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Mrs Clare Elkes
Acting Headteacher
Buntingsdale Primary School and Nursery
Buntingsdale Park
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Dear Mrs Elkes

Short inspection of Buntingsdale Primary School and Nursery

Following my visit to the school on 19 March 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.

You and the staff have created a school where pupils are happy and well cared for. Pupils spoke about the school's positive ethos and how well the school teaches them about respect for others. Pupils are charming, polite and welcoming to visitors. Parents commented on the positive difference you, as the acting headteacher, have made in the school. In particular, they mentioned the range of courses available to parents, such as English and computing, and how this helps them to support their children's learning.

Since your appointment as acting headteacher in January 2018, you have taken action to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils by the end of key stage 2. You and officers from the local authority regularly monitor teaching and provide teachers with informative feedback. However, even though the feedback is specific and precise, leaders do not always go back and check if staff have made the changes or implemented the actions that were recommended. In some year groups, the result is that feedback to pupils and assessments of how well they are doing are not always accurate. This prevents some of the most able pupils from reaching even higher standards in writing and mathematics.

Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is above the national average. The majority of pupils are children of service families. Many pupils leave because their families are

posted to other barracks. Good support is in place to welcome new pupils who join the school in all year groups.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of out-of-school clubs and inter-school competitions. Good partnerships with other schools enable pupils to participate in cross country, dodgeball, archery, gymnastics and athletics competitions. As a result, pupils enjoy sport and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and fit.

Behaviour in classes is good and pupils move around school sensibly. Pupils say they feel safe in school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Safeguarding is well led and managed. You have successfully created a culture where there is a strong shared responsibility for ensuring that pupils are safe. Training for staff and governors is up to date and reflects the latest guidance, as do the school's policies. Staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child.

Pupils learn about road safety, e-safety, safety in the environment and how to keep themselves safe. Staff are trained on how to spot signs of exploitation or extremism.

Inspection findings

- You and the governors are focused on improving outcomes for pupils. Following the last inspection, leaders were asked to ensure that progress in writing is as a rapid as that in reading and mathematics. Staff have benefited from their engagement with local schools alongside support from the local authority to share good practice. This is helping to ensure that pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
- The teaching of writing is improving. Over the past three years the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing at the end of key stage 2 has increased and is now in line with the national average. Teachers are getting better at teaching and assessing writing in key stage 2. Themes for writing engage pupils in thinking carefully about the audience they are writing for. Pupils have many opportunities in key stage 2 to edit, improve and redraft their work. In Years 5 and 6, for example, pupils used the stimulus of a book by Katherine Rundell, 'The Explorer', to plan their own persuasive writing on a dilemma about whether to return to their abandoned plane. Pupils used a broad range of vocabulary to express their thoughtful ideas. Work in books shows that pupils make good use of their knowledge of grammar, spelling and punctuation to improve their writing. Leaders and staff have worked closely together to make changes to the school's writing curriculum and how writing is taught. Staff have identified the need to engage boys in writing through work that captures their interests. Work in books, on display and in visits to classrooms from early years to Year 6 shows that the new developments are having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment as young writers.
- Pupils' attainment improved in 2018 at the end of key stage 2. It came closer to

the national average in reading, writing and mathematics combined. You are acutely aware that there are some differences in the achievement of groups of pupils. For example, the proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in key stage 1 in writing and mathematics has been low for the past three years. You have identified this as an area for improvement. Pupil numbers in some year groups are small and high pupil mobility impacts on outcomes for pupils. During the inspection I looked at the school's achievement information for individual pupils and groups of pupils.

- You have taken actions to improve outcomes in mathematics across the school. Leaders recognise that the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standard in mathematics by the end of Year 6 has been well below the national average for the past two years. Better teaching in key stage 2 is having a positive impact on current pupils' progress. Greater emphasis is now placed on pupils developing their problem-solving skills. Work in books shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress in key stage 2. Teachers are taking greater account of their starting points from the previous key stage. However, in key stage 1 pupils' skills of reasoning and problem-solving are not as well developed. This prevents some pupils, particularly the most able, from making greater gains in their mathematics.
- Pupils are very proud of their work. Many pupils present their work with care. However, in some classes teachers do not always have high enough expectations of standards of handwriting or presentation. Some staff do not ensure that pupils who are struggling to form letters correctly have enough support to help them improve. Expectations of presentation in mathematics books are not consistent through the school. As a result, pupils do not always set out their work neatly.
- In 2012, the school changed from being an infant school to a primary school. At the time of the last inspection classes in key stage 2 were being introduced year by year, with the first group of Year 6 pupils starting in 2016. At your last inspection you were asked to ensure that all pupils are given work that is appropriately challenging in all subjects across the curriculum. You have ensured that staff new to key stage 2 work closely with a local cluster of schools to moderate their assessment judgements. Work in books shows that teachers' subject knowledge in subjects across the curriculum is strong. The curriculum is enhanced by visits and high-quality reading materials. Pupils show much enjoyment and have good skills in predicting, planning and evaluating the results in science and design and technology. As part of a project on the Second World War, pupils in Years 5 and 6 designed gas masks and made plans for bunkers. Their work showed perseverance and creativity and that pupils reflected on their successes.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- following the monitoring of teaching and learning, staff act on the feedback they receive, and leaders monitor that this has been done
- further effective action is taken to improve outcomes in mathematics so that they

match those in reading and writing for all groups of pupils in key stages 1 and 2

- the proportion of pupils exceeding the expected standards in writing and mathematics rises in key stage 1
- all teachers insist on high standards of presentation in handwriting and in 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 Shropshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Pamela Matty
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I met with you, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. I visited all classrooms with you, scrutinised pupils' books and spoke to pupils about their learning. I talked to pupils to gather their views about the school during the school day and at break time and lunchtime. I reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. I sought the views of parents at the start of the school day. I took account of the 11 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, 21 responses to the pupil questionnaire and 17 responses to the staff questionnaire.