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Sarah Duffy
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Duffy

Short inspection of Port Isaac Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 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 the school was judged to be good in April 2012.

This school continues to be good.

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

You became headteacher of Port Isaac Community Primary School in 2013. The following year, the school entered a federation with Boscastle Community Primary School and you are now the executive headteacher for both schools. In your time at Port Isaac, the school has improved and the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection have been successfully tackled. Attainment at key stage 1 has risen and overall absence has declined. Nonetheless, you are aware that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils needs to improve further. You and your staff also understand that progress in mathematics at key stage 2, although in line with the national average, is not as rapid as it is in reading and writing.

The federation's governing body has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the areas it still needs to work on. Governors provide school leaders with the right balance of challenge and support in order to drive forward school improvement. They pay particular attention to the academic outcomes of pupils and this helps to ensure that these are a constant focus of leaders at all levels.

Port Isaac Community Primary is a small school and pupils describe it as a very friendly place with a 'family' atmosphere. All the parents who responded to the online parental survey would recommend it to another parent. Typical comments from parents referred to the school's 'wonderful sense of community' and the

teachers' 'calm and professional approach' to their work. Universally, parents praise the way the school communicates with them and deals with any concerns they might have. My observations and conversations in the school confirmed this assessment of the school as a vibrant, cohesive community. Pupils are cheerful and polite. They behave well and are strongly focused on getting the best out of their education.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All staff are appropriately trained in up-to-date safeguarding practice and this has fostered an approach of constant vigilance. Pupils say that they feel safe and all the parents in the online survey agreed that their child was safe in the school. The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. This includes the single central register of pre-employment checks made on teachers and other staff, which is well maintained.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry concerned the progress in mathematics of pupils in key stage 2. In the 2016 national curriculum assessments at key stage 2, pupils made progress in line with other pupils nationally. In reading and writing, however, these same pupils made significantly faster progress. You and your staff understand the need to bring pupils' progress in mathematics into line with that made in these other subjects. As a consequence of actions you have taken, such as investing in additional training, current pupils' progress in mathematics is improving.
- Teaching of mathematics is highly effective in developing pupils' fluency, reasoning and problem-solving. Teachers use questioning very effectively to assess, probe, develop and deepen pupils' understanding of key mathematical concepts. Teaching is characterised by a thorough understanding of the demands of the new mastery curriculum and teachers set work that is appropriately challenging, whatever individual pupils' starting points are.
- Pupils enjoy studying mathematics and their books show a strong commitment to doing their best. Pupils are resilient when faced with difficulty. They do not give up and have well-established techniques to help them solve challenging problems. The work in their mathematics books is well set out and neatly presented. This helps them to develop logical thinking and deepens their understanding.
- The inspection's second line of enquiry related to the effectiveness of the early years in helping children to reach a good level of development at the end of Reception. The school has recently introduced a new way of recording children's progress. These learning journeys show that assessment in the early years is robust, accurate and well evidenced. It is focused consistently on identifying the next steps that children need to take and helping them to do so. As a result of this effective assessment and teaching, children make good progress towards their early learning goals. For example, their writing develops well, as does their

understanding of aspects of mathematics, such as shape, space and measure.

- My third line of enquiry related to the success with which school leaders are improving attendance and reducing persistent absence. This was an area for improvement at the last inspection and rates of absence were still too high in 2015/16. Recently, however, school leaders' actions have improved attendance. Overall attendance so far this year is now in line with the national average. Persistent absence has dropped sharply and is also now in line with the national figure. Nonetheless, rates of absence for disadvantaged pupils are still too high, even though they have also declined considerably so far this year.
- The inspection's final line of enquiry concerned the improvement of writing in key stage 1. The school is prioritising the development of pupils' written skills in its current development plan. Scrutiny of pupils' work in Years 1 and 2 shows that they are making good progress in their writing. In some cases, progress has been dramatic. In story-writing, pupils show a good ability to structure narrative and to use their imagination creatively. The school's policy of getting pupils to write consistently across the curriculum is also helping them to develop their writing well.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in mathematics in key stage 2 continues to improve so that it matches the progress they make in reading and writing
- the attendance of disadvantaged pupils continues to improve.

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

Stephen Lee
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you at the start of the day to discuss your evaluation of the school's performance. Later, I met with members of the governing body, including the chair. Together with you, I visited lessons to observe pupils' learning and took the opportunity to talk to pupils and examine their work. I also talked to teachers and other staff. I held a discussion with a number of pupils to find out about their experiences at the school. I also examined a range of documentation provided by

the school, including records of attendance. In making my judgements, I took into account 27 responses to the online survey of parental opinion, Parent View, and spoke to other parents at the start of the day.