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Mrs Sarah Clarke  
Headteacher  
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TQ13 9QB

Dear Mrs Clarke

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

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2019, 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 April 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. In April 2016, the school joined Link Academy Trust.

Leaders and staff have created a welcoming, friendly and vibrant atmosphere which enables pupils to thrive both in their personal and academic development. You are highly inclusive in your approach and find opportunities to make sure that everyone has a chance to shine. An example of this is through weekly pupil-led 'passion presentations', where pupils are able to demonstrate their keen interests to their peers.

Pupils told me they feel a great sense of responsibility in the school and are given numerous opportunities to contribute to the running of the school. They say that leaders listen to them and act on any concerns or actions they raise. During the inspection, I visited an assembly led by pupils who were voting on improvements to the school and maturely discussing a letter from a member of the public. It is clear that positive relationships exist between the school and the local community.

You have worked closely with staff to develop their approach to teaching writing. In classrooms we visited together, and work seen in pupils' books, it was clear to see how your actions have had an impact on pupils' progress. Writing is a strength of the school. However, you also recognise that you have further work to do in improving the mathematics curriculum and providing greater challenge for the most able readers.

Pupils at Hennock Primary School are polite and very well behaved. All pupils who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they would recommend the school to a friend. Parents and carers with whom I spoke during the inspection were equally positive about the school. One parent's comment to me that encapsulates many was that 'Hennock is an amazing school with such a diverse and creative curriculum.' All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, held similar views.

Recently, the governing body has been through a challenging period of recruitment. However, with the support of more-experienced governors from within the trust and the consistent leadership of the chair, the governing body is now established. More-recently appointed governors recognise that they have more to do in defining their roles to secure the best possible outcomes for pupils. Consequently, the challenge that all governors provide is not yet as rigorous as it should be.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. A consistent focus on safeguarding training has ensured that staff have a good understanding of the risks of child sexual exploitation, female genital mutilation and radicalisation. Leaders use external agencies effectively to support vulnerable pupils. If leaders feel that agencies are not taking the necessary action to keep pupils safe, leaders are quick to escalate their concern until it is resolved.

There is a nurturing and caring ethos that permeates the school, which pupils value. As a result of strong relationships, pupils are confident that they know who to speak to, or to use the 'worry bin' if they have any concerns. All pupils who responded to Ofsted's survey say that they feel safe and that they have an adult to talk to if they are worried. The curriculum is well designed to make sure that there are many opportunities for pupils to learn about keeping themselves safe. For example, during the inspection I observed how pupils were learning to identify a fake website on the internet and what actions to take. Pupils are adamant that bullying is not a problem in the school.

### **Inspection findings**

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed three lines of enquiry. The first considered the quality of the curriculum beyond English and mathematics. This line of enquiry stemmed from the fact that the school's website was not clear enough about the curriculum on offer to all pupils.
- The curriculum is well planned and is broad and balanced for learning at all ages. Leaders have made sure that pupils develop their knowledge and skills systematically as they progress through the school. For example, pupils in key stage 2 learn historical facts sequentially to develop an understanding of how history has had an impact upon geographical features. Current pupils in key stage 2 are learning about volcanoes and pupils were able to articulate clearly how the Ice Age and volcanoes shaped the geographical landscape.
- Pupils' work in subjects other than English and mathematics is of a high

standard. Pupils report that they enjoy the wider curriculum and, when looking at workbooks, it is clear to see how current pupils are making strong progress across a range of subjects. High-quality displays around the school and in classrooms celebrate the high standards pupils are reaching in science, geography, art and history. Furthermore, pupils report favourably on the extra curriculum opportunities that the school provides. A favourite with key stage 2 pupils is the residential to Great Potheridge House.

- Our second line of enquiry examined what actions leaders have taken to ensure that most-able pupils achieve their very best in English by the end of Year 6. This was because, over time, the proportion of pupils attaining the higher standards in reading and greater depth in writing was below, or in line with, that found nationally.
- Leaders have refined their approach to the teaching of reading. Units of work in English are now based around challenging texts and this is having a positive impact in supporting pupils' understanding of writing for different purposes and audiences. As one pupil said, 'Reading the book first helps us write like an author.' Additional and equally challenging personal reading books are available in classrooms and pupils have the opportunity to read widely and often. This helps pupils develop their fluency in reading. Although reading is a strength for most pupils, the most able pupils are not fully deploying their reading skills efficiently to enhance their work across the curriculum. Leaders recognise that further refinement is required for pupils to develop a deeper understanding and application of the more technical skills of reading.
- In writing, work in pupils' books shows how teachers encourage pupils to use ambitious vocabulary to improve their compositions. As a result, pupils' writing often demonstrates high levels of confidence with language, and mature writing skills for their age. Together, we observed learning in the mixed-age Reception and key stage 1 class where we looked at children working successfully with older pupils to identify formal and informal language in a letter. The quality of work in books is above what would be expected for their age.
- The final line of enquiry was to consider the effectiveness of mathematics teaching in key stage 2. This was because, in recent years, pupils' progress in mathematics at the end of Year 6 has been less strong than in reading and writing.
- You told me that alongside the trust and other professionals you are continuing to develop the curriculum for mathematics. Historically, the mathematics curriculum has not gone deep enough for pupils to be fluent across all strands of mathematics. The leader for mathematics recognises that more work is needed to ensure that pupils receive a broad mathematics curriculum.
- In classrooms visited together, we observed how teachers plan lessons which build on pupils' previous learning. However, a range of evidence showed that much of the work being asked of pupils is too limited to calculation and number. This slows pupils' development of knowledge and skills in mathematics. Pupils' workbooks show that they revisit their learning and practise their written calculations regularly. Consequently, they secure a depth of understanding. Teachers use questioning skilfully to develop pupils' reasoning skills in calculation

and this enables pupils to be confident in their mathematical thinking. However, in key stage 2, the progress of the most able pupils is weaker than in other key stages. This is because teaching staff do not use this information to adjust their teaching to stretch and challenge pupils' thinking sufficiently. This hampers the progress pupils make.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they continue to improve the quality and the breadth of the mathematics curriculum and how it is taught, so that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable, particularly the most able
- governors continue to develop their roles, so that they are knowledgeable and able to provide rigorous challenge to hold leaders to account
- they continue to develop reading further, particularly for the most able pupils, so that pupils can make full use of their reading skills and improve their work across the curriculum.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Middlemore  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you; the chief executive officer; senior teacher; and three members of the governing body, including the chair of the local governing body. I considered the 20 responses to Parent View, including the free-text comments. I spoke with pupils formally and informally during the day. I also considered the 10 responses to the staff survey, and 11 responses to the pupil survey. We observed teaching and learning jointly. I looked at a range of pupils' work in their exercise books as well as their work displayed around the school and in their classrooms. I scrutinised a range of school documentation, including the single central record, your school self-evaluation and improvement plan.