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Mrs Angela Hill
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mrs Hill

Short inspection of Butts Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 February 2019, 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 October 2014.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and the head of school provide strong and purposeful leadership. Since becoming executive headteacher and working across two schools, you have focused on making sure that leadership at Butts Primary School is distributed well and is secure. Other leaders are empowered to make improvements in their areas of responsibility. The governing body has a very good understanding of the school and the community that it serves. There is a high level of ambition for pupils and the capacity for further improvement is good.

There is an unwavering focus on the school vision, 'One school, one community'. You and the staff have put community at the heart of your work. This was typified in the comments that pupils made during the inspection, 'Everyone is unique and equal' and 'If anyone is left out, we bring them in.' Leaders and staff know the community well and provide particularly good support for vulnerable pupils. The curriculum is well planned and gives pupils opportunities to appreciate and understand their community. It is an inclusive and caring school. Pupils are happy and their personal development is exceptionally well catered for.

You work closely with other leaders to analyse the school's performance and bring about improvement. Assessment information and test data are used well to identify and address any gaps that pupils may have in their learning. Leaders also carry out effective checks on the quality of teaching and provide staff with precise feedback

on how to improve their teaching. Recently, you have developed these processes by giving teachers more opportunities to reflect on their own practice.

Teaching has continued to improve since the previous inspection. Children get off to a good start in the Nursery. Staff get to know children quickly and match activities well to their needs. This start is built upon strongly when children move through Reception. There is a high level of challenge and children really enjoy their curriculum themes. For example, staff have really immersed children in their current topic about dinosaurs. Part of the classroom has been turned into a role-play area, with large dinosaurs and a range of topic vocabulary on display. Children make very good progress across Reception, particularly in their writing. You have ensured that early reading receives a positive focus. Phonics teaching in key stage 1 is well organised and effective. Staff have good subject knowledge and teach pupils to decode and blend very effectively.

You have responded positively to the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. Staff have received training to understand better how to challenge the most able pupils. In mathematics, the level of challenge comes across well in pupils' books. The most able pupils are being given increasing opportunities to apply their understanding to complex problems, including through reasoning. You have also started to put on additional tuition after school to help deepen the learning for the most able. Some of the approaches to teaching reading are new and have not yet been fully embedded. As a result, sometimes the level of challenge is not high as it should be across the different classes in the school.

Pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well provided for. The special educational needs coordinator works closely with staff to make sure that pupils with highly complex needs get the support that they need.

The governing body is reflective and forward-thinking. One of the members is a national leader of governance and has helped to recruit appropriately-skilled people from the local community. Governors are ambitious for the school and provide a high level of challenge and support.

Safeguarding is effective.

You have ensured that all the arrangements for safeguarding are fit for purpose. Keeping pupils safe is at the heart of the school's work. The designated safeguarding leads meet on a regular basis and review the support that is in place for the most vulnerable pupils. The systems for sharing and recording concerns are very well organised. Staff report concerns quickly and leaders follow these up tenaciously. Regular and relevant training enables staff to have a good understanding of their safeguarding responsibilities.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe. A weekly assembly on safety enables pupils to stay aware of different risks. During the inspection, several pupils talked about the visit of a police officer and how it helped them to consider the risks associated with alcohol and smoking. E-safety is taken

very seriously and is taught well. Pupils are clear about the dangers that are associated with the internet and what to do if they are contacted by someone that they do not know. They gave examples of telling an adult if unsure and never giving out personal information online.

Inspection findings

- Pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 declined in 2017. You and your leadership team quickly identified that aspects of teaching needed to be improved. Several new initiatives have been introduced and both progress and attainment improved in 2018. A good example is the new approach to teaching reading. Teachers use age-appropriate fiction and non-fiction books as a stimulus for reading comprehension activities. Pupils enjoy reading and are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of the text and identify new vocabulary. The culture for reading has been raised across the school. Some of the reading strategies are relatively new and are not yet embedded across every class in the school. As a result, sometimes the level of challenge in reading sessions is not as strong as it should be.
- Writing is taught well across the school and the work in pupils' books demonstrates that they make good progress. Teachers use a whole-class text as a stimulus for writing. Pupils enjoy this approach and take pride in their written work. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 6 spoke knowledgeably about the story of Romeo and Juliet. The written work in their books, produced in response to the play, was of a high standard.
- In 2017 and 2018, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test was below the national average at the end of key stage 2. You identified that historically, some of the technical language associated with grammar and punctuation had not been taught as well as it should have been. You rectified this during the current academic year with specific teaching of the terminology that pupils will come across in the end of key stage test. Pupils' books show that grammar and punctuation is taught well. Pupils apply grammar and punctuation appropriately into longer pieces of writing.
- You have worked closely with other leaders and staff to put in place a thoughtful curriculum. There is a clear vision to make sure that the pupils learn about their local, national and global community. Each theme has a key enquiry question to focus the learning for the term. For example, one question posed in Year 5 is 'Where would the world be without the Second World War?' Pupils enjoy their curriculum and develop an appropriate level of knowledge and understanding across a wide range of subjects.
- The curriculum is also enriched by wider activities and experiences. Older pupils from neighbouring schools are used as role models to mentor and support pupils on aspects of learning. You have also provided opportunities for pupils to meet aspirational figures in the community. For example, visitors into school have included an ITV news presenter, an Olympian and a female rail engineer. You choose visitors to support pupils' understanding of the world. For example, the female rail engineer was chosen to raise awareness of gender stereotyping. During the inspection pupils shared how much they enjoy art and drama opportunities.

- The primary physical education (PE) and sport premium has been used well to provide pupils with additional opportunities for PE and sport. There has been an increase in extra-curricular sports clubs and competitions. Lunchtime activities and the daily mile challenge have helped to increase physical activity levels for pupils. However, there has not been a sufficient focus on making sure that the funding is used for initiatives that develop sustainable provision in the future. For example, there has been limited training for teachers to improve their delivery of high-quality PE. In the academic year 2017/18 the amount allocated and spent for the PE and sport premium was less than it should have been.
- In the 2016/17 academic year, there was a relatively high number of exclusions. However, there were valid reasons for the action that you took. Decisions to exclude pupils are not taken lightly and exclusion is used as a last resort. Due to good-quality pastoral support, the number of exclusions has reduced over the last few years. You make good use of external agencies to provide appropriate support for pupils with complex needs.
- Attendance rates are increasing positively over time. You work closely with other staff to analyse, in good detail, attendance rates for different groups. There is a robust process of follow-up to both challenge and support parents to improve their children's attendance. Some pupils with SEND have had previously low attendance. In many of these cases, attendance is improving.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the new approaches to teaching of reading are embedded fully so that pupils' attainment in reading continues to rise
- staff receive opportunities to develop their expertise in teaching of physical education
- the 2017/18 allocation for the physical education and sport premium is accounted for accurately and the surplus funding is appropriately spent.

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

Yours sincerely

Matt Meckin
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and several other leaders. I met with six governors and a school improvement adviser from the local authority. I spoke to pupils informally and formally. I made short visits to eight lessons and

looked at a range of pupils' books. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and considered free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View. I also considered the responses from Ofsted's online questionnaires for pupils and staff.