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Mrs Rebecca Hutton
Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hutton

Short inspection of Buckland Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 10 October 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 your appointment as headteacher in February 2015, you have been clear and decisive in your actions to improve further the quality of education at the school. You have made well-judged changes to the leadership team, which have improved its effectiveness. Senior and middle leaders work successfully together. They regularly contribute helpfully to the training of staff and support colleagues where needed. All staff are held fully to account for ensuring that pupils achieve their best. An open culture of mutual trust exists throughout the school. Teachers readily seek advice from one another and welcome the many opportunities they are given for professional development. Consequently, teaching and learning continue to improve. As headteacher, you are held in high regard by the school community. One parent echoed the views of many, commenting, 'The head is a positive role model who cares passionately about the school.'

Governors know their school well. They offer helpful challenge to school leaders by regularly asking thoughtful questions. For example, governors recently sought assurance that non-classroom-based teaching staff are deployed effectively.

Parents are highly supportive of your school. The vast majority who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, would recommend the school to other parents.

Parents also appreciate the school's 'open-door' policy and the willingness of staff to meet them before or after school to discuss any concerns.

Pupils enjoy attending and the majority come to school regularly. They talk excitedly about the wide array of activities they participate in, ranging from visits to Harry Potter World, sporting events, camping in the school's grounds and axe throwing. However, the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below that seen nationally.

You have addressed the areas for improvement that inspectors identified at the last inspection. Subject leaders now systematically check the progress and learning of pupils and hold teachers to account for any underperformance. These leaders know their subjects well, identifying the strengths and what needs to be done to secure further improvement. In addition, you have acted on the previous inspection issue concerning pupils' responses to their teachers' feedback. In line with the school's policy, pupils are now given more time to reflect on their work through peer-to-peer marking opportunities and guidance from staff. This has been beneficial in helping pupils know what they need to do to improve.

You and other leaders, including governors, have identified that the progress made by the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils, particularly in key stage 2, is not rapid enough. You have started to take action to address this issue.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding within the school. They have made sure that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and stored securely. Staff understand the challenges and difficulties some families face and ensure that appropriate action is taken to help them. This includes accessing support from outside agencies when appropriate.

You provide comprehensive safeguarding training to all members of staff, ensuring that they are up to date with the latest information available. Your communication with staff is effective. For example, you have instigated a weekly briefing on safeguarding in all staff meetings. As a result, staff are clear about their responsibilities and what to do if they have any concerns.

Pupils feel safe and happy at school. They describe staff as caring and are confident that they have someone to speak to about any worries. Pupils understand what bullying is and are proud that the school gained a silver anti-bullying award last year. Pupils have a good knowledge of e-safety and know how to stay safe online.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, pupils' progress, particularly that of key groups including the disadvantaged, the most able pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and

pupils' attendance.

- Leaders have correctly identified that pupils with low prior attainment were, in the past, not making sufficient progress. As a result, leaders have introduced a more robust tracking system. Leaders now make regular checks to ensure that pupils do not fall behind. Appropriate interventions are in place and checked closely to ensure that these are having a positive effect on pupils' learning. Teachers are held to account for the progress pupils make and report on this regularly to leaders. Teachers and teaching assistants give freely of their time before school and at lunchtimes to offer extra support to these pupils. Lower-attaining pupils' progress has accelerated and is now in line with progress made by other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve well. In 2017, unvalidated assessment information showed that all disadvantaged pupils in Year 1 met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils reaching a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year has also improved steadily over the past three years and, by 2016, was in line with the national figure.
- Leaders have identified in the school improvement plan that the progress and attainment of the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are areas for development. Leaders have introduced new ways of working and pupils, particularly in mathematics, are set tasks that provide greater challenge. Pupils say that they enjoy these activities as they make them think hard. In most activities, teachers challenge the most able by asking pupils to explain their answers fully and encourage them to explain their thinking. Furthermore, leaders have purchased high-quality texts to support guided-reading sessions. As a result, the most able pupils have greater opportunities to think more deeply, such as when inferring meaning from challenging passages of text. In key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who attain at greater depth has risen. Unvalidated information for 2017 shows that the proportion of pupils working at greater depth is in line with that seen nationally.
- Leaders have adopted a range of strategies to improve the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and these are having a positive effect. As a result, pupils' attendance has risen gradually for the past three years. Nevertheless, the attendance of these groups of pupils remains slightly below the national average.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should:

- ensure that the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities continues to improve so that they attend more regularly
- raise pupils' attainment by increasing the proportion who gain the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.

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. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Brian Macdonald
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you and your deputy headteacher to discuss the school's self-evaluation and plans for improvement. I held discussions with middle leaders and governors, including the chair of the governing body, and talked with a representative of the local authority. Together, we observed learning in every year group. We talked to pupils about their learning and looked at their books. I heard pupils read and talked with them about their school. I looked at the school's documentation relating to governance, pupils' progress and attainment and safeguarding. I considered 67 responses to the online pupil survey, 36 responses to the staff survey and 71 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, including 66 free-text comments.