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4 May 2017

Mr Randall Brook
Headteacher
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Dear Mr Brook

Short inspection of Mawnan CofE VA Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 20 April 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. You play a vital and key role in setting the tone, culture and ethos of Mawnan School. You use your detailed understanding and knowledge of your pupils to provide a broad and rich curriculum that meets their needs well. Your approach to developing a caring environment and a secure community ensures that pupils learn together in a positive manner, interacting well with their peers. Overall, pupils, staff and many parents recognise your honesty and integrity in the way you go about maintaining the success of your school. Pupils in turn emulate the characteristics you model in the way they learn and play together.

Your advocacy of 'community' and 'all round' values plays a key part in your approach and underpins your curriculum offer. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of democracy and tolerance is strongly promoted and taken very seriously. Pupils play a strong part in designing their learning experiences and selecting their own level of challenge during lessons. Pupils therefore feel very involved in their school. They specifically welcome the opportunity to request their own extra-curricular clubs such as remote control club or street dance. Older pupils particularly enjoy the high number of opportunities to compete against other schools in sports events or the 'amazing chance' to attend the local secondary school for more advanced mathematics.

All involved in the school are making a strong contribution to the ongoing

developments evident. Consequently, you continue to successfully address the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Most pupils write across a broad range of topics and subjects well. Effective links are made between subjects that help pupils develop specific literacy skills when learning about Central America or Anglo Saxons, for example. Pupils' presentation around the school and in their books is generally of a good standard. Staff morale is high because all are included in actions and plans for further development. The togetherness of the staff is a key reason why Mawnan is a special place to work and learn.

The majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are happy with the quality of education provided by the school. Many are complimentary about you, your staff and all you do to help their children. Most feel their children are safe in school. Pupils also feel very safe, commenting 'We've had every one of the emergency services in school to help us keep safe, including the coastguard to help us understand water safety when sailing on the Helford River.' Parents typically commented on the rich curriculum and topics studied that engage and motivate their children. You are aware that some parents have concerns about pupils' behaviour around the school. Discussions with pupils and staff throughout the day and reviewing the school's work regarding this issue did not support parents' views. Pupils typically feel very happy and well cared for, saying that lessons are not disrupted by poor behaviour and any behaviour issues are always sorted out.

During 2013–15 pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics improved at key stages 1 and 2 and was above average. Good-quality teaching, combined with an effective curriculum and strong leadership, ensured that pupils' performance improved since the previous inspection. In 2016 pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 were below those anticipated. Pupils' progress in mathematics was markedly lower than expected and significantly below the national figure. A significant proportion of this small cohort has personal, educational or medical issues that made them vulnerable and affected their academic progress. The decline in mathematics was the main reason for the school being defined as 'coasting' by the Department for Education in 2016. However, work in current pupils' books and the school's assessment information indicates that pupils' progress and standards are on track to be above average in 2017.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and your leadership team ensure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Policies and practice keep abreast of recent legislation and good practice. You use the expertise on your governing body to update staff training regularly so that all are vigilant and mindful of the potential dangers to pupils. Your effective links with the education welfare officer and good partnership working with other local schools are helping to improve pupils' attendance. This was too low last year and has improved as a result of determined actions combined with weekly class rewards for good attendance.

Your investment in supporting pupils' emotional development is increasingly

successful. Specific sessions for those pupils who may be vulnerable provide the time and space for a trusting relationship to develop between the adult and the child so that discussion is open and honest. There is a strong sense of belonging within the school community. Pupils particularly commented on the school website links available to them that enable them to post any concerns anonymously. Pupils report that these are always addressed by the headteacher. Teaching pupils about the values of respect, tolerance and open acceptance is one of the cornerstones of your work. You and your team have created a culture where difference, whatever form it may take, is accepted and celebrated. This prepares pupils well for the realities of life beyond the school gates.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection we explored whether the attainment gap between boys' and girls' writing was closing. We also looked at how well boys were using their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation in their writing. Together we investigated how well the curriculum was supporting pupils' progress in mathematics. Finally, we examined how well some girls, currently in Year 2, were progressing in their phonics.
- Your school improvement plan rightly identifies closing the attainment gap between boys and girls as a key priority. Your deep analysis and evaluation of the reasons why some boys lag behind girls pointed to some relationship issues and 'unconscious bias' by adults in the way boys were treated. Training with your local partnership of schools and support for staff has fully addressed this issue. Your active promotion of effective male role models and the involvement of dads in their child's education are also proving successful.
- Another reason why the gaps are closing is your increased emphasis on engaging boys in their learning through interesting activities planned in the curriculum. Actions start in the early years where a high number of construction and physical activities to develop boys gross and fine motor control skills are helping them get off to a good start. Competition and technology are also used well to stimulate and motivate boys in their learning. The outdoor environment is used effectively to provide a wealth of rich activities that support classroom teaching well. Boys typically report that they enjoy all lessons and feel work is challenging and they are progressing well.
- The curriculum and rich activities are supporting most pupils in their development of writing. However, lower- and middle-ability pupils are not progressing at the same rapid rate as their more able peers. Some activities planned do not meet their learning needs closely enough and are at times too hard for them. Other pupils do not receive enough support and scaffolding to help organise their ideas and thoughts in order to write well. Your chosen approach to record pupils' writing involves using many different types of books; for spelling, grammar, punctuation, technical and creative writing. Too often boys do not see the links between different aspects of writing and therefore do not apply many conventions for grammar, punctuation and spelling when writing independently. This hinders their better progress.
- The new leader for mathematics has a strong command of the subject and

aspects that need further development in the school. Training and guidance for staff has rapidly improved teachers' subject knowledge of the national curriculum requirements and the 'mastery' approach. The curriculum for measure, shape and handling data is varied and interesting. Effective links are made to other subjects and outdoor learning that promote pupils' enjoyment of the subject and good progress in these areas of mathematics well. The same variety is not yet evident in the teaching of 'number'. Activities planned are at times too repetitive. Pupils are not routinely challenged to use their knowledge of numbers to tackle new or different mathematical problems. The mathematics leader is aware of this issue and that the teaching of number is not yet having the desired impact on developing pupils' fluency and deeper conceptual understanding.

- Girls are making good progress and attaining well in phonics. The girls currently in Year 2 are on track to reach standards above the national average by the end of the year.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers ensure pupils use their knowledge of spelling, grammar and punctuation routinely when writing
- planned activities in writing meet the needs of lower- and middle-ability pupils more closely so they can organise their thoughts and ideas in order to achieve successfully
- the curriculum for 'number' in mathematics is improved to develop pupils' deeper conceptual understanding and fluency.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Light
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and with the leaders for English, mathematics and the early years. Two members of the governing body, including the chair, met me to discuss the actions taken since the previous inspection. The views of a number of parents were gathered through their responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. Visits to classrooms were conducted jointly with you to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, to review the quality of pupils' work over time, and to listen and talk informally with them about their experiences of school. A range of documentary evidence was evaluated, including

documents relating to safeguarding and governance. The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2014, 2015 and 2016.