top-performing 1% of schools in the country. Pupils' books show that they apply their writing skills in English as effectively as in other subjects, such as science. However, you correctly identified a weakness in the teaching of punctuation, grammar and spelling. Effective staff training and teachers' increased vigilance have led to significant improvements in the accuracy of pupils' grammar and punctuation. However, work in books shows that pupils' writing is still marred by inaccurate spellings. In September 2016, leaders put strategies in place designed to raise standards in spelling. These are yet to have a consistent impact in all year groups, although there are some encouraging signs, particularly in Year 6.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- in the early years, leaders engage other pre-school providers and parents and carers from different groups in their children's learning

- teachers in key stage 2 insist that spelling is accurate and applied in all areas of learning.

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

Tracy Hannon  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

Callington Primary School joined with Boyton Primary and Lewannick Primary in February 2014 and formed The Duchy Academy Trust. A board of directors oversees the work of the trust.

During this inspection, I spoke to you, staff, pupils and five members of the governing body. You and I made visits to lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning and to scrutinise their work. I listened to pupils read.

I considered a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation, development plans, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding documentation.

In addition, I took account of 74 responses to the Parent View online survey, 36 responses to the staff survey and 65 responses to the pupil survey.