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Mrs Paula Quinney  
Headteacher  
Germoe Community Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Quinney

### **Short inspection of Germoe Community Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 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 the school was judged to be good in February 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Staff, governors and parents have confidence in the school's leadership. As numbers increase, you, your staff and governors are focused single-mindedly on securing the school's continued success. For example, one parent confirmed, 'The headteacher has great vision for the school', while another commented, 'I admire her hugely for her commitment and engagement to constantly reviewing and improving teaching.'

You have ensured that the school's motto, 'A love of learning for life', underpins the school's work. Your commitment to providing a stimulating curriculum lies at the heart of the pupils' well-rounded education. Pupils say that they like learning about mathematics, for example, and particularly enjoy the enquiry-based investigations which make them think further about their world.

Since federating with another local school, you have strengthened your leadership team. Your team is determined, capable and increasingly effective. You are fully supported by a dedicated and skilled governing body. Leaders at all levels work well as a team across the two schools and provide rigorous challenge and support to secure effective teaching and pupils' good progress. Your accurate evaluation of the school's work has helped you to identify that a few pupils, particularly the most able, need to make better progress. You are also aware that you need to ensure consistency when teaching spelling in key stages 1 and 2, to help pupils achieve better standards in their writing. Your actions to support this necessary

improvement are well formed.

Pupils are happy and enthusiastic learners. Adults have high aspirations for pupils and develop strong working relationships with them. This gives pupils the confidence to improve their learning. As a result, they thoroughly enjoy discussing their work with each other, persevere when learning gets tricky and are keen to succeed. They work hard in lessons and enthusiastically support each other in their learning. Pupils enjoy being at school and behave extremely well. These findings are fully supported by parents and summed up by one parent who wrote, 'Germoe is a wonderful school and my children are more than happy there. They love going to school and have a real love of learning.'

You have successfully addressed the areas for improvement raised at the last inspection. You have ensured that pupils have a thorough command of each mathematical calculation skill before moving on to the next. Additionally, you have improved the quality of teaching by sharing and applying best practice from schools within your network.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders ensure a positive safeguarding culture across the school. They ensure that arrangements for keeping pupils safe are up to date and fit for purpose. Leaders and administrative staff undertake suitable checks on staff and visitors. Recruitment procedures are stringent and secure. Staff and governors receive good training in child protection procedures. Leaders and administrative staff keep detailed records of the training that staff complete. This includes understanding how to keep pupils safe from sexual exploitation, radicalisation and extremism. As a result, staff understand their responsibilities fully and have clear knowledge of the school's policies and procedures around safeguarding.

All the pupils I spoke with told me that they feel very safe in school. Some said that they would have no hesitation in speaking to a member of staff if they had any concerns. Other pupils felt that the concerns they encounter are so minor that they could easily disregard them and move on. Pupils showed that they know how to keep themselves safe and manage risk by, for example, understanding keeping safe online by using secure websites beginning with 'https'. Nearly all the parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, agreed that the school keeps their children safe.

### **Inspection findings**

- My first key line of enquiry checked how effectively teaching, learning and assessment brings about strong progress and attainment in mathematics. Since the last inspection, you have improved the teaching of methods of calculation and extended pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills considerably. You have worked with the local mathematics hub to extend the curriculum, by ensuring that pupils develop skills that are better matched to their abilities. This is particularly important in the school's mixed-age classes. Pupils respond eagerly to

the challenges that teachers present to them, learning through a range of practical and written activities. For example, during the inspection, one group of pupils were measuring the capacity of cuboids on the decking outside the classroom.

- From the early years through to Year 6, pupils work quickly through levels of difficulty when solving mathematical problems. Adults effectively support the least able pupils to understand simpler problems, while other pupils work at higher levels of difficulty. However, work in books shows that some pupils, particularly the most able, do not routinely attempt the more complex problems in lessons. This means that these pupils do not make the progress they are capable of making by the end of key stages 1 and 2.
- My second line of enquiry was to investigate whether the most able pupils are challenged as effectively as possible. Leaders and governors are aware of the need to increase the proportion of pupils who achieve the higher levels in mathematics and writing. This includes the full age range of children from the early years to pupils at the end of key stage 2. Teachers set more challenging work in literacy and mathematics to extend pupils' skills in lessons. For example, when writing stories, teachers challenge pupils to add further adjectives or use more adventurous language. Despite this, not enough pupils achieve the higher levels in their written work. Staff plan additional activities to develop oracy skills through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities further develop literacy skills. For example, the school has won a local debating competition against other schools for two years running.
- Most-able pupils in Year 6 join their peers from other local schools to take part in weekly mathematics 'challenge' lessons. There is also a 'big mathematics problem' task every Friday to develop all pupils' thinking skills and encourage them to talk to each other about their reasoning. However, examples of work show that not all pupils, particularly the most able, are sufficiently challenged to achieve the higher levels in mathematics.
- My third key line of enquiry was to follow up how well writing is taught from when pupils start school, so that their writing skills are in line with national expectations at the end of key stage 2. In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the standard expected in the Year 1 phonics screening check was higher than the national figure. Outcomes in writing in the Reception class were also above the national average. Pupils say that they enjoy writing and are enthusiastic to write stories. Many pupils write fluently and with expression, producing completed pieces of writing that meet national expectations in grammar and punctuation.
- The progress of current pupils in writing is, however, not as strong as it is in reading or mathematics. The school's own assessment predicts that progress will accelerate in terms 2 and 3. This is because a large number of pupils join the school at other times than in the Reception Year and take time to settle into school and class routines. The school also has a high proportion of pupils with additional educational needs such as a high occurrence of dyslexia.
- A current school priority is the teaching of spelling. In particular, staff focus on linking pupils' phonic knowledge to their ability to spell words that cannot be

sounded out, for example 'the'. Writing in books shows that, while teachers correct spellings in work which is edited and redrafted, this is not consistent across classes. They do not generally correct spelling errors in writing tasks in other curriculum subjects and topic work. This is particularly evident in key stage 1 and is not generally consistent in key stage 2. As a result, the quality of pupils' writing is marred by the large number of spelling errors in writing and topic books.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- improve the quality of writing across all curriculum areas by increasing teachers' consistency when identifying and correcting pupils' spellings
- ensure that pupils of all abilities, particularly the most able, complete work that is more specifically matched to their abilities in mathematics and writing.

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 this inspection I spoke with you, representatives of the governing body and the local authority's representative on the telephone. You and I visited lessons to observe pupils' attitudes to learning. We also scrutinised work in pupils' books together, along with your senior leaders. I had a discussion with pupils and listened to a small number of pupils read. I scrutinised a range of documentary evidence, which included the school's self-evaluation and school improvement plan. Together, we reviewed information relating to pupils' progress and achievement. I checked records and documentation relating to safeguarding, attendance, monitoring and improvement. I reviewed the checks made on staff about their suitability to work with children. I took account of 22 responses to the Parent View online survey, including eight text responses.