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Mrs Carley Holliman  
Executive Headteacher  
Bushey and Oxhey Infant School  
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Dear Mrs Holliman

### **Short inspection of Bushey and Oxhey Infant School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 November 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 December 2011.

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

There have been significant changes in leadership at the school since the previous inspection. The school became part of a federation, with Bushey Manor Junior School, in June 2015 and you were appointed as the executive headteacher of both schools in January 2016. A single governing body is now in place, with a new chair of governors. The head of school for Bushey and Oxhey Infant School was appointed two years ago, and there have been many other staff changes this year. You have worked closely with senior leaders and governors to ensure that a good standard of education has been maintained during this turbulent period.

You have the confidence of staff and governors. All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they are proud to work at the school. Governors also recognise the commitment that you and the head of school have made during the federation process and the manner in which you have ensured that standards have remained high throughout. Parents also value the school highly. Almost every parent who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, would recommend the school to other parents. Those I spoke to informally, at the start of the day, were extremely positive in their praise for school leaders and the staff who work with their children.

At the previous inspection, school leaders were asked to improve pupils' attainment in subjects across the curriculum and to review pupils' progress more regularly. They were also asked to sharpen improvement planning, and governors were asked to play a more active role in the life of the school. Each of these issues has been

addressed, although you recognise that further work is needed to improve teaching and learning in some subject areas. You have introduced more rigorous systems to check on the quality of teaching and learning and the impact that it has on pupils' achievement. You meet regularly with teachers to review and record pupils' progress and attainment. Improvements have also been made to governance. The recently reconstituted governing body possesses a good range of appropriate experience, and governors visit the school regularly to see for themselves how the school's policies and procedures are impacting on pupils' development. Governors share your ambition for the school to improve further, and your plans for improvement are based on an accurate assessment of the school's performance.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Safeguarding is rightly given a high priority at Bushey and Oxhey Infant School. Along with other school leaders, including governors, you ensure that safeguarding policies and procedures are rigorous, and that they reflect current statutory requirements. You ensure that all members of staff have relevant training and that anybody appointed to work at the school undergoes the necessary checks before taking up their post. The single central record of the checks that are made is well maintained.

The school site is extremely well managed and cared for. Risk assessments are carried out wherever necessary, which demonstrates the school's vigilance for the safety of all its pupils. Every parent who responded to Parent View said that their child feels safe while at school. Pupils spoken to also said that they feel safe in school and that they know who to go to if they have a concern. They are confident that they will be listened to. As one pupil said, in a discussion about life at the school: 'It's like a big family at this school. Everybody is friendly here!'

### **Inspection findings**

- Pupils are proud of their school. They behave well, wear their uniform with pride and help to ensure that the school is kept tidy and free from litter. They enjoy learning, both in class and in the various clubs that are held after school, such as science, computing and French.
- Good lines of communication between parents and staff are established prior to children starting at the school. Home visits, and the opportunity for parents to visit the school with their children, help to ensure that there is a smooth transition from home into the Reception class. As a result, children settle quickly into school life. Staff make regular assessments of children's development and carefully track their progress. They ensure that children make good progress and, by the end of the Reception Year, the percentage of children achieving a good level of development is above the national average.
- Reading is a strength of the school. Effective teaching ensures that younger children quickly develop a good understanding of phonics. During this inspection, I heard a number of younger pupils using their knowledge of phonics to successfully sound out words that they found difficult to read. The number of pupils passing the phonics check, at the end of Year 1, has been above the

national average for the past three years. Pupils are encouraged to develop a love of reading. A wide selection of books are available in classrooms and parents are often encouraged to visit classrooms to read with their children. By the time that they leave Year 2, almost all pupils have developed the skills that they need to become successful readers, and the percentage of pupils working at greater depth in 2016 was well above the national average.

- Pupils make good progress in writing. Reception class children are regularly encouraged to write, and their good knowledge of phonics helps many children to quickly become independent writers. Some excellent pieces of writing were seen in the key stage 1 books that were scrutinised during this inspection. The high standard of writing was reflected in the 2016 key stage 1 results, which were well above the national average.
- Pupils generally attain well in mathematics by the end of key stage 1. However, the work seen in pupils' books showed that, too often, the most able pupils do not get enough challenge in the work that is set for them. For example, in a Year 1 class, all pupils, including the most able, were working repeatedly on simple problems involving addition and subtraction of numbers up to 20, work which they had covered during their Reception Year.
- Pupils do not achieve sufficiently well in science, geography and history. Teachers' expectations about pupils' learning in these subjects are often too low. Pupils are often given simple worksheets rather than being provided with activities which challenge them to think more deeply and use the skills and knowledge that they have developed in reading, writing and mathematics to demonstrate what they have learned. As a result, pupils do not develop a wide enough understanding of the wider world in which they live.
- The relatively small number of disadvantaged pupils, for whom the school receives additional government funding, do not attain as well as they should. School leaders track the progress of this group of pupils carefully and have been successful in improving their attendance. However, they have not ensured that effective additional support has been provided to help these pupils to make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, the gap in attainment between these pupils, and other pupils nationally, is not diminishing quickly enough.
- The school provides many different kinds of learning experiences for pupils. Regular educational visits are organised, for example pupils visited the theatre to see 'Matilda' during the summer term. Visiting speakers often support learning. During a recent 'enterprise week' a genetic scientist came in to speak to pupils about her work. On the day of this inspection, two parents led an assembly on Diwali, helping pupils to develop a good understanding of the way in which Hindus celebrate this festival.
- Governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They provide a good level of support and challenge to senior leaders. They visit regularly to see for themselves how the school's policies and procedures are put into practice, for example one governor undertakes a regular review of the school's safeguarding procedures. Governors have also met with the school council and led an assembly to explain to the pupils how a governing body works. Effective communication between governors and school leaders ensures that there is a culture of openness and accurate self-evaluation at the school.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and governors should:

- improve the support that is provided for disadvantaged pupils so that they make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics
- improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in science, geography and history
- ensure that greater levels of challenge are provided for the most able pupils in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Paul Tomkow  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I focused on the following key lines of enquiry during this inspection:

- How effective is the school's approach to safeguarding children?
- Is the wider curriculum taught effectively?
- What has the school done to improve the attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils?
- Are school leaders tracking pupil progress effectively?
- Is governance effective?

During the inspection, I met with you, the head of school and an assistant headteacher. I met with the chair and three other governors. I visited classrooms, accompanied by you and the head of school, to observe teaching and learning and speak to pupils about their work. I also listened to pupils read. I attended an assembly and observed pupils' behaviour in and around the school. I talked to parents at the beginning of the day and considered the 82 responses to Parent View and the free-text responses submitted by parents. I also scrutinised the responses from staff and pupils to Ofsted's online questionnaires. I looked at a wide range of documentation, including your improvement planning and information about the progress and achievement of pupils. The safeguarding policy, the single central record of staff checks and other records and procedures to keep pupils safe were also scrutinised.