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Mrs Jane Byrne  
Executive Headteacher  
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Ugborough  
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Devon  
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Dear Mrs Byrne

### **Short inspection of Ugborough Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 28 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 July 2013.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your tenacious, uncompromising yet supportive and enabling leadership has ensured that the challenges faced by the school are addressed with resolve. In partnership with the local authority, and in your role as a national leader of education, you are regularly called upon to support other schools. This work ensures that you are up to date and very well informed about current educational practice. You skilfully use this knowledge to support improvements within your own school. Similarly, your chair of governors as a national leader of governance makes sure that the governing body is knowledgeable, well informed and suitably trained. This enables governors to provide leaders with a very good balance of challenge and support. Leaders and governors celebrate the school's successes, but are also quick to identify areas that need improvement. Any weaker areas are tackled swiftly and there are rigorous checks of the progress being made against tightly focused improvement plans. Access to high-quality training opportunities for staff has contributed significantly to improved teaching and leadership. For example, you actively encourage staff to do as you do, to look outwards, to embrace change and to learn from others. To this end, you and your staff have welcomed reviews of the school's work, conducted by senior leaders from other local schools, and are quick to act on any recommendations made.

You ensure that the school is at the heart of the community. Close links with the

local pre-school help to ensure that the youngest children settle quickly and happily into school. Parents express their confidence in leaders and governors. All those who responded to Parent View, the online questionnaire, would recommend the school to other parents. Many explained that their children were happy at school, that they feel safe and make good progress because they are taught well. Comments such as, 'nothing is too much trouble,' and 'we could not have chosen a better school for our child', sum up the very positive views expressed by many parents.

You and your leadership team have successfully tackled the areas needing improvement identified at the previous inspection. Pupils are now given time to consider their learning and to talk about their ideas and what they have learned. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at questioning pupils to check their understanding and to make sure that any misunderstandings are corrected quickly. Staff changes and sharply focused training have allowed you to strengthen leadership expertise in the school. Expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised and teaching has improved. Leaders at all levels now contribute extensively to school self-evaluation and the school improvement process. Strong pupil progress is being secured across the school through the close checking of how well teaching is supporting pupils' learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Pupils report that they enjoy school because 'lessons are fun' and they feel very safe. They talk confidently about how well they are supported by adults and know that they could talk to someone if they have a concern or worry. Pupils talk warmly about the 'family feel' in school and how pupils of all ages get along well together. They report that there is very little poor behaviour and that any disagreements are sorted out quickly. Pupils' personal and academic development is enhanced equally well by the respectful and tolerant relationships they develop with adults and each other. Pupils understand how to manage personal risk in a variety of situations, including when using new technologies.

Leaders and governors ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records kept on all staff are detailed and of good quality. Staff and governors have received all relevant training, including for safeguarding, and vetting checks are thorough. However, you and your governors acknowledge that the system to check on staff training and development is not fully embedded. As a result, governors do not possess a complete and accurate picture of the training staff have received and the impact this is having. A strong culture of safeguarding pervades the school and staff are very clear about the challenges that are faced by some families. You work very closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils' welfare and safety are assured. The school is vigilant in checking that pupils are safe if away from school, by rigorously following up the reasons for any absences.

### **Inspection findings**

- We agreed that my first line of enquiry would focus on the progress made by children in the early years, especially those who need additional support to help them reach the expected goals. With your encouragement, the leader of early years has ensured that the provision made for children engages their interest and motivates them to learn. They have many opportunities to practise and improve their skills as they engage in the wide range of stimulating activities on offer. Much of the stimulus for children's learning comes from books and first-hand experiences that give a context for their learning. For example, after a visit to Plymouth Theatre Royal to see 'Room on the Broom', children were able to write confidently about their favourite part of the story. Many children make good use of their phonic knowledge to aid their spelling of words, and use simple punctuation accurately.
- Improving mathematical thinking and reasoning skills is a focus for improvement across the school. You have ensured that children in early years are encouraged to talk about numbers and to explore the relationship these have with each other. A wide range of resources helps children to complete simple calculations, and to explore the different combinations of numbers that together make a new number. You have ensured that frequent, accurate checks on children's learning are used to modify activities so children of all abilities make good progress, and if necessary are helped to catch up quickly. As a result, more children are now reaching the goals expected by the end of their Reception Year than in past years.
- We also agreed to check whether actions taken in Years 1 and 2 to improve the teaching of phonics have been effective and whether children who left Reception at the expected standard are making better progress than in previous years. Training for teachers has been successful and in both year groups, more pupils are already working at the expected standard in reading and writing than at this time last year. We observed pupils making good use of their phonics knowledge to support their reading and writing.
- Assessment outcomes for middle-ability pupils in Year 6 for reading, writing and mathematics were low compared with those of their peers. We agreed to explore the reasons why this occurred. Some pupils had experienced a range of learning or personal challenges. Teaching over time had been inconsistent and together these factors hindered the progress made by the group as a whole. You have been unrelenting in your efforts to improve teaching across the key stage. Consequently, expectations of what pupils can achieve have been raised significantly. Improved use of assessment information enables teachers to plan lessons that meet the needs of all pupils. Across the key stage, pupils are making better progress than at this point last year and many more are working at greater than expected depth for their age.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are also being helped to improve their thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics. Pupils are keen to work in this way. Their

understanding in mathematics is deepening and they are beginning to explain their thinking. At times, however, although their recorded work shows that they understand a mathematical skill or concept, teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for pupils to work at greater depth.

- Finally, we explored the reasons for the high persistent absenteeism of some pupils. The school's procedures to promote good attendance are robust and you work closely with external partners and other agencies to tackle the poor attendance of the very few pupils that continue to give cause for concern. The attendance of the vast majority of pupils is currently in line with national expectations.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the school continues to focus on improving pupils' thinking and reasoning skills in mathematics and providing sufficient challenge for pupils to work at greater depth
- administrative systems for recording the vetting and training of staff provide governors with a complete and accurate picture of the training staff have received and the impact this is having.

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

Yours sincerely

Alison Cogher  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and discussed improvements since the previous inspection and the school's self-evaluation. We explored the professional development and training opportunities provided for staff through your local federation and by working closely with other schools. Together, we visited each class to observe pupils' learning. I spoke to pupils during lessons, at playtime and at lunchtime. I took account of the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with a range of written comments from parents and the views of those I spoke to at the start of the day. The 14 questionnaires completed by staff were also considered.

I analysed a range of school documentation, which included the school's safeguarding practices and attendance information. Together we looked at pupils' work in books from each year group, and considered the school's information about

pupils' progress. I met a group of governors and spoke by telephone to a senior adviser from the local authority.