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12 November 2010

Mrs L Swann
Headteacher
Buckingham Park Primary School
Buckingham Road
Shoreham-on-Sea
West Sussex
BN43 5UD

Dear Mrs Swann

Ofsted monitoring of Grade 3 schools: monitoring inspection of Buckingham Park Primary School

Thank you for the help which you and your staff gave when I inspected your school on 3 November 2010, for the time you gave to our phone discussions and for the information which you provided before and during the inspection. Please pass on my thanks to the children and the staff who were so welcoming.

Since the school was last inspected issues related to the formation of the school by amalgamating a first and middle school and removing Year 7 continue to impact on staffing and further development. In the last two years pupil numbers have reduced by almost one third. This decline is continuing as the reduction in numbers works through the school, reaching a minimum in the next academic year. After this time the school should start to grow as is shown by the Reception classes that are now oversubscribed. These fluctuations in the size of the school have created instability in the staffing complement and further changes both in staffing and class organisation will be necessary. This has had a particular impact in Key Stage 2 where the number of teachers reduced by half. The senior leadership team has been strengthened with greater devolving of responsibilities aimed at driving through improvement and supporting the staff team in coping with current and future challenges.

As a result of the inspection on 9 July 2009, the school was asked to address the most important areas for improvement which are set out in the annex to this letter.

Having considered all the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time the school has made good progress in making improvements and good progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement.



My visits to a sample of Key Stage 2 lessons indicated that pupils' achievement overall has improved and is now good. This is supported and confirmed by the school's thorough analysis of information on pupils' performance. Attainment is rising steadily and there was a significant improvement in 2010 compared to the outcomes in 2009. Standards in Key Stage 2 are now satisfactory and much closer to national averages in Key Stage 2 English and mathematics. As a result of improvements in the quality of teaching, pupils' learning is now good and they make good progress. More-able pupils in particular made good progress and the numbers of pupils reaching higher levels at the end of Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2010.

Pupils are keen to do well and are enthusiastic about their learning, especially where the tasks are interesting and engaging. Good teaching is well planned to include a range of strategies that make lessons lively and enjoyable but also clearly focused on intended learning outcomes. There is a growing understanding among the staff of how their children learn and teachers are flexible in looking for the best strategies to make this happen. This is supported by developments to the curriculum that are increasingly successful in building on previous learning and using skills from other areas, for example developing literacy skills through science. Teachers have higher expectations of their pupils, both in terms of behaviour and performance. Pupils know this and respond by trying to do their best in lessons. Behaviour both in lessons and around the school is good and pupils work and play well together. Improvements in teaching are well supported by the marking, assessment and target-setting systems now in place. Pupils are clear about the quality of their work and know what to do to improve. They are given meaningful numerical and descriptive targets that show them where they are and how to get to the next level. Teachers are making much better use of the outcomes of assessments to plan future lessons as well as identifying pupils who need extra help. This is a particular benefit to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who receive provision that is supportive and appropriate to their needs, and so they make good progress.

The senior leadership team is bringing in good systems to collate information on pupil performance to give an overview that will track outcomes for individuals, classes and the whole school. Subject and learning leaders are much more aware of the need to use this information effectively to improve the quality of provision in their areas. The senior leadership team has given a strong lead by developing the skills of these middle leaders so that responsibilities and accountabilities are much clearer. Middle leaders now feel more involved in contributing to the future development and improvement of the school. Local authority advisers have provided good support for school improvement which has been carefully tailored to the school's needs. The local authority has also supported the school in dealing with difficult staffing decisions and issues as the size of the school fluctuates. I hope that you have found the inspection helpful in promoting improvement in your school. This letter will be posted on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Christine Jones



Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex

The areas for improvement identified during the inspection which took place in July 2009:

- Raise achievement and standards in Years 3 to 6 so that pupils achieve their full potential.
- Establish consistently high-quality teaching in Years 3 to 6 by setting high expectations and planning stimulating activities.
- Ensure that marking, feedback and the use of pupils' targets is consistent so that pupils know and understand what they need to do to improve.
- Develop the role of subject and learning leaders in order to improve the quality of provision.

