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Mrs Linda Stephens  
Headteacher  
St Meriadoc CofE Infant Academy  
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Dear Mrs Stephens

### **Short inspection of St Meriadoc CofE Infant Academy**

Following my visit to the school on 26 January 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 2010.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. For all who work or learn at your school, it is a very happy place. Pupils learn and play together full of enthusiasm and enjoyment. Staff and pupils all used the words 'togetherness' and 'teamwork' when describing the culture of your school. Your dedicated and spirited staff team shows the collective ambition required to help pupils successfully overcome any barriers they may face. Adults are fully committed to your vision and contribute strongly to the school's welcoming atmosphere. Staff morale is high and pupils achieve well in an environment where laughter fills the classrooms, echoes down the corridors and cascades around the staffroom.

Pupils learn in a caring and safe environment where adults encourage them to be themselves and play a full part in the school community. Your school values lie at the heart of everyone's approach and are acted out daily by the pupils themselves. The youngest children help each other to persevere with their learning and efforts as a 'Percy Penguin' and not a 'Give-up Gerald'. Pupils know such values will help them to become successful learners. Parents agree. All those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend your school, agree their children are making good progress and, most importantly to them, are safe and happy. The 'friendly, vibrant and supportive' ethos of your school are typical of the comments made.

You have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last inspection in 2010. Adults throughout the early years settings ensure that activities support and build on children's learning well. All play an equal part in securing children's early development and fostering an environment where any child is happy to explore new activities by themselves. Older pupils' writing has improved and pupils are writing more, across a wider range of topics and themes. Pupils' interest and engagement in writing is particularly sparked when crafting stories linked to themes such as Dr Who; especially when you became a Dalek! When pupils leave school, they do so having achieved well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics have been above average in recent years.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

All involved in the school community are highly committed to keeping pupils safe. You have developed a culture where all staff are vigilant about the safety of pupils. Staff are perceptive in identifying when pupils could be at risk of harm from the moment they start school. Training for safeguarding and child protection is up to date, regular and welcomed, enabling staff and governors to fully discharge their duties. Staff are therefore prompt and confident in reporting any concerns. Pupils and parents are very confident that issues are followed up.

Your strong emphasis on pupils' personal development promotes their positive behaviour, with respect and courtesy as the norm. Effective links are evident with outside agencies to cater for any vulnerable pupils. Very positive relationships across the school community mean pupils trust staff to listen to their concerns, particularly the staff that supervise them at lunchtime. Pupils know how to use the internet and social media safely and responsibly and understand that the school is a safe and harmonious community. Governors regularly check that the schools' safeguarding processes are working well and that all necessary checks are made to confirm that those who wish to work with children are suitable. Overall, the leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and of a high quality.

### **Inspection findings**

- When we listened to some lower-attaining pupils read, you were quick to identify that pupils use their knowledge of phonics to decode what sounds letters make well. You also noted that pupils are competent in the 'basic mechanics' of reading. Pupils' enjoyment of reading and their success when segmenting more complicated sounds, then blending them to read, was clearly evident. However, the teaching of reading does not routinely develop pupils' deeper comprehension, fluency and understanding sufficiently. A few pupils are therefore not catching up to reach the standards expected for their age.
- We also explored how well the most able writers, especially girls, were being challenged. Through discussions with pupils and looking at a range of work and displays, it is clear that pupils of all ages enjoy writing about the interesting and varied topics taught. However, some aspects of pupils' spelling, for both boys and girls, are holding them back from attaining as well as they do in reading and

mathematics – most notably, the ability to spell accurately when attempting more adventurous vocabulary in their own writing.

- We identified that in 2014 and 2015 by the end of Reception, disadvantaged pupils had not attained as well as their non-disadvantaged peers. During our visits to lessons, and when observing adults working with children in Nursery and Reception, it is apparent you have fully addressed this attainment gap. Careful consideration of children's needs, from the moment they enter school, are used to plan for their personal and early academic development. Adults work tirelessly with a wide range of external agencies to ensure that children's needs are fully met. Activities stimulate children's interest and spark their imagination. As a result of your collective efforts, disadvantaged children in 2016 reached standards at the end of Reception above those of other children nationally.
- You have also had a marked success on improving pupils' attendance at school which is now well above the national average. Your parent liaison officer plays a pivotal role in this element of your work. The detailed knowledge of local families held, combined with a determined approach not to let anyone 'off the hook' has had a profoundly positive impact. Much credit should be given for 'getting beyond the school gate' out, into the local community and insisting that children attend school wherever possible.
- During our time together, discussions took place regarding your systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work with leaders. Research is being used well, alongside monitoring, to inform practice, for example in the teaching of grammar. Formal records of lessons observed are detailed and used as part of the performance management process for school staff. However, other aspects, such as work scrutiny activities or pupil discussions, are conducted 'informally'. Monitoring lacks the precision and detail needed to provide pertinent information necessary for teachers to refine and develop their practice or target specific groups of pupils even further.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should secure improvements in:

- lower-attaining pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding of comprehension and fluency when reading
- the quality of spelling skills for the most able pupils so that more can reach the standards they are capable of
- the precision and impact of leaders' monitoring and evaluation of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the Rainbow Academy Trust executive board, the director of education for the Diocese of Truro, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cornwall. This letter will be

published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

**Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, leaders for English and mathematics, special educational needs and the early years. Three members of the governing body, including the chair, met the inspector to discuss the actions taken since the last inspection. The school's current plans for development were evaluated, alongside recent records of the quality of teaching. Visits to most classrooms were conducted jointly with you to evaluate the impact of teaching on pupils' learning, review the quality of pupils' writing over time and talk to pupils informally about their experiences of school. A range of documentary evidence was evaluated including that relating to safeguarding and governance. The inspector met with a group of pupils from Year 2 and heard some lower-attaining pupils read.