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Mr Daniel Knuckey
Headteacher
Booker Hill School
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Dear Mr Knuckey

Short inspection of Booker Hill School

Following my visit to the school on 20 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 September 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 the school as headteacher, in September 2017, you have set about your role with great energy and enthusiasm. You quickly established a clear and aspirational vision for the school. Together with your capable senior leaders, you are ambitious for your pupils and want them to achieve the very best outcomes.

You and senior leaders have a sharp and accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. School improvements have pupils at their heart. You and your leadership team are effectively supporting all teachers to take on different aspects of leadership, so that developments across the school are shared. Pupils, too, feel they have a say in how the school improves. For example, pupils eagerly told me how they had been instrumental in suggesting the art gallery display. Your action to include everyone in school developments is successfully building a strong learning community.

Your clear aspiration for pupils to be well cared for and to achieve their best has helped to create a friendly, happy school. Lessons are calm and focused, and relationships between staff and pupils are genuinely respectful. Pupils show confidence in themselves as learners and talk about their learning with pride. A pupil explained, 'Sometimes the work is hard, but we love the challenge.' Pupils are highly motivated and keen to learn.

Parents are very supportive of the school. The school recently carried out its own

parent survey, with a high number of positive responses. A parent responding to Ofsted's online survey said, 'This school is an integral and valued part of the community.' Parents and carers praised staff for being approachable and willing to support families when needed. A parent summed up the views of many, saying, 'My child is flourishing.'

You and your leadership team have successfully tackled the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. These included pupils' writing and their independent work. The school's motto, 'learning without limits', is consistently applied and understood across the school. Learning tasks are usually meaningful to pupils and grab their interest right from the start. Therefore, pupils are typically keen to attempt independent work, because they are confident and motivated to learn. Pupils are given valuable opportunities to build up their writing stamina, to write at length and to write for different purposes. Pupils' work in their books demonstrates a clear focus on spelling, punctuation and grammar, and continuing improvement. However, in some lessons, the most able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging tasks to enable them to achieve at the higher standard.

You and your leadership team are successfully strengthening the role of middle leaders. This was another area for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Effective training and support are enabling them to lead their subject areas well. For example, the humanities leader has been supported well by a senior leader to check practice across the school in topic lessons, and to identify areas for improvement. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching and, as a result, pupils produce work of a high standard.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Pupils said they feel safe and secure. All parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey said that their children feel safe at the school. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, including online. As a result, they talk confidently about the shrewd use of privacy settings and know that not all information on the internet is reliable and trustworthy.

Staff are well trained and knowledgeable about how to keep pupils safe. Efficient systems are in place to enable staff to flag any concerns. Staff raise concerns about pupils in a timely and appropriate manner when necessary. Leaders know pupils well and keep up to date about potential risks to individuals in their community. Timely and appropriate referrals are made to external agencies and tenaciously followed up when needed.

Governors efficiently monitor the school's procedures for keeping pupils safe. For example, governors regularly scrutinise the single central record of recruitment checks on staff.

Inspection findings

- During the inspection, we looked closely at specific aspects of the school's provision, including the effectiveness of leaders' work to ensure that particular groups of pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. These included those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language, and disadvantaged pupils. We also considered how effectively teaching enables the most able pupils to achieve well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are supported well. A range of carefully selected approaches to learning is tailored effectively to individual pupils' needs. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked. The support they receive is adjusted appropriately when needed. This flexible and responsive approach is clearly having an impact, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. In these subjects, many of these pupils make strong progress from their starting points; for some, their progress is rapid.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language receive timely and efficient support as soon as they join the school. From the nursery through to key stage 2, proficient adult support ensures that pupils are immersed in spoken language. They are sensitively encouraged to talk about their learning and their ideas. As these pupils move up through the school, the work in their books shows how they are able to successfully hone and refine their writing, making strong progress. Pupils who speak English as an additional language also achieve well in mathematics.
- Sensibly, leaders are taking a consistent approach, across the whole school, to promote challenging opportunities for the most able pupils. As a result, pupils are being encouraged and supported well to solve problems and explain their thinking across subjects. In some cases, targeted additional support is helping pupils improve their reading and writing in order to access more challenging mathematics work. Such finely tuned teaching is not yet firmly established, however. At times, work set for the most able pupils lacks the challenge on which they will thrive.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the most able pupils, in all year groups, achieve the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Claire Prince
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, your senior leadership team, governors, and a representative from the Buckinghamshire Learning Trust. Together, you and I visited classes in all year groups. I considered 21 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 15 free-text comments. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. Twenty-nine staff completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire, which was also considered. I also took into account the results of your own surveys of pupils, parents and staff. I observed and spoke to pupils at breaktime, and met with a small group of pupils more formally. I scrutinised work in pupils' books. I also analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' progress and safeguarding. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness.