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Ms Emma Roberts
Headteacher
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Dear Ms Roberts

Short inspection of Button Lane Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 2 November 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school is a popular choice for parents and, as a result, the school is expanding in size. Early years and key stage 1 are now much larger than at the previous inspection, with three classes in Reception and Year 2. The increase in numbers has provided a much-needed boost to the budget, giving you the opportunity to develop and improve your pupils' learning environment further.

You and your restructured and expanded leadership team have an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Together, you have worked hard to improve pupils' progress in writing, particularly for pupils in key stage 2. You recently celebrated the success of this work as pupils at the end of Year 6 made rapid and accelerated progress from key stage 1 in writing, which was well above the national average. In contrast, pupils' progress from key stage 1 to key stage 2 in mathematics was only average. I wanted, therefore, to investigate the reasons for this slower progress in mathematics, which was also identified as a weaker aspect in the previous inspection.

You are fully aware of where further developments are needed to improve learning in mathematics from your recent review of mathematics teaching. Training and support for teachers and teaching assistants is ongoing. This includes some specialist training, such as for teaching assistants providing additional help through the 'numbers count' programme. You have created a culture whereby everyone is willing to share ideas and resources with each other. External support through your

cluster of schools is effective, in particular from one school, which has developed expertise in the delivery of a mastery approach to teaching mathematics. All staff are fully committed to accelerating pupils' progress in mathematics. In the last inspection, you were asked to review the professional development systems in place at that time to make sure that the proportion of outstanding teaching increased. This included support for teachers, teaching assistants, new staff and any newly qualified teachers (NQTs). Your work in mathematics perfectly illustrates how you have improved training for all teachers, although there are no NQTs currently employed in the school.

You are not satisfied with the proportion of children reaching a good level of development by the end of Reception, a trend that has continued for several years. Only about two thirds of children are ready to start Year 1, which is below the national average, and this difference continues to increase over time. Although most of your children join Reception from your Nursery, about a quarter have had little or no previous experience of education. Some children are not fully toilet-trained, are unable to feed themselves properly and have poor social skills. You are committed to further tackling one of the areas for improvement from the previous inspection and improve teaching and learning in the early years through more-effective use of resources. You aim to make certain that more children quickly develop the skills they need to reach a good level of development by the end of Reception. Your exciting plans to create a fabulous outdoor learning area for early years and key stage 1 will support this aim. Building is already under way and children will be able to make full use of the new learning areas in the spring term.

One of my key lines of enquiry was to find out if governance continues to be as effective as at the time of the previous inspection. Governors are knowledgeable about the school because they have the skills necessary to challenge leaders to check if their work is effective. Governors' training is up to date and they make sure that this continues to be the case through regular skills audits. Governors also have the experience to enable them to improve provision for pupils. Some governors are working to establish links between their own places of work to further enrich the curriculum, for example through contact with health service professionals.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. This is particularly important at the present time due to the extensive building works on site. The school site is safe and secure and all contractors working on site have had the necessary safeguarding checks. Pupils talked confidently about the 'red line not to be crossed', which marks the out-of-bounds building areas. They know it is dangerous to talk to the contractors while they are at work because the builders might get distracted, resulting in an accident.

You make certain that safeguarding is given a high priority throughout the year due to your 'rolling programme' of safeguarding training. This provides a constant 'drip feed' as an ongoing reminder for staff on themes such as children who may be

missing from education, child sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation. Catch-up training is provided for any staff who miss training and good use is made of training sessions delivered across schools in the cluster.

Pupils have a good understanding of e-safety and keeping safe when using the internet. They know that the school's internet filtering system is effective and blocks certain sites they may like to access. Some key stage 2 pupils were unsure about what they had been taught about how to keep themselves safe from gangs and knife crime and could not remember anything they might have been taught about the risks from extremist or radical views. Although you are confident that these themes have already been covered in assemblies, further reminders would be helpful for pupils.

Inspection findings

- Pupils are happy at this school and could not think of any ways to improve it further. The newly appointed head boy and head girl and members of the recently formed pupil leadership team are exceptionally proud of their new positions of responsibility. They are extremely creative and have some amazing ideas as to how they intend to gather the views of pupils and provide help for younger pupils.
- One of my key lines of enquiry during this inspection was to find out about the effectiveness of the curriculum to make sure that it is suitably engaging, meets the needs of pupils and that they are being prepared for life in modern Britain. This is because there have been significant national changes to the curriculum since the school was last inspected five years ago. Pupils experience a broad curriculum. They have many opportunities for enrichment, including singing, sports clubs, learning to play piano and guitar and joining with the samba band. Pupils have a good understanding of British values such as democracy, respect and tolerance.
- You continue to work hard to implement the national changes to the mathematics curriculum and to ensure that all staff have a good understanding of mastery in mathematics. One part of this has been your shift in focus away from booster classes to help pupils to prepare for tests. Instead, you now provide ongoing support and extra help at the first sign of pupils' progress slowing. This strategy is making a difference in improving all pupils' mathematical understanding.
- Pupils are developing their confidence in mathematical reasoning and teachers insist on pupils using correct mathematical language throughout their explanations. Teachers encourage fluency in their planning of pupils' work and pupils are now competent in calculating using correct written methods. However, some pupils are confused about identifying the most efficient and effective calculation method to use and miss shortcuts. Pupils have very little opportunity to solve problems in mathematics and some teachers appear to view this as 'questions in words', which often do not require pupils to think any harder about their work.
- I also wanted to find out more about pupils' attendance and see if the slight dip to below-average attendance in 2016 has been reversed. Attendance in 2017

improved slightly compared with that of 2016. You restructured your pastoral leadership team to ensure a sharper focus on improving attendance through more-frequent checks on pupils' attendance. You introduced a range of strategies to improve the attendance of the most persistent absentees such as panel meetings for pupils, providing transport for families experiencing difficulty in bringing their children to school, and issuing warning notices and fines. As a result, persistent absence reduced from 10% in 2016 to 9.5% in 2017.

- Governors' checks on information provided for parents on the school website lack rigour because much of this information is missing, out of date or inaccurate. A new school website is being developed and, when complete, will provide direct access for parents to the up-to-date policies and information that are currently only available in school.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils are given work to do in mathematics that makes them think harder about their work, including having more opportunities to solve problems and identifying the most effective and efficient methods of calculation
- teachers and teaching assistants in Reception plan work which builds on learning in the Nursery and provides sharply focused additional support as required, so that more children reach a good level of development
- pupils have a greater understanding of how to keep themselves safe from a wider range of risks that they may face through a coherent plan for learning, appropriate to age, across the school.

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

Yours sincerely

Denah Jones
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I checked your safeguarding documentation and met with a range of staff, including yourself, other leaders and a group of governors. I spoke with a representative from the local authority in a telephone conversation. I talked with parents as they picked up their children at the end of the school day. I discussed pupils' work with them in lessons when you and other leaders accompanied me, and looked at a selection of pupils' work in books. I listened to a group of pupils read and met with members of the newly formed pupil leadership team.