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Mrs Louise Swann  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Swann

### **Short inspection of Buckingham Park Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 23 January 2018 with Katherine Powell, Ofsted Inspector, 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 2013.

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

With other leaders, you continue to provide effective leadership. You are proud of the caring and compassionate culture you have created in the school. Pupils follow this example and are kind and considerate of their peers. Their conduct is good around the school and they are attentive and cooperative in lessons.

Staff like working at the school and the vast majority of parents are happy with the manner in which their children are nurtured, kept safe and form lasting friendships. You have successfully completed several building projects so that pupils benefit from a large, well-resourced, learning environment. The outside spaces, the presence of poultry, and the forest school setting provide many enriching learning opportunities for the pupils. You are planning carefully for the continuing growth in the number of pupils on the school's roll, so that all the school's space is used productively.

This expansion of the size of the school means that you have had to train and coach other staff to take on middle-level leadership roles. Most are becoming proficient and lead their teams well. Since September 2017, middle-level leaders have had access to accurate and helpful information about what each pupil knows, understands and can do. They know how each pupil performed at the last formal assessment point. Leaders are increasingly working with class teachers to ensure that all pupils are provided with work that both meets their needs but also stretches them to do as well as they can. We agreed that, currently, disadvantaged pupils and those with middle-level prior attainment, in particular, are not doing as well as they could.

Pupils attain outcomes, over time, in reading and mathematics which compare favourably with results in schools nationally. Most of the mathematics teaching observed on the day of the inspection was contributing well to pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding. However, the rates at which pupils make progress, especially in writing, are slower than for other pupils with similar starting points nationally. Although you encourage a love of books and reading, and have provided a range of tried and tested strategies for improving writing, outcomes in writing, in 2017 in Year 6, for example, were disappointing.

With the help of the governors, you are determined that this will not be repeated. You have strengthened the arrangements for assessing current pupils' progress. You appointed a member of staff to lead on the capture and analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. You have studied the extensive information you now have and are using it to challenge teachers to extend and enrich their work with pupils. As a result, you showed us compelling evidence that standards across the school are rising in the current academic year. The differences between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing. The rates of progress for pupils with middle-level prior attainment are increasing. More of the most able are on track to attain high standardised scores or work at greater depth.

Governance is strengthening too. Recent appointments have added necessary skills to the governing body. The long-serving chair of the governing body ensures that all governors are suitably trained for their roles. She constantly seeks to renew her own knowledge, and to keep pace with frequent changes in policy and processes.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders' work to keep the pupils' safe is thorough. The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. The chair of the governing body checks regularly the record of the checks made on persons wishing to work or volunteer at the school. The site team makes sure that the premises are clean, well-maintained and free from hazards.

The family liaison officer and the school's counsellor both support skilfully leaders' efforts to maintain the attendance, health, well-being and safety of all pupils. Teachers take time to educate pupils about the importance of staying healthy, taking exercise, and remaining safe in online contexts. You told me that there are no recorded incidents of bullying at the school. Conversely, evidence provided via the survey, Parent View, indicates that a few parents do not believe that bullying is handled well. Pupils told the team that they feel safe in school. Pupils are very well supervised at break and lunchtimes. Many are encouraged to participate in games organised by teaching assistants and midday meal supervisors.

### **Inspection findings**

- This inspection was carried out to check whether or not the school is still good. Inspectors also considered the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements. The inspection examined in detail the current performance of different groups of

pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged and those with middle-level prior attainment. Inspectors examined the school's work to support the development of pupils' writing and the impact and effectiveness of current leadership arrangements.

- Published information for Buckingham Park Primary School shows that historically pupils did less well in key stage 2 than in the early years and in key stage 1. Notably, pupils made less progress in writing in 2016 and 2017 than in other subjects, and less well than pupils with similar starting points on average in other schools.
- Leaders were rightly concerned by these outcomes and have acted decisively to ensure that pupils achieve the results of which they are undoubtedly capable. Inspectors found many pupils able to work at above-expected levels for their age. The school's own information about pupils' strengths in reading, for example, also shows that pupils are able to do better.
- Pupils are particularly well behaved in lessons. Teachers rarely have to deal with disruptive or challenging behaviour. In some classes, pupils benefit from inspiring, imaginative and creative teaching. They respond enthusiastically, and are willing to pick up every bit of learning on offer.
- In the early years, adults interact frequently with children to extend their learning. There are fewer opportunities for children to learn by exploration and independently.
- Teachers provide secure teaching on the correct parts of speech, how to put writing together accurately and how to 'up-level' previous pieces of work over time. The teaching of phonics in key stage 1 provides a good grounding for pupils' reading and writing.
- Pupils are able to use correct English, at levels appropriate to their age. However, more pupils could write more extensively and more fluently. Many are capable of modelling their writing on the work of contemporary children's authors.
- Disadvantaged pupils are catching up now with their classmates as a result of well-thought-through interventions. In one example, such pupils, among others, are benefiting from one-to-one mathematics tuition through a useful online system. Others are increasing the pace of their learning with the provision of extra support for their learning of phonics earlier in their time in school.
- The leadership of subjects, particularly English and mathematics, remains with you and your deputy. You showed us how you are working with teams of teachers to develop the teaching of these subjects and make it consistently strong. You also explained how you are continuing to coach middle-level leaders so that they can take more responsibility for supporting teachers and challenging them to do as well as they can.
- There are some strong examples of leadership elsewhere in the school. The early years is organised efficiently and managed adeptly. Adults support children to make strong progress so that a large majority attain a good level of development by the end of Reception. The recently appointed assessment coordinator has a very clear understanding of the school's performance. He has devised an efficient

toolkit for tracking the progress and attainment of pupils and groups of pupils.

- These developments in leadership are increasing the pace of school improvement. Consequently, the school is well placed to take the next steps in its journey.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the performance of disadvantaged and middle-attaining pupils is closely monitored, and improves to match that of other pupils in the school
- all teachers raise their expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing and set correspondingly challenging work
- outcomes for all pupils, especially the most able, are as high as they can be so that more are judged to be working at greater depth and making rapid progress.

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

Yours sincerely

Simon Hughes  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

You led us on a tour of the school. You and your deputy jointly observed learning in all year groups except Year 3. Visits to lessons were relatively brief but in that time, we observed learning in phonics, mathematics, English and in the early years. Inspectors spoke with several pupils and one of the team interviewed six Year 6 pupils. Only one pupil completed Ofsted's confidential online survey. Inspectors spoke informally with parents and took into account 119 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's confidential online survey. In addition, the lead inspector reviewed 69 free-text responses submitted via the same survey tool. The lead inspector met with a group of five staff and considered 22 responses to Ofsted's confidential online staff survey. Inspectors held meetings with leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of the early years. The lead inspector met representatives of the governing body and the local authority to discuss the current performance of the school.