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28 March 2017

Mrs Sian Smith
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Smith

Short inspection of Bursledon Church of England Infant School

Following my visit to the school on 14 March 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 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

Since joining Bursledon, your passion, drive and strong leadership have enabled the school to go from strength to strength. You are supported well by a skilled and dedicated team of senior leaders who work together effectively to deliver your ambitious vision for the school. You have set clear expectations for all staff members and as a result have earned their support and respect. Governors are equally committed and share your high aspirations for all pupils. They support and challenge leaders appropriately, in equal measure. Your commitment to staff development is a particular strength. High-quality coaching and regular training opportunities enable teachers to build well upon their skills and knowledge. You ensure that everyone is a learner at Bursledon.

Staff pay the highest regard to pupils' emotional well-being. In turn, pupils state that teachers, 'look after us really well' and make them 'feel happy'. Pupils enjoy playing and learning alongside each other because staff instil positive relationships and provide a caring environment. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school, with one parent stating: 'Every effort is taken to ensure my child's academic achievement and emotional well-being are taken care of. It maintains a warm, friendly and welcoming community atmosphere.' As a result, the school's values of 'love, respect and aspire' radiate throughout the school.

You have maintained the strengths identified at the last inspection and taken incisive action to address those areas identified for improvement. You have made broad changes to teaching and learning and successfully raised pupils' progress and attainment. That said, you have rightly identified that teaching assistants could have an even greater impact on pupils' learning and are now developing their skills and knowledge to achieve this. You have also ensured that subject leaders, who now demonstrate considerable skills in their areas of responsibility, have appropriate knowledge and understanding to lead to a high standard.

Last year, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 exceeded the national averages for these subjects. The number of pupils working at greater depth in reading and mathematics was also high. In Year 1, pupils typically achieve well in phonics and by the end of Year 2 most pupils achieve the expected standard. Recent progress information indicates that current pupils are achieving equally well, including the most able, those who are disadvantaged, and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, in 2016 children's progress from their starting points in the Reception Year was not as rapid. Leaders are rightly addressing the effectiveness of teaching and learning in the early years to ensure that children get off to the best possible start when they join Bursledon.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. You have ensured that records are detailed and accurate, and of a high quality. Staff are trained well in all areas of child protection. For example, recently, staff undertook additional training on keeping pupils safe from radicalisation.

Leaders, including governors, have a robust knowledge of safe recruitment practices. For example, when shortlisting candidates references are always taken up before interviews take place. Similarly, you check candidates' suitability to work with children by carrying out thorough background checks prior to appointment.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. One pupil shared his e-safety knowledge by explaining, 'You should never go on the internet unless you are with a grown-up.'

Inspection findings

- In 2016, the proportion of girls making expected progress at the end of key stage 1, in a range of subjects including reading, writing and mathematics, was not as high as that of boys. You have researched carefully why this was and have made a number of changes to ensure that girls now achieve as well as boys. For example, you seek girls' views about the curriculum and choose topics that they find interesting and stimulating. You have reviewed the books you use to support learning and now select those that have strong female role models and characters. Following careful tracking and monitoring of this group of pupils, you

are now able to demonstrate successfully that girls and boys are achieving similarly well.

- Children receive good-quality learning opportunities in the early years. Teachers ensure that a wide range of activities develops learners' skills and abilities. For example, one group of children worked with an adult to extend their understanding of number. Using counting blocks, one child explained that the number 18 was made up from 'one group of 10, and eight units'. In reading, children were successfully scanning a text to identify words that contained particular groups of letters. Despite this, leaders are aware that last year the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below the national average. Appropriate plans are in place to improve outcomes in the early years but the impact of these improvements is not yet evident in the children's learning and achievements.
- Disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils make good progress from their starting points. You pay particular attention to their well-being and provide high-quality additional support to ensure that their needs are met well. For example, the before-school care provision, 'Seagulls', is a calm and settled environment that enables pupils to start the day free from anxiety and ready to learn. I was delighted to see an example of the success that disadvantaged pupils enjoy as a result of the specially adapted curriculum you have put in place to meet their specific needs.
- You have high aspirations for disadvantaged pupils to achieve similar academic success to their non-disadvantaged peers. For example, if needed, you ensure that these pupils receive daily additional teaching in writing and mathematics. You have reduced persistent absence by supporting families well to ensure that disadvantaged pupils attend school regularly. As a result, current progress for this group of pupils is good. By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of disadvantaged pupils making expected progress typically exceeds that of other non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Teaching assistants usually support pupils' learning well. For example, in Year 2 one teaching assistant worked effectively to help pupils understand the different steps needed to solve a challenging mathematics problem. However, occasionally, teaching assistants are not actively engaged in supporting pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils' progress is sometimes not as rapid as leaders intend. You are rightly working to ensure that teachers make best use of additional adults' support to enable all pupils to make rapid progress. Similarly, you are rightly developing teaching assistants' skills and knowledge to ensure that pupils achieve the highest standards in their learning.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- improvements to teaching and learning accelerate children's progress in the early years
- teaching assistants have the skills, knowledge and guidance from teachers to support all pupils to make rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Dom Cook
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I observed learning in all year groups, spoke to pupils and looked at work in their exercise books. Observations were conducted jointly with senior leaders. Meetings were held with subject leaders and four members of the governing body. I also met with representatives from the local authority. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and took into account 57 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 55 written comments. I also analysed 14 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. A range of documents was reviewed, including: the school's development plan; leaders' evaluation of the school's effectiveness; information about pupils' achievement; the governing body's reports; the local authority's reports; and records concerning pupils' attendance, behaviour and safety.