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Ms Suzannah Teagle
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Teagle

Short inspection of Threemilestone School

Following my visit to the school on 6 November 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 May 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 arrival in 2017, you have worked tirelessly with other leaders, including governors, to stabilise the school and start reversing its fortunes. Together with your deputy, you have brought renewed vision and ambition for pupils. You have taken prompt action where this has been needed, to hold other leaders and teachers to account for their performance. As a result, current outcomes for pupils are improving. The overwhelming majority of pupils and parents and carers strongly endorse your efforts and recognise the improvements. Typical comments from parents as part of the inspection survey include, 'I believe that since Ms Teagle has become headteacher, Threemilestone School is going from strength to strength', and, 'The school is amazing!'

Since your appointment, you have benefited from high-quality support and challenge from the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust (TPAT). You have worked closely with a mentor through the trust to identify accurately strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching. This is enabling you to put the appropriate support in place to tackle weaknesses. Teachers know the pupils well and plan lessons and sequences of work that are meeting the pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils are enthusiastic learners. Previous gaps in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are being addressed at pace. However, you and other leaders, including governors and trustees, understand that it is essential to maintain the current rate of improvement to raise achievement by the time pupils leave the school.

You have successfully tackled issues raised at the last inspection. For example, the writing focus across the school has seen an improvement in pupils' outcomes, so that their progress at the end of key stage 2 was positive in 2018. This shows strong improvement on the previous two years. However, some weak writing development in early years and key stage 1 still holds some pupils back. This remains a challenge, as does continuing to drive up standards by the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and other leaders ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. For example, staff recruitment, vetting and training for child protection are suitable and up to date. Staff know pupils well and this helps them to foster positive relationships. As a result, pupils trust staff and have confidence in them. You and other staff work effectively with a range of external agencies to keep vulnerable pupils safe. Records show how rigorously you act on behalf of pupils to keep them safe.

Pupils say that they feel happy and safe in school. They know how to stay safe in different situations. For example, they explained how to report suspicious activity online 'to a reliable adult'. They have a good understanding of risks associated with fire and evacuation procedures. Pupils also know what bullying is. They say that it is uncommon. If it happens, they trust staff to intervene and deal with it. However, a very small minority of parents lack confidence in the school's safeguarding procedures. You and governors are aware of this and are taking steps to work with parents to remedy this.

Inspection findings

- Considering the weak outcomes published in the 2018 national assessments for pupils' progress in reading and mathematics at key stage 2, we agreed that I would evaluate how well current pupils are achieving in these subjects. Through your leadership teams, you have already identified areas for improvement. Actions are firmly in place. For example, the focus on mastery in mathematics, and comprehension and inference in reading, is helping pupils to gain rapidly the key skills and knowledge needed to be proficient in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils in key stage 2 are developing a secure understanding of number and calculation and how to apply these in a range of contexts. For example, they can read long numbers such as '13,307,661.325' and explain what decimal points mean and their relevance in real-life situations.
- Pupils enjoy mathematics. They speak enthusiastically about new initiatives, such as 'times table challenges'. They see the relevance of this learning and how it contributes to being successful in life. However, teachers do not consistently challenge some of the most able pupils, which hinders their progress.
- Pupils also enjoy reading. You have revised and refined your approach to reading, so that this has become an integral part of the school day. Your statement that, 'reading is for everyone' is apt and reflected in the day-to-day

running of the school. Pupils are encouraged to read widely and often. For example, they are enjoying using the refurbished library and sharing a story at the end of the day. Furthermore, your targeted work on improving pupils' comprehension and inference is starting to make a discernible difference to pupils' reading ability.

- However, the quality of detail in teachers' assessments for reading is variable. This means that pupils are not consistently receiving precise enough next steps to make even stronger progress.
- I also evaluated the quality of teaching to improve writing in key stage 1 and early years. Pupils enjoy writing for a variety of reasons. Strong cross-curricular links stimulate pupils' interest and ensure that they are keen to write. For example, pupils in Year 1 enjoyed the recent visit to The Lost Gardens of Heligan, which gave them the insight and understanding to write convincingly about it.
- However, teachers often structure or frame writing too heavily, which reduces the quality of pupils' work. This is because it detracts from pupils' ability to write freely and gain the independence needed as emerging writers. In addition, opportunities to practise writing and mark making in early years are limited. This means that some children are not getting off to the best possible start in readiness for key stage 1.
- In scrutinising examples of writing in key stage 1, we found weaknesses in pupils' spelling and grammar, as well as handwriting. These aspects are not yet as good as they should be. You are fully aware of this. As a result, you have targeted specific training for staff, and activities, such as moderation, to check for improvements.
- I also considered how well the pupil premium grant is being used to improve the quality of care and education for disadvantaged pupils. You have implemented a comprehensive strategy through the school's 'statement of commitment'. This means that every disadvantaged pupil is given targeted support. Pupils' progress is routinely reviewed. This is ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are making strong progress that is, at times, better than that of their peers. However, individual plans for some pupils are not sufficiently detailed. At times, this weakens the progress of a few individuals.
- You have a wide repertoire of activities to engage disadvantaged pupils. They have a clear stake and voice in their school. For example, there is strong representation of disadvantaged pupils on the school's parliament, its language and STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) teams and in various sporting teams. You meet the social, emotional and behavioural needs of disadvantaged pupils through a wide and varied curriculum, including extra-curricular activities.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- raise pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2, particularly in reading and mathematics
- improve the quality of writing in key stage 1 and early years by ensuring that pupils develop greater independence as writers.

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

Yours sincerely

Stewart Gale
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

At the start of the day, we agreed the timetable and activities for the inspection. I worked extensively with you and your deputy, including sampling a range of pupils' work and talking with pupils through inspection activities. I scrutinised safeguarding records and we discussed a wide range of related matters, including staff recruitment, training and vetting arrangements. I spoke to pupils, staff and some parents about their views of safeguarding. I evaluated evidence that shows how you work with other agencies to keep children safe. I met with representatives of the local governing body and reviewed school documents, including the school's self-evaluation summary, improvement plans and records of governors' visits.

I took full account of the 122 responses on Parent View, as well as the free-text responses received during the inspection. I also met with some parents at the start of the inspection and spoke with representatives of the trust, including the director for education and chief executive officer. I also met with other team leaders in the school, including those for mathematics and English.