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Mr Andy Higgs  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Higgs

### **Short inspection of Bucklebury C.E. Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 26 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 January 2015.

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

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

Since your appointment in September 2015, you have worked with great resilience, with leaders and governors, to create a school culture where the morale both of staff and pupils is high. Importantly, you know what the school does well and what could be even better. You work closely with other leaders to consider thoughtfully how to further enhance teaching, learning and assessment to further improve pupils' outcomes. Similarly, you have ensured that the school's motto, 'to develop pupils' mind, body and spirit' is rooted deeply in the school's culture to provide pupils with an educational experience which takes account of their academic and pastoral needs. You have successfully created a school community where staff 'develop the whole child'. The Christian values of love, faith and hope shine through in the life of the school.

Bucklebury C.E Primary School is a warm and welcoming school where pupils are happy and learn well. They are thoughtful and considerate towards their friends and others. Pupils told me that bullying is rare. They value each other as individuals and appreciate their differences. The pupils I interviewed told me, 'We may all look different on the outside, but we are all the same on the inside. Everyone is welcome at our school.' Pupils enjoy taking additional responsibilities such as representing pupils' views on the school council, helping during playtimes, organising worship

assemblies and running the school library.

Teachers use their assessments of pupils' work to help them plan and carefully provide for pupils' learning needs. They give pupils valuable feedback in lessons. This helps pupils to edit their work and further develop their knowledge and understanding. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They told me that, 'If we don't understand something, we know that our teachers will help us. It is okay not to know everything straight away.' However, sometimes the support provided by teaching assistants is not as effective as it might be. Leaders have put in place plans to provide training and further enhance the skills of support staff.

The school's current assessment information shows that current pupils in key stages 1 and 2 make strong progress and many achieve well, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.

Parents are unanimous in their praise for the work of school leaders to support them and their children. Parents are very complimentary about the regular leadership communication and their children's learning, progress and well-being. They appreciate the opportunities to visit school and to see their children's work, talk to staff and join in with the weekly celebration assemblies. One parent captured the views of many and told me that Bucklebury is, 'one big happy family at the heart of our community'.

You and your team have successfully addressed the areas highlighted for improvement in the previous inspection. Middle leaders are now a strong and cohesive team. They are passionate about their roles and work closely with staff to ensure that standards remain strong. Governors keep themselves well informed through regular visits and close scrutiny of leaders' work. They offer appropriate challenge and support to the headteacher. Leaders and governors work effectively together to ensure that pupils' achievement continues to improve and areas identified as needing further development get better.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose.

Staff know pupils well and are alert to the slightest change that might raise a cause for concern. They follow the school's systems well, passing on any worries swiftly. Leaders work well with external agencies and are persistent in ensuring that the most vulnerable pupils receive the support they need. You have made sure that systems for checking the suitability of staff to work with children are rigorous and robust. The governing body is well aware of the need to ensure that pupils continue to be kept safe at all times.

Pupils feel safe and told me that there are always members of staff to talk to if they have any worries. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and recognise potential risks, including when using the internet. For example, they

told me that it is important not to share personal information online.

### **Inspection findings**

- During the inspection, I considered the impact of the work of middle leaders to improve pupils' outcomes. Middle leaders show absolute commitment to the school's vision and ongoing further improvements. They evaluate the impact of their work through monitoring pupils' achievements across the curriculum. They use this information to plan appropriate next steps for other subject improvement plans. Middle leaders have worked well to further improve pupils' outcomes. For example, they ensure that pupils read widely and often across different subjects. In Year 6, pupils demonstrated successfully their inference skills as they held sophisticated discussions about their shared class story.
- I scrutinised the effectiveness of mathematics teaching in key stages 1 and 2. You and the leader for mathematics have overseen a comprehensive review of how the subject is taught. The approach you have adopted ensures that pupils build on their mathematical knowledge and apply it well to problem-solving. Teachers have received training to deliver the programme effectively. They use their strong subject knowledge in mathematics to introduce the subject and check for understanding. I found that teachers ask skilful questions to check pupils' understanding and intervene effectively to address any misconceptions. Most pupils respond well and show good levels of engagement in mathematics. However, occasionally the most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently. At times, learning is not planned well enough to take into account their higher level of understanding. Where this is the case, they do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- I also evaluated the quality of phonics teaching. Typically, teachers have strong subject knowledge which they use well to help pupils sound out their letters and sounds. For instance, in key stage 1 pupils used their phonics knowledge well to read unfamiliar words and discuss what they understood about a character from the story they read. They used their phonics knowledge effectively to help them spell and write adjectives to describe their favourite characters from the story. Current school assessments show that large proportions of pupils are confidently developing their early reading skills. You also ensure that parents are able to support pupils' phonics learning at home. A number of parents spoke highly of this work.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that they:

- exploit the skills and expertise of teaching assistants through further targeted training
- provide work for the most able pupils which is sufficiently challenging, consistently meets their needs and enables them to make appropriate progress.

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 West Berkshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Shazia Akram  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you and, together, we planned the key lines of enquiry for the inspection. I also met with other members of the school staff, including middle leaders, teachers and teaching assistants. I met with three members of the governing body, including the chair. Together with you, I visited key stage 1 and 2 classes to observe pupils' learning, speak with pupils and look at their work. I also met formally with a group of pupils. I considered 86 responses to the online pupil survey. I met parents and carers at the end of the school day and took into account 70 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including two written contributions. I spoke with staff during the day and took account of 14 responses to the online staff questionnaire. I also spoke to advisers from the local authority and the diocese. I examined a sample of pupils' work with middle leaders. I looked at a range of documentation, including information about the work of governors and safeguarding, and curriculum plans. Additionally, I scrutinised and discussed pupils' progress and attainment and the school's self-evaluation and development plans.