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Mrs Julie Orrell
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Orrell

Short inspection of St Erme with Trispen Community Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 24 January 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 January 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Your focus on the further development of middle leadership, whole-school training and curriculum support is resulting in continued improvements in the progress that pupils make. As a result, pupils at St Erme with Trispen achieve well. The proportion of pupils who met and exceeded the expected standards for their age at the end of key stage 1 in 2017 was well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. A very large majority of pupils met the expected standard in phonics in Year 1 in 2017. Standards at the end of key stage 2 have also been well above the national average in writing for the last two years.

Parents are highly supportive of the school. Every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school and agrees that their child is happy. Almost every parent agrees that their child is taught well, is making good progress and that the school is well led and managed. Parents praise your approachability and that of your staff. They greatly value the school's caring and nurturing ethos. One parental comment, typical of many, stated, 'My children look forward to going to school every day because the staff have done such a great job at making them feel noticed and valued.' Many say that the school is 'fantastic', with several commenting on the interesting curriculum and the wide variety of clubs provided. Parents clearly see the school at the heart of the local community.

You have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the school and the areas

that require further work. Plans are in place to address any shortfalls. For example, you have identified that pupils' reading skills in key stage 2 are not always developed well enough in order for them to achieve the higher levels. You are working productively to address this.

You expect pupils at St Erme with Trispen to be well behaved and take on key responsibilities in school. Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered. Pupils enjoy school and, as a result, their attendance is good. Inspection evidence shows that pupils across the school behave well. They are working hard to develop their skills. However, sometimes the work planned is not matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. As a result, some pupils do not understand what they have to learn and their learning falters when they wait for further explanations from adults.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to ensure that teachers move learning on as briskly as possible through challenging tasks. You continue to focus on this aspect of work. Teachers have increased the level of challenge in lessons and this is effective for most pupils. However, the most able pupils are not yet rigorously challenged in their learning. Consequently, the proportion of pupils achieving the higher standards in mathematics and reading was below national average in key stage 2 in 2017. On occasion, pupils who are not as able are expected to work on the same tasks as their most-able peers. As a result, they find that the work set is too hard.

You were also asked to further improve pupils' achievement in mathematics by developing pupils' mental mathematics skills and providing more opportunities for pupils to apply their knowledge and understanding. Your work to overcome this is generally effective. Most pupils enjoy the range of mathematical problems they are challenged to complete in lessons, and can explain their reasoning well. Pupils' ability to use their mental mathematics skills has improved and this is having a positive impact on their ability to complete calculations efficiently and quickly.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, governors and staff maintain a positive safeguarding culture across the school. This underpins pupils' personal development and gives pupils a positive environment in which to learn. You check attendance patterns carefully. You also give pupils the opportunity to discuss any possible concerns about bullying in assemblies and lessons. They have a good understanding of what constitutes bullying and say that bullying does not happen in school as far as they are aware. Pupils confirm that they feel safe because they can always talk to someone if they have any worries or concerns.

Leaders, including governors, conduct regular checks on the school's safeguarding systems. Your detailed and high-quality records show how conscientiously you and your staff identify and support vulnerable pupils. School records show that staff and governors are up to date in their training and it is in line with current legislation. This includes recognising the dangers of extremism and radicalisation. The governor responsible for safeguarding frequently checks that the school's single central

record is maintained accurately. Overall, leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Staff know their responsibilities and how they should respond if they have any concerns. You are diligent and take timely action to respond to pupils' needs. Parents are confident that their children are safe at school. The work of the pastoral team is much appreciated.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, I met with you to discuss the school's progress since the previous inspection. We agreed on the following lines of enquiry: how well leaders have addressed improving standards in mathematics in key stage 2; how leaders have ensured that all groups of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, make good progress across the school; how effective leaders are in supporting pupils to achieve the higher levels, particularly in reading in key stage 2; and how well the school keeps pupils safe.
- The standards that pupils achieved in mathematics in 2017 were lower than in reading and writing. You and your mathematics leader have rightly targeted mathematics as a priority. Additional resources and a restructuring of the teaching of mathematics through increasing the focus on developing pupils' problem-solving skills are making learning more exciting and impactful. Pupils are able to explain their reasoning and methods, deepening their knowledge and understanding further. This is particularly effective when teachers ask questions which make pupils think further about the problem.
- Pupils are now excited about learning mathematics and are confident using their multiplication tables. Teachers have responded well to your raised expectations by increasing the level of challenge for most pupils. However, they are not yet routinely matching tasks to pupils' levels of understanding sufficiently. As a result, too many pupils finish activities too quickly and have to wait before moving on to the next task. At other times, activities planned are too hard for other pupils who then need additional support from an adult in order to understand what they have to do next. As a result, learning time is wasted while pupils wait for an adult to direct them further.
- Teachers are keen to improve their subject knowledge and practice of teaching mathematics. Actions are improving the quality of teaching overall. However, when we scrutinised mathematics books together, we saw that teachers are not yet routinely challenging the most able pupils. For example, many are given the same problems to solve as most of the other pupils.
- Disadvantaged pupils who were in Year 6 in 2017 made consistently good progress through the school from their low starting points, with many joining the school in key stage 2.
- Current pupils who are disadvantaged are making good progress. This is because you use pupil premium funding very effectively to support these pupils in lessons, for example through the effective support provided by teaching assistants. You are successful in addressing any differences in achievement

between these pupils and their classmates. This is because you monitor their progress precisely and continually look for ways to improve the support for these pupils. Parents are very appreciative of the extra support you give their children, both academically and emotionally.

- In 2017, no pupil achieved the higher level in reading. We established that the 2017 group had unique needs and characteristics, which resulted in some pupils having difficulty gaining the higher-order skills in reading. Progress in writing at the end of Year 6 in 2017 was significantly above the national average. Writing is a strength of the school at all key stages. Work in books shows that there is a wide range of purposeful writing across the curriculum. Teachers' expectations of writing are consistently high, ensuring that pupils meet the highest standards of which they are capable with many achieving the higher levels.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers have uniformly high expectations of what pupils can achieve in mathematics and reading so that a greater proportion exceed the standards expected for their age
- teachers match activities more closely to pupils' learning needs in mathematics and provide all pupils with a clear understanding of what they have to learn, so that time in lessons is used more productively.

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

Julie Jane
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you and your assistant headteacher. I accompanied you to all the classrooms to observe pupils' learning and behaviour. I met governors, including the chair of the governing body. I had a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner. I met several pupils to talk to them about their experiences of the school. I listened to some most-able Year 6 pupils read as well as a key stage 1 pupil. I scrutinised pupils' work in their books. I considered the school's self-evaluation, and looked at records of achievement for current pupils and the school's planning for improvement. I looked at information about attendance and various documents relating to safeguarding.

I took account of the 44 responses to Parent View. I also read the many comments

written by parents.