

26 February 2018

Mr Matthew Blunt
Head of School
Lerryn CofE Primary School
Lerryn
Lostwithiel
Cornwall
PL22 0QA

Dear Mr Matthew Blunt

Short inspection of Lerryn CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2018, 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 December 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Following your appointment in September 2017, you have worked effectively with other schools and leaders in the expanding multi-academy trust (MAT), including the school monitoring committee, formerly the governing body. The high expectations of pupils' academic achievement you hold are not at the expense of developing their important life skills such as resilience and collaboration. For example, a parent who completed the online survey wrote, 'I particularly like the fact that academic work is well balanced with outdoor activities.' You have developed very positive relationships with parents who, overwhelmingly, would recommend the school to other parents.

Since becoming head of school, you have listened to pupils, staff and parents, who typically agree that you have built well on the school's strengths. For example, parents agree that the school is 'fabulous' and 'values each child as an individual by staff and pupils alike'. One parent commented, 'This is a very well run small local school that provides a good foundation in life for all of its pupils.' You and your school monitoring committee recognise the need for further support from leaders in the trust to continue to develop respective roles and responsibilities.

You have an accurate and realistic understanding of the school's current performance. Your plans clearly set out what needs to improve further, with specific and measurable targets. For example, you identified that not enough pupils reached the expected standard in the spelling tests in 2017 and took prompt action to address this. Teachers set more challenging work for most groups of pupils,

particularly those whom the school has identified as falling behind in their work. However, other identified pupils do not make rapid enough progress because the level of challenge is not yet sufficient.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that teachers check progress frequently so that they can move pupils, especially the most able, on to more challenging work as quickly as possible. Your work to achieve this is generally effective. Teachers in your two mixed-age classes plan for many levels of challenge within lessons after first assessing pupils' understanding of the task. This enables them to set challenges for pupils which are meeting their next academic and personal needs effectively. Adults are good at helping pupils to select appropriate tasks which develop their knowledge, skills and understanding.

You were also asked to improve individual pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. This aspect has been accomplished successfully. Pupils are typically engaged and interested in tasks presented to them. Older pupils discuss their learning with each other and with adults enthusiastically. They say that they love to learn new things. Across the school, the range of activities planned promotes pupils' good learning behaviours. Pupils enjoy and focus on their own tasks as others work on different activities in the room, needing little prompting.

Leaders and staff expect pupils at Lerryn to be consistently well behaved and take on key responsibilities in school. Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered. Pupils enjoy school and attendance rates have improved considerably.

Safeguarding is effective.

The culture of safeguarding pupils is strong. You, your staff and the MAT give the safety of pupils a high priority. All staff and the monitoring committee are appropriately trained in identifying possible signs of risk and harm. School records show that staff are up to date in their training in recognising the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. Statutory guidance for recruiting and vetting new staff is followed diligently by the MAT. Those leaders responsible for safeguarding check that the school central record is maintained accurately and all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

You and your staff are tenacious and know what to do to keep pupils safe. You are diligent and take timely action to respond to pupils' needs. The strong emphasis you place on pupils' personal development ensures that they develop the skills they need to keep themselves safe, including when using modern technologies. Pupils report that they feel safe at school and would happily seek the support and guidance of an adult if they had any concerns or worries. Parents are very confident that their children are safe at school. You actively seek specialist support to find solutions for pupils and their families. You are resolute in promoting good attendance and checking when pupils are not at school. As a result of this, attendance has improved considerably. Pupils' excellent behaviour, and the positive way in which they work and play together, reflect the confidence they have that they are safe and looked after well at school.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to evaluate how effective leaders are in ensuring that pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently positive. This included whether positive attitudes have an effect on the progress that pupils make and whether the curriculum is engaging pupils in their learning. I found out that pupils really enjoy school and say that they like to learn new things, especially outdoor learning and 'fun things' like making model volcanoes. Observation of pupils in the classroom confirmed what they said; as well as clearly enjoying the challenges set for them, they persevere at tasks, with high levels of concentration.
- The previous inspection reported that some pupils were occasionally distracted. Teachers now have high expectations of behaviour in the classroom, expecting pupils to take responsibility, where appropriate, for their own learning. This was particularly evident where younger pupils were seen to manage distractions well. In the classroom that is shared with pre-school-aged children, younger children pursue free-choice play activities. Despite these obvious distractions, older pupils remain focused on their learning, for example when examining the properties of three-dimensional shapes.
- My second line of enquiry asked how leaders ensured that all groups of pupils made good progress and were challenged effectively. As year group numbers are very small, I looked at achievement across the whole school. Leaders' assessment of current pupils is accurate. Most pupils are making good progress in their learning in reading, writing and mathematics. Some groups of pupils make rapid progress. Teachers plan learning in order to challenge pupils' thinking depending on their ability rather than their year group. This gives some pupils the confidence to attempt harder tasks than they might normally have tried.
- Teachers and teaching assistants know pupils' individual learning needs well and use this information to plan lessons and experiences that are tailored to meet their learning needs. Furthermore, teachers are working closely with colleagues in other schools to compare the quality of pupils' work with that of all other pupils nationally. However, there is evidence that, occasionally, pupils who are identified by the school as requiring additional challenge are not given tasks that are difficult enough. This hinders their ability to make more rapid progress and achieve the higher levels.
- My next line of enquiry evaluated how effective the MAT is in ensuring that support for the new head of school and the school monitoring committee leads to further improvements to teaching and learning. Your partner school supports you very effectively in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning as well as moderating pupils' outcomes. High-quality training enables you to evaluate school policies and practices and assess pupils' progress. Schools within the trust give good support which helps you to evaluate the work of the school in line with national expectations for academic achievement.
- The newly formed school monitoring committee has very skilled and experienced members as well as new appointments. These new members require further training, for example in how to evaluate school progress data, in order to fulfil

their role more effectively. Your appointment to head of school is very recent and there are areas of your leadership that need developing further, such as assessing areas for school development with greater detail and precision.

- My final line of enquiry was about attendance. Current data for this year showed that overall attendance is now well above the national average and persistent absence has reduced. This is because the school keeps detailed tracking records on each pupil. Where pupils' absence becomes a cause for concern, the school is quick to engage with families and work closely with external agencies in order to support better attendance.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide sufficiently challenging tasks for identified pupils in order to accelerate the progress they make
- the Celtic Cross Education MAT provides further support for the new head of school and school monitoring committee in order for them to develop and fulfil their roles successfully.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, 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

Julie Jane
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection I met regularly with you and the MAT school improvement adviser as part of a professional dialogue throughout the day. I also met with members of the school monitoring committee, including the chair. We undertook observations of learning in lessons and examined pupils' work, focusing on levels of challenge for pupils of different abilities. I listened to the reading of pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2. I met with pupils to talk about their experience of school life. I examined the school's website and a variety of documents made available by the school, including published performance data and a summary of its self-evaluation. I took account of the written comments and views of 17 parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.