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6 January 2016

Mrs Philippa Mitchell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Mitchell

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

Following my visit to the school on 10 December 2015, 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 May 2011.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education provided by the school since the last inspection. You, senior leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of the school. You are ambitious for pupils and know what needs to be done to improve the school further.

Governors hold you to account well. They check how much progress pupils are making and ask relevant questions to be sure that pupils are achieving as well as they can. Governors collect their own evidence through regular, well-planned visits to the school.

Leaders check teaching regularly and where it is not as good as it should be they take appropriate action to improve it. Leaders meet with teachers to review pupils' progress and achievement carefully. Using this information, they identify any pupils who require additional support. This means that all pupils make at least expected progress and many make more than this.

The previous inspection found that pupils did not always have sufficient time to work because teachers spoke for too long. They also pointed out that the level of challenge provided for most-able pupils was variable, particularly in mathematics. You have tackled these areas effectively. In the lessons I observed, pupils had plenty of time to work and teachers planned the lessons well to support learning. Work in pupils' books reflected this. Most-able pupils are challenged consistently

and are making very good progress. This is reflected in the large number of pupils achieving the higher levels in the Year 6 national tests in 2015.

Published information shows that in 2015 early years, Year 1 and Year 6 pupils achieved much better than others nationally. In Year 2, reading results were above average but writing and mathematics outcomes were broadly in line with national figures. This was because, where individuals have gaps in their learning, it is not always picked up and dealt with quickly enough. For example, if a pupil does not fully understand when to use capital letters, the teacher identifies it as a target, but does not necessarily give enough time to developing their understanding. The school's current focus on improving feedback to pupils, linked to the new assessment procedures, is tackling this.

Leaders, teachers and governors carefully check the progress of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium (government funding for disadvantaged pupils). Appropriate support is put in place wherever it is needed and these pupils make at least expected progress. However, in some year groups, the gap has not yet closed between these pupils and their peers.

Pupils speak very enthusiastically about the school. They say their teachers are firm but fair and that they enjoy the wide range of topics they study. The majority of parents are similarly positive about the school and rightly recognise the good-quality education. Parents are encouraged to share their views through regular questionnaires and through the parent group, which meets each term.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are appropriately detailed. Policies are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are up to date. Staff receive regular training which ensures that they are confident about their responsibilities in keeping pupils safe. Governors and leaders meet each term to review safeguarding arrangements and any incidents. They carry out an audit of safeguarding procedures and documentation annually, from which they identify any ways in which arrangements can be improved even further.

The majority of parents are rightly confident in the school's work to care for pupils and ensure that they are safe. Pupils say that they are very well cared for and feel safe. They learn about safety through their personal, social, health and economic education lessons, including stranger danger and internet safety. The pupils I spoke to said they are comfortable to talk to their teacher if they have concerns; one said with conviction that he would ask the headteacher to help 'because she would do it quickly'.

### **Inspection findings**

- You provide strong leadership for the school community and a clear vision which is shared by governors and other leaders. Your high expectations and determination ensure that all staff are effective and pupils do well.

- Leaders and governors monitor their areas of responsibility well and have a good understanding of their roles. They work effectively together to identify appropriate actions to develop the school further. However, some of the documentation to support their work does not reflect how good they are, because it is not as evaluative and sharply focused on impact as it could be.
- While a senior leader has been on maternity leave, other leaders have willingly taken on additional responsibilities and carried them out well. This has ensured that the school has continued to improve. A good example of this is the new assessment procedures, which were introduced by leaders in September. Teachers are using the new system to assess and record what pupils have learned. Although it is too soon for it to be embedded, teachers speak with confidence about how it will help them to identify the next steps in learning.
- Teachers plan a good range of activities to engage pupils and extend their thinking. An example of this was seen in Year 2, when pupils were working cooperatively in groups to consider a picture of a snowy woodland. They discussed what they might hear, see, smell and feel. The ideas they shared were imaginative, well explained and incorporated techniques such as similes, which they accurately identified.
- The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils' needs. Much of the work in topic books reflects the school's work to extend pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Examples include learning about Guy Fawkes, Remembrance Sunday, Islam and Christianity. During the inspection, Year 6 pupils were writing a letter to highlight the plight of monkeys in the rainforest, which they took very seriously.
- Behaviour is very good. During the inspection, some unusual activities were taking place, such as a Year 4 ukulele concert for parents and an infant nativity rehearsal. Despite this, pupils were calm, sensible and well mannered throughout the day, including in the lunch hall and the playground. During lessons, pupils showed that they were interested, keen to work hard and do well. Behaviour logs demonstrate that there are few incidents of poor behaviour. Pupils are clear about what happens if someone does not behave well, but say this is unusual.
- Attendance is just above average. The majority of pupils attend school every day, and this is recognised by the school. The few pupils who are persistently absent are tracked carefully and appropriate action is taken. Governors are kept fully informed.
- All pupils learn French. There are informal activities, such as songs and rhymes for pupils in early years and Key Stage 1. Older pupils have formal lessons, through which they develop their vocabulary and have opportunities to practise speaking. The feedback from secondary schools suggests that pupils do well in French when they transfer.
- You and governors set appropriately challenging targets for staff, linked to the progress of their pupils. Governors rightly consider whether the targets are met, and make decisions about pay accordingly.
- The local authority adviser reviews the school annually and meets with you to discuss progress. She has also worked with teachers to review assessment procedures and help them use the new system. Support would be even more useful if the adviser challenged the school with greater rigour.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- raise achievement further at Key Stage 1, so that pupils do as well in writing and mathematics as they do in reading
- embed new assessment systems so that teachers can be confident about how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next
- continue work to close the gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers, so that they achieve at the same high levels.

I am copying this letter to the Chair of the Governing Body and the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Louise Adams  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other leaders, teachers, four governors, including the Chair of Governing Body, and a representative from Hampshire local authority. With you, I visited each class to observe teaching and look at work in pupils' books. I observed pupils' behaviour in a range of situations, including lessons, lunchtime and in the playground. I spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the school day and immediately after the Year 4 ukulele concert. I considered the responses of 57 parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and two letters. I analysed a range of documentation, including the local authority's annual review, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plan, information about pupils' progress and safeguarding checks, and policies and procedures.