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Dear Mrs Ball

Short inspection of Badshot Lea Village Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 22 March 2016, 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 2011.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. You have made a successful start as headteacher, driving forward improvements and making necessary changes. Parents, governors and the local authority value your energetic and enthusiastic leadership. Parents welcome your open approach that demonstrates that pupils are at the heart of your work. You have set high expectations. Staff share your aims. They are unreservedly positive about their roles, your leadership and the work of the school.

Badshot Lea is truly a village school. The community is valued by the school and the community values the school. For example, the recent 120-year anniversary of the school brought the community together with celebrations and social events such as the barn dance. The curriculum provides further exciting events for pupils to enjoy such as pirate day, although one pupil was a little disappointed, stating, 'but we didn't find any treasure!'. There are numerous extra-curricular activities available, such as art, gardening, yoga, multi-skills and hockey. Pupils' achievements are rightly recognised in these activities too. Pupils revel in additional responsibilities that immerse them in school life. The 'little green team' is proud to pick up litter and make sure that the school retains its Eco-Schools status. The school council is regularly re-elected so that each pupil can take a turn in improving the school. Democracy is very much in place. Parents are unanimously positive about the school. All would recommend it to another parent.

Pupils continue to achieve well. At the end of key stage 1 last year, pupils' attainment in all subjects was above the national average. A high proportion of pupils exceeded the expectations for their age in reading. Last year, the gap between disadvantaged pupils in Year 2, their classmates and others nationally reduced. Children's achievements in the early years improved in 2015. The proportion reaching a good level of development increased and was above the national average. The large majority of children were well prepared for Year 1. Pupils currently at the school are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys' achievements are increasingly similar to those of girls. Nevertheless, you know that there are some shortcomings. For the last two years, not enough pupils met the expected standard in the phonics check. Last year, the most-able pupils did not achieve well enough in writing at the end of Year 2. You have swiftly taken action to address both of these.

At the previous inspection, inspectors identified three areas for improvement. Leaders and governors have effectively addressed these so that:

- pupils have more opportunities to develop their skills in information and communication technology in different subjects. Each class makes use of laptops and tablets to enable pupils to improve these skills across the curriculum
- teachers have consistently high expectations of pupils' presentation of work in their mathematics lessons. Across the school, pupils present their work neatly in their exercise books
- middle leaders are actively involved in monitoring teaching and learning. They have a clear understanding of where improvements are needed.

Safeguarding is effective.

You and the governors consider the care of pupils to be paramount. Therefore, you carry out a regular audit to ensure that safeguarding systems, policies and procedures follow best practice. Staff training is frequently updated and this, along with an effective induction, ensure that everyone knows what to do if they are worried about a pupil. You work closely with other professionals to promote pupils' welfare. This includes ensuring that pupils attend school regularly and arrive on time. Indeed, this year, levels of absence have reduced significantly and attendance is now above the national average, reflecting your high expectations. Parents are very confident that their children are safe at school. Pupils feel safe and talk about the different ways that they have learned to keep safe through fire drills and lessons about hazards in the home. Pupils know that bullying is when, 'you are not nice to someone over and over again'. They think that this is very unusual and are confident that adults will help them if they have a problem.

Inspection findings

- After you joined the school in April 2015, you worked closely with the local authority to judge accurately the school's effectiveness. You have used this information well to devise a school development plan that addresses weaknesses. For example, you recognised the need to increase consistency in teaching and learning. You have put effective systems in place to ensure that teachers are held to account for pupils' progress. Consequently, the quality of teaching has improved.
- You have worked closely with colleagues in two other schools to develop a new assessment system that ensures that when pupils leave Badshot Lea, the receiving school has accurate and meaningful progress information. You also use this information well to track pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics as they move through the school. The system enables you to keep a close eye on the progress that different groups of pupils are making. This has helped you to ensure that the gap between boys' and girls' achievements is narrowing.
- Together and individually, leaders carefully check the quality of teaching and learning. As a result, teachers receive helpful feedback that enables them to improve. You have provided middle leaders with increased responsibility and greater involvement in school improvement work. They have benefited from a range of training and support offered by the local authority. This has ensured that middle leaders make the right changes and are starting to track pupils' progress. For example, the mathematics leader has made changes to the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to solve problems. Although middle leaders can describe the actions that they have taken, they are not yet able to explain the impact of their work on pupils' outcomes.
- You have made effective changes to phonics teaching. Staff have received training to improve their subject knowledge and raise their expectations of pupils. Leaders regularly check the progress that pupils are making. Teachers use this information to group pupils carefully so that lessons provide effective challenge to all. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs or disability are no exception. They show resilience and make links in their learning to achieve well. For example, in one phonics lesson, the teacher challenged the class to recall the tricky sound 'au'. One pupil remembered the spooky image that the teacher had shown them in the past and quickly piped up, 'I know, as in haunted!' As a result of these changes, pupils' achievement in phonics has risen. The very large majority of children in the Reception class and an increasing proportion of pupils in key stage 1 are meeting the standards expected for their age.

- Pupils have more opportunities to develop their writing skills. Teachers give pupils plenty of writing tasks in a range of subjects that require them to write at length. Writing lessons are also more challenging. Teachers use assessment information well to identify the most-able pupils and provide them with tasks that better match their learning needs. For example, in Year 2, the most-able pupils were using complex sentences and writing for effect to engage readers in their sea-creature fact files. Consequently, the proportion of pupils exceeding the standards expected for their age in writing has risen. The most-able pupils are achieving almost as well in writing as they are in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have rightly identified the need to make improvements to provision for pupils with complex special educational needs. The school's special needs resource centre has started to adapt to the changing needs of the pupils it serves. For example, teachers have set pupils individual targets that reflect their higher expectations for pupils' learning and personal development. Some pupils are now accessing mainstream lessons such as phonics so that work is appropriately challenging. However, this work is still in progress and some pupils are not always receiving teaching that is closely matched to their needs. This hinders their progress.
- Governors are effective. They have strengthened their own systems to better hold leaders to account. Increasingly, governors are checking pupils' progress. Governors are reflective and are starting to restructure their committees to ensure even greater oversight of the school's work. They are actively involved in the school's development planning and they monitor the progress of actions. Nevertheless, governors are not measuring the impact of improvement work on pupils' achievement well enough.
- The local authority has provided significant support for the school. As a result of close oversight, consultants have provided the right advice and expertise to enable noticeable improvements to key systems, leadership, teaching and pupils' learning.
- Pupils behave extremely well around the school. They agree that their behaviour is impressive, noting that it is unusual for anyone to be 'on the cloud' because they have not followed the rules. Pupils meet the high expectations of adults and display good manners. This extends towards each other. In the Reception class, one child was heard politely offering his whiteboard to a classmate, who responded with good grace, 'no thank you'.
- You are committed to securing equal opportunities. Through the Weyside Confederation, you have joined the 'index for inclusion' project. This is helping you to make the school even more welcoming and accessible to everyone.
- Pupils' personal development is well supported. Adults take the time to know each pupil and promote individuality. Pupils are confident in themselves because their personalities are celebrated. Parents recognise that the school has supported their children with more than learning key skills. Many cited increased confidence as one of the positive effects of the school on their child's development.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they can demonstrate more effectively the impact of their actions on pupils' outcomes
- the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in phonics at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 meet or exceed that of others nationally
- work continues to enable the most-able pupils to achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics
- pupils with complex special educational needs or disability receive teaching that is accurately matched to their abilities.

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

Yours sincerely

Caroline Dulon
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, the English and mathematics leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. Together, we visited eight lessons or parts of lessons. I looked at work in pupils' English and mathematics books. I considered 51 responses to Parent View, including 33 comments. I also took into account one letter from a parent, and 29 responses to the staff questionnaire were considered. I spoke to pupils on the playground and observed their behaviour around the school. A range of documents were evaluated, including the school's development plan and safeguarding records.