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31 March 2017

Mr Ben Cox  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Cox

### **Short inspection of The Dingle Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 21 March 2017, 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 March 2012.

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

The leadership team is focused on raising standards and providing an education enriched by opportunities for children to excel in sport, music and drama. The school band is a typical example of what defines this school – an opportunity for children to broaden their horizons and begin an interest that they can go on to be skilled at. It was a great delight to be able to experience this first hand when watching the band's rehearsals of 'Let me entertain you' and the James Bond theme music. Trumpets, cornets, flutes, clarinets and saxophone were all played confidently, with determination and enjoyment.

Pupils enjoy school and enjoy learning. Parents value the work of the school in keeping their children safe and giving them an enriched curriculum. Staff are proud to be a member of the Dingle team and feel motivated and respected by school leaders.

There has been a successful drive over the last 18 months to improve the teaching of mathematics across the school. The key ingredients for this success are:

- strong subject leadership
- learning from expert teachers in other schools
- buying the right resources to help teachers do their job

- constant checking on how well teaching is helping children to make progress and taking action when needed
- work with secondary school staff so that when pupils start in Year 7, they are well prepared and teaching builds on what they already know.

The impact of this work can be seen in the proportion of Year 6 children who achieved the expected standard in mathematics in 2016, which was well above the national average. The school was in the top 10% of schools nationally for the proportion of children making or exceeding the progress that is expected.

We agreed that the school now needs to focus on improving writing across the subjects and classes. Work is already under way, led confidently by your deputy headteacher. A passion for writing is gaining momentum. I saw evidence of pupils improving their editing skills and some impressive writing in science books. Teachers understand that the most-able pupils should make enough progress to achieve standards that are well above average. Errors in pupils' workbooks suggest that teachers are not always giving attention to detail.

We also agreed that more work was needed to make sure that children in Reception and pupils in key stage 1 acquire the skills of reading quickly through the teaching of phonics, so that more achieve success in the Year 1 phonics check.

At the previous inspection, the inspector reported strengths in early years teaching, good levels of care for children and a varied curriculum. These strengths have been maintained. Reported areas for improvement included sharing the strong teaching practice seen in school and improving the way small-group work is used to improve children's reading skills. The Year 6 test outcomes provide some evidence of pupils' reading skills. In 2016, Year 6 pupils left the school having made progress which puts the school in the top 10% of schools nationally according to this measure.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is effective. Thorough checks are completed on adults before they are allowed to work with children and records are detailed. At every staff meeting, time is given for staff to raise any concerns regarding safeguarding and appropriate action is taken quickly. This is just one example of the very positive culture of safeguarding. Those parents and pupils that responded to Ofsted's online inspection surveys and Parent View were confident that the school is a safe place.

### **Inspection findings**

- The leadership team and the governing body have an accurate view of the school's performance and are right to have the teaching of phonics, writing and the progress of the most-able pupils as school improvement priorities.
- The leadership team have a good understanding of what progress children and pupils are currently making and what lies behind the 2016 test results. You know, for example, that the low proportion of pupils attaining the national expectation

in the Year 1 phonics screening test in 2016 was partly due to the weaker progress that this particular cohort of children made in early years.

- Information about the progress that children and pupils are making as well as work in their books suggests that outcomes at the end of this academic year will improve.
- The progress that pupils make in reading and mathematics is not as strong in key stage 1 as that in key stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress. It is also very pleasing to know that their attendance is very good and that they are encouraged to get involved in extra-curricular activities.
- The rich range of extra opportunities your school gives pupils is exceptional, as is the level of participation. Music, drama and visits to places of interest all add to creating the school's distinctiveness. A tribute to the school's success is its trophy cabinet, which is crammed with trophies testifying to the school's success in a range of sports, including football, hockey, netball and cross country.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the proportion of pupils who pass the phonics screening check in year 1 improves and is above the national average.
- teachers pay particular attention to improving the progress that children and pupils make in writing, particularly the most able, so that they transfer spelling, punctuation and grammar skills and knowledge into their 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 East Cheshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Cook  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, your deputy headteacher and the business manager. I met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body, and spoke with a representative of the local authority. I considered the responses from 64 pupil and 28 staff questionnaires and 111 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, which included 77 added free text comments. I visited six classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher to observe and speak with pupils about their learning. I also scrutinised pupils' books in each class.

I considered a wide range of documentation and information relating to your self-evaluation, school improvement planning, attendance, governance, assessment, monitoring of teaching and safeguarding.