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Mrs Tessa Coulthard  
Head of School  
Modbury Primary School  
Modbury  
Devon  
PL21 0RB

Dear Mrs Coulthard

### **Short inspection of Modbury Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 14 November 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 January 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. As head of school your close working with the executive headteacher and governors from the South Hams Federation ensures the effective sharing of resources, ideas and skills across your schools. Subject leaders and teachers are actively involved in partnership working. Your collaborative approach energises staff and has brought about improvements to teaching and learning. Together with other leaders, you provide drive, vision and clear leadership which are highly valued by staff and parents. You are highly ambitious for the school and the pupils in your care. Having successfully improved the fabric and appearance of many aspects of the school buildings and estate, you are keen to continue with these ongoing developments. Pupils and parents are justly proud of the school and recognise the changes made. One comment, typical of many from parents, stated 'I love the caring attitude of this school and over the past couple of years everything seems to be getting better and better.'

Modbury is a village school which offers a nurturing and inclusive family atmosphere. Pupils are cheerful and display very positive attitudes towards learning, their school and each other. They were excited and keen to tell me all about their school experiences during my 'guided tour'. In classes, pupils willingly engage in their tasks, taking pride in the presentation of their work. From the moment they start school, the habits of good learning are established through a clear focus on routines, expectations and the importance of being part of a wider caring community. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children are happy, safe and well looked after.

Your self-evaluation, monitoring and school improvement planning are robust, have clear targets and are appropriately focused. You have identified the right areas for further improvement and are taking the right actions to achieve them. You have prioritised raising the quality of the curriculum and assessment in foundation subjects. You are also aware there is more to be done to fully stretch the most able pupils and to ensure that pupils' understanding of purpose, structure and organisation when writing in different genres continues to improve. Subject leaders are highly motivated and keen to tackle these areas. Governors, who have a professional approach and are a dedicated team, contribute well to this process of improvement. They hold a detailed understanding of the school's performance and are well informed through visits to the school and via leaders' detailed reports.

The school's previous inspection report recognised the many strengths of your school, including: the consistently high quality of teaching, the high standards in reading, the good behaviour and conduct of pupils and the strong ethos of the school that promoted pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding well. These continue to be strengths. The report also noted the need to challenge pupils to think more deeply and to make better use of teaching assistants when supporting learning throughout lessons. Together with other leaders, you have responded well to these areas for improvement. More pupils are being routinely challenged in their work and, as a result, are making better progress. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning and the wider life of the school.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that there is a culture of vigilance across the school. Records are well maintained, detailed and of high quality. The clear, well understood procedures ensure that safeguarding requirements are effectively managed. All staff have up-to-date training to an appropriate level so they know what to do should they have any concerns about a pupil. Governors are knowledgeable about safeguarding and ensure that through their monitoring, this aspect of the school's work is given high priority.

All parents, and all staff who responded to the surveys, expressed their belief that pupils are safe, happy and well looked after. Case studies indicate how well you work with outside agencies to support families as well as pupils. School records for individual pupils show that your systems to raise concerns are secure. Pupils hold a detailed understanding of how to keep themselves safe in a variety of situations because safety features prominently in the curriculum.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the visit, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision, including:
  - how well assessment information in foundation subjects is being used to stretch and challenge pupils

- how well the most able pupils are being pushed in their learning
  - how effectively the teaching of writing is helping pupils to progress well
  - how the pupil premium funding is being used to support improving the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders' outward-looking approach, combined with a strong focus on using educational research, ensures that teachers benefit from regular collaboration and partnership working across the federation. Subject leaders work well with teachers from federation schools to support their professional development and improve practice. The curriculum is enriched by a varied assortment of sporting activities, clubs, trips and visits, which are valued by pupils and parents. However, pupils' books show that in subjects such as religious education, design and technology and science, assessment information is not used as well as in English and mathematics to plan activities that meet the learning needs of pupils. Activities interest and engage pupils, but lack a sharp focus on pupils' subject-specific progress. Consequently, their understanding, knowledge and skills in subjects other than English and mathematics is not as strong as it might be.
- The curriculum is successful in promoting pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding. Pupils welcome the many opportunities they receive to take on leadership roles across the school. Activities, such as voting for what film to watch on 'film night', develop pupils' understanding of democracy well. Pupils particularly welcome the recent addition of the new school kitchen garden to supplement the other facilities now on offer including the swimming pool and forest school.
- The curriculum in art is a particular strength of the school. The range and breadth of pupils' work on display across the school is of high quality and reflects the rich range of activities on offer to pupils. Assessment, tracking, specialist teaching and the leadership of art are further ahead of other foundation subjects at this time and provide a good model for other subject leaders to follow.
- Training and a new approach to developing the mathematics curriculum are bearing fruit overall. On our learning walk, we particularly noted pupils' readiness to respond eagerly to routine calculation questions. However, at times, they are not required to think more deeply and explain their understanding. Activities planned are starting to focus more carefully on the development of pupils' reasoning skills so that they become more confident when tackling questions that challenge assumptions. From looking at work in pupils' books, this type of questioning is starting to be a more consistent feature of everyday mathematics work. You have effective plans in place to continue with these developments.
- Expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement are typically high. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not sufficiently challenged to extend their views and deepen their thinking, especially those who are in the younger age groups. At times, teaching in English and mathematics does not ensure that pupils' knowledge, skill or understanding develops deeply for these pupils. In foundation subjects, some assessment tasks do not link carefully enough to what has been taught. Consequently, the information obtained is not used precisely enough to plan the next activity which should ensure that the most able pupils

make even more rapid progress.

- The teaching of writing follows a clear framework that makes it clear to staff how pupils' skills are to develop from year to year. For example, in English, teachers ensure that pupils use their knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation during daily writing activities. During feedback, they focus on this aspect of writing closely so that pupils acquire the technical aspects of composition correctly. When this is coupled with exciting opportunities that also focus on developing pupils' skills in specific genres, pupils make swifter progress in their writing. This was seen, for example, in pupils' work to create for and against cash crops arguments when studying the production of chocolate in Year 3. At times, pupils' understanding of the structure, organisation and purpose of different genres such as reports or letters is lacking, meaning their progress slows.
- Leaders ensure that the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively to support pupils' academic learning and their personal development. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to support any pupils who are falling behind. Effective assessment and tracking systems for English and mathematics, together with timely intervention and support, ensure that these pupils make strong progress in line with their peers.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the curriculum and assessment procedures in foundation subjects continue to improve
- the most able pupils are routinely challenged in their thinking to deepen their knowledge, skills and understanding across all subjects
- the teaching of writing ensures that pupils' understanding of the structure, purpose and organisation of different genres improves.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Devon. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the executive headteacher from South Hams Federation and four members of the governing body, including the chair. Together with you and the executive headteacher, we visited every classroom to look at teaching and learning. I considered a range of pupils' work in their books across a range of subjects. I met with the school parliament, who provided me with a 'guided tour' of the school,

during which time I gathered their views about the school. I took into account 33 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I also considered the views represented in nine responses to a staff survey and met with the subject leaders of English, mathematics and science. I evaluated a range of documents, including the school improvement plan, leaders' self-evaluation documents, safeguarding information, procedures and checks.