

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



21 February 2017

Mr Nick Waldron
Headteacher
Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School
Jubilee Square
Buckingham Park
Aylesbury
HP19 9DZ

Dear Mr Waldron

Short inspection of Buckingham Park Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 8 February 2018, 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 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 the previous inspection, the school has been through a period of rapid growth. There are now far more pupils at the school and many new members of staff have joined the staff team. You have managed the school well during this period. You are ably supported by a team of senior leaders. Their arrival has strengthened the quality of leadership and capacity for further improvement. The school is a happy, inclusive community where everyone is valued. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's values such as forgiveness, honesty and friendship. The school's partnership with parents and carers is a strength, and the vast majority of parents are highly positive about the school. As one parent commented, 'My child is thriving, excited about learning and enjoys school life.'

The early years is a bustle of activity. The stimulating environment, strong teaching and rich learning opportunities enable children to make a good start. Relationships are warm and nurturing. Children achieve well and by the end of the early years a higher-than-average proportion attains the expected 'good level of development'. In key stage 1, pupils make good progress, and the proportion of pupils who attain the expected standards is similar to the national average. Good teaching has led to pupils' good attainment in the Year 1 phonics screening check. In 2017, the school had its first cohort of Year 6 pupils. The proportion of pupils who attained the expected standard in key stage 2 was below the national average. However, this was a very mobile group of pupils, and almost all of them joined the school at various times other than the usual starting point. Overall, while current pupils are

making appropriate progress, disadvantaged pupils are currently attaining less well than their peers and their progress is slightly more variable. You have identified this issue as a priority on your development plans. However, these plans lack sufficient rigour. For example, they do not include clear measurable milestones or targets to enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of their planned actions.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and appreciate the wide range of activities and out of school clubs that the school has to offer. They said that their teachers make learning fun and are kind and helpful. Pupils appreciate the valuable feedback their teachers give them about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work. Across the school, classrooms are well organised and purposeful, and relationships are positive. Attractive displays support and celebrate pupils' learning. The vast majority of pupils are well behaved and courteous. The small number of pupils who have challenging emotional and behavioural needs are supported well. Adults are calm and measured in their approach and provide sensitive support. The school's records show that there are very few incidents of bullying or discriminatory behaviour and that these are followed up appropriately. However, we agreed that your current records of inappropriate behaviour are not sufficiently clear. These do not allow leaders and governors to have strategic oversight of the nature or frequency of any incidents or of how well these are dealt with.

You have taken effective action to address the areas for improvement highlighted by inspectors during the school's previous inspection. Improvements to teaching have led to a significant improvement in pupils' phonics skills and writing. In our visits to classes, we could see how well pupils were applying phonics in their reading and writing tasks. Pupils now have many more opportunities to write for a range of purposes, and teachers give suitable attention to addressing important skills such as sentence construction and punctuation. In one class, we could see pupils using checklists and targets to evaluate and improve their writing. We also saw some examples of high-quality writing that show how pupils are becoming adept at capturing the reader's attention. One pupil wrote, 'Just imagine you are about to do something embarrassing ...'

The appointment of a team of senior leaders has strengthened leadership. Leaders make a strong contribution to school improvement through their systematic monitoring. Your effective action has led to a rise in pupils' rates of attendance. Attendance is monitored stringently and the child and family worker provides good support to help overcome any barriers to good attendance. Attendance overall is now in line with the national average and fewer pupils are persistently absent. You have drawn on the good-quality support from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust (BLT) to help you to improve the teaching of mathematics. This work has strengthened pupils' calculation, reasoning and problem-solving skills. Teachers are now making sure that pupils develop a solid grounding in important mathematical concepts. You have also introduced a new way of assessing and tracking pupils' progress. However, this is yet to be fully embedded, and you acknowledge that assessments made by some teachers are not as accurate as they need to be. As a consequence, for a few classes, the school's assessment information does not yet provide an accurate view of pupils' learning.

Safeguarding is effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. All pre-employment checks are carried out diligently and record-keeping is systematic and rigorous. Good-quality training and your weekly email updates mean that staff are very knowledgeable about their responsibilities. They are alert to any concerns about pupils and follow these up promptly. You and the other designated safeguarding leads meet weekly to make sure that everyone is kept up to date. Referrals are carried out swiftly and you enlist the support of outside agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe. Pupils have a very good understanding of keeping safe online, for example, by not sharing personal information. They also know that it is important to report anything that upsets them to a member of staff at school. Pupils are entirely confident in reporting any concerns to their teachers. As one pupil commented, 'The teachers are there to help us.' Governors fulfil their responsibilities well by carrying out termly audits of safeguarding. Pupils said that they feel safe in school and that everyone is kind and helpful. The vast majority of parents agree that their children are safe at school.

Inspection findings

- During this inspection, we agreed to focus on some aspects of the school's work: the progress of current pupils including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; how well leaders are using additional funding to improve outcomes and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities; and the effectiveness of the leadership of teaching and learning.
- Visits to classes and scrutiny of pupils' books confirm that most pupils are making good progress. In the lower years, some pupils are making rapid progress in their writing skills and apply their phonics skills very well when reading and writing. Older pupils are writing with increasing control and maturity, adapting their writing for different purposes. They show a good awareness of how they can use different literary techniques such as similes, alliteration and powerful verbs to enrich their writing. In mathematics, pupils are acquiring secure calculation skills and learning to reason and to solve problems. Pupils are making important links between calculations, such as the relationship between addition and subtraction.
- You have sensibly refined the school's non-negotiables to bring about greater consistency in teaching approaches in order to improve pupils' progress. However, while we agreed that most pupils are making good progress, there is still some slight variability in the progress that disadvantaged pupils are making. In addition, many of these pupils are working below the expected standards. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are making appropriate progress from their starting points.
- The additional funding the school receives for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is used well. You have made sure that teachers provide targeted support in class to meet these pupils' needs. Some funding is used to help disadvantaged pupils make the most of the activities the school has

to offer, such as out-of-school clubs and school visits. This has helped to increase pupils' engagement and enjoyment of school. However, the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils has not yet enabled these pupils to make rapid progress. The child and family worker is often a first point of contact for families. She works with families to support pupils' good attendance and to help them overcome any other barriers to learning. The positive impact of this work can be seen in the improvements to pupils' attendance. Persistent absence rates have fallen significantly for disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.

- Senior leaders work together as an effective team. They lead by example and keep a careful check on the quality of teaching and pupils' work in books. Leaders are aware that there is some variability in the accuracy of teachers' assessments and that these do not always reflect the good progress seen in pupils' work. Their fortnightly supervision meetings with teachers enable them to hold teachers to account for pupils' progress, providing both challenge and support. They are working hard to make sure that new staff can quickly become up to speed with the school's approaches and non-negotiables. The headteacher accepts that there are some weaknesses in the school's development plans for improving teaching and learning. These do not include sufficiently clear success criteria so that leaders and governors can evaluate the impact of their plans.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- they strengthen and embed the school's new assessment system so that teachers' assessments provide a more accurate view of pupils' learning
- there is an even greater focus on the progress of disadvantaged pupils so that they make faster rates of progress and more achieve the expected standards
- they refine their development plans to include clear milestones and targets to enable leaders and governors to evaluate the impact of these plans
- the school's system for the recording of incidents of inappropriate behaviour is strengthened to enable leaders and governors to keep strategic oversight of this aspect of the school's work.

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

Yours sincerely

Sue Cox
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

Together with you, I visited all classes to look at pupils' learning and talk to them about their work. I met with you to discuss the school's self-evaluation and with a group of leaders to review pupils' work and progress. I also met with five governors, including the governor with particular responsibility for safeguarding. I held a meeting with the school's adviser from BLT and met with a group of pupils from Years 2 to 6. I reviewed a range of documents including the school's pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff to work with children, safeguarding information and other school policies and documents. I considered the views of parents through the 78 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I took into account the responses from the 38 members of staff who completed the Ofsted staff questionnaire.