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Ms Jo-Anne Callow
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Ms Callow

Short inspection of North Petherwin School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 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 your predecessor 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 previous inspection. Following a dip in standards in 2016, you have successfully identified the right priorities for development and ensured that achievement in 2017 improved. You have established a team that is fully committed to providing a high standard of education within a caring and supportive environment.

You are the executive headteacher of both Werrington and North Petherwin primary schools. Since the last inspection, the school has joined the An Daras Multi Academy Trust, which has strengthened the leadership capacity of the school and provided effective professional development for leaders and teachers. The trust also provides opportunities for staff to work with a wider range of colleagues to support each other to ensure better outcomes for pupils. The trust has helped leaders to develop and refine their self-evaluation processes and provides an additional validation of senior leaders' monitoring.

Staff fully support your drive for improvement and governors monitor the school's work closely. As a result, leaders at all levels play an effective role in improving the school and raising outcomes for pupils. You have established a strong culture of professional dialogue. Senior and middle leaders analyse strengths and weaknesses in teaching, learning and assessment effectively, which leads to well-focused support and rapid improvement. You and senior leaders meet regularly with teachers to review pupils' progress. Together you ensure that any pupils who are in

danger of falling behind with their learning are provided with additional support, responding flexibly to changing needs. As a consequence, the majority of pupils make good progress.

The calm and purposeful atmosphere, that leaders and teachers have worked hard to create, pervades the whole school and helps pupils to thrive and enjoy learning. The pupils I spoke with during the inspection, and those who completed the online questionnaire, said that teachers listen to what they say and that everyone is keen to help each other. As a result, pupils work together very effectively and poor behaviour is rare. Overall, attitudes to learning are exemplary; even the youngest pupils are able to work very well without adult support.

Parents who spoke to me at the beginning of the day confirmed the positive view of the school as presented in the online questionnaire, Parent View. You have built a positive school community, underpinned by strong relationships between pupils, teachers, parents and leaders.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding and leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They carry out the statutory checks on staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. As a result of regular training, leaders have ensured that staff are vigilant about any potential risks that pupils may encounter.

The school's website provides detailed and comprehensive information for parents about safeguarding. Parents praise school leaders for their approachability and express confidence in the school's work to keep their children safe. Pupils themselves understand how to stay safe. The pupils who spoke to me about behaviour said that bullying does not happen at the school, but that if it did the teachers would deal with it well.

Inspection findings

- My first key line of enquiry was about how effectively school leaders and governors ensure that pupils, particularly boys, make consistently good progress in reading and writing. Although results in reading and writing in 2017 showed a strong improvement compared with 2016 and were in line with or above the national average, they were not as strong as results in mathematics. In addition, boys did less well than girls at each key stage. In key stage 2 currently, school assessment information and progress in pupils' books suggest that both boys and girls are on track to meet the expected standard in attainment at the end of the key stage in both reading and writing. However, a few Year 1 and Year 2 pupils are not making as much progress as they could, and leaders' checks have not yet remedied this weakness.
- Leaders in the school and in the multi-academy trust rigorously compare their published results with national trends, analysing the reasons for any strengths or weaknesses and responding with well-considered plans for improvement. Plans

are aimed at making refinements to the English curriculum, providing professional development for teachers and raising expectations. The English curriculum guidance is a clear and comprehensive tool to support teachers but is not yet consistently understood and used by all teachers. Middle and senior leaders have plans to continue to develop teachers' professional knowledge and consistency of practice across the school.

- During my visits to classrooms and when looking at pupils' work, I saw that both boys and girls have excellent attitudes to learning. They maintain attention and effort in their writing even when the work is challenging for them. Pupils' reading is generally confident and fluent in class as they make use of research material, learning resources and their own previous learning. Teachers provide interesting and engaging opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 were responding to a letter from the council saying that they had to make up any school time lost because of the bad weather. They had to think about how to sequence and present their arguments effectively.
- Over the last two years the proportion of pupils meeting the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been close to the national average. However, some of the current phonics teaching is not sufficiently precise to support low prior attainers and children in the early years to make good progress.
- The second key line of enquiry was around how well teaching and the curriculum meet the needs of pupils. Teachers respond to pupils' own interests to plan each term's topic. As a result, pupils of all ages, abilities and starting points are strongly motivated to learn and talk enthusiastically about their work to their parents. During the inspection, for example, Reception children were excited to tell me about the fossils in their classroom. At the beginning of each term, teachers tell parents what each class will be studying and how they can help their children. Pupils' conceptual development and their understanding of the world around them can be clearly seen through their topic work.
- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning skilfully to challenge pupils and encourage them to expand upon their ideas and explanations. They have high expectations of pupils' ability to persevere, even when they are finding it difficult. Pupils live up to these high expectations.
- Leaders have not yet clearly mapped out pupils' progression across the curriculum in advance but do keep a record of which objectives have been covered each term. In addition, teachers' expectations about how pupils apply their mathematical and literacy skills in different contexts and their response to basic literacy errors are not consistent. As a result, pupils are not consistently challenged to apply and develop their mathematical and writing skills across the wider curriculum at the high standard that they do in their literacy and numeracy lessons.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- standards in writing continue to improve for all pupils, including through the development of phonics with the younger children
- leaders' checks on teaching ensure that the expectations around achievement in the wider curriculum match the expectations in English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Janet Ross
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I visited classes with you and your head of school. I looked at the work in pupils' books during lessons, as well as looking separately at a sample of pupils' work with your leaders. I talked with pupils during my visits to the classrooms.

I met with you, your head of school and middle leaders during the inspection. I also met with the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust and the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and spoke with the school administrator.

I took account of 17 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. I also considered 10 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 25 responses to Ofsted's online pupil questionnaire.

I reviewed the school's website and information about the school's academic performance. I considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness, the school's improvement plan, information related to pupil premium funding, monitoring information from the multi-academy trust and an external adviser's reports. I also looked at documents related to safeguarding.