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26 June 2019

Mrs Philippa Mitchell  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Mitchell

### **Short inspection of The Butts Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 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 December 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 your senior leaders have a very clear grasp of the strengths of the school as well as the areas targeted for further improvement. Your improvement plans are detailed and comprehensive, containing clear success criteria by which leaders at all levels can be held to account. Outcomes for pupils are consistently above average, but senior leaders remain ambitious and continually drive to enable pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.

You lead a school where all teachers and staff focus closely on the needs of each pupil. Teachers and teaching assistants take time to get to know each pupil individually. They know pupils' interests and aptitudes well. This all contributes to a happy, inclusive school community where pupils flourish. Pupils are wholly positive about their school and enjoy the many learning opportunities on offer. They are full of praise for the staff who listen carefully to any problems or worries that pupils have and help resolve them. Pupils' behaviour is excellent. In lessons they are diligent and show very positive attitudes to learning because learning interests them. Their consistently well-presented work bears testimony to this. Pupils are keen to talk about their learning and celebrate their various successes.

The great majority of parents who expressed a view would recommend the school. All agree that their children are happy to come to school and are well behaved. Several parents that I spoke to were particularly complimentary about how staff know pupils well and how pupils are taught good manners. One parent spoke for many when saying: 'My children feel valued by all the staff at the school. They feel

they are recognised and known as individual personalities rather than simply another pupil. It has a wonderful family-friendly atmosphere.'

Teachers have strong subject knowledge that enables them to set high expectations and ask probing questions that make pupils think deeply. They explain new ideas clearly and check that pupils have understood before moving on. One pupil explained: 'Adults are supportive and help you to develop and do your best. If you are struggling, they will help, but won't just give you the right answer.' Senior leaders have invested in equipping teaching assistants with the skills to help pupils find ways of overcoming difficulties in their learning. Pupils are developing independence and resilience as a result.

At the previous inspection, you were asked to embed assessment systems so that teachers can be confident about how well pupils are doing and what they need to do next. The school's assessment system has changed and developed over time to best suit the needs of the school. It gives leaders and teachers a clear picture of how well pupils are progressing through the curriculum, and enables them to set ambitious targets for pupils, including those on track for the higher standards. Teachers' planning is sharply focused on helping pupils to reach these targets and to fill any identified gaps in learning.

Inspectors also asked you to raise achievement in writing and mathematics at key stage 1, so that they match the high standards that pupils achieved in reading. Improvement in the teaching of mathematics has led to better outcomes across the school. The proportion of pupils attaining and exceeding the expected standard in mathematics was in line with that of reading and above the national average in 2018. However, there is still work to be done to enable more pupils to achieve the greater depth standard in writing.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Staff have had the right training and advice to enable them to recognise, record and report concerns, however minor they might appear to be. All policies, procedures and protocols are detailed and rigorous.

Pupils feel safe in school. They trust adults to look after them and deal with any worries that arise. The same friendly atmosphere in the classrooms is also seen on the playground. Pupils understand bullying well, including cyber bullying, but are very firm in saying that it does not happen at this school. They also understand the various hazards associated with being online, including dangers from hackers. Lessons and special assemblies reinforce the importance of responsible online behaviour. The curriculum also covers other aspects of staying safe, such as road safety and what to do if caught in a fire, enabling pupils to be aware of risks and how to stay out of harm's way.

## Inspection findings

- We agreed to explore how well teaching enables pupils to exceed the expected standards in writing across the school. The number of pupils who have achieved this higher standard has been lower in writing than in reading and mathematics.
- New approaches to the teaching of writing, introduced this academic year, are having a positive impact on pupils' writing. Pupils love reading and this also helps them to gain a very positive attitude towards writing. Teachers' use of high-quality texts in lessons exposes pupils to a rich treasury of vocabulary to use in their own writing. Pupils grow to love words from a young age and take great pleasure in learning and explaining new ones that they have met. They enjoy discussing and exploring shades of meaning between similar words. For example, a pupil in Year 3 explained the meaning of the word 'pearlescent' in great detail, how it could be used in a piece of writing, and how it differed from words of similar meaning.
- There is a consistent approach to writing across the school. Even young pupils become well-informed, articulate writers, able to explain how their work will capture readers' interest. The proportion of pupils who are on track to achieve age-related expectations are above the national average, but too few pupils across the school are currently on track to attain the greater depth standard.
- Next, we agreed to learn more about how well pupils achieve across the wider curriculum. Pupils enjoy a wide and varied curriculum that covers the full range of subjects. Work seen in science demonstrates a clear focus on helping pupils not only to acquire knowledge of science, but also to apply their knowledge in scientific enquiry. In geography and history, teachers' carefully structured sequences of lessons and topics help pupils build their knowledge of these subjects securely. Lessons are further brought to life by visitors to the school and by trips to interesting places such as Marwell Zoo, Butser Ancient Farm and Portchester Castle. Pupils achieve well in French. By the time pupils reach Year 6, they write beautifully handwritten, illustrated short 'Mister Men' books in accurate French. The teaching of music is a strength of the school. However, the curriculum does not provide pupils with enough opportunities to gain a clear understanding of the diverse cultures represented in modern Britain.
- Subject leaders have a clear understanding of how well their subject is taught in the school. They make sure that their subject receives suitable coverage in the curriculum and is taught effectively. They receive training to help them not only have a secure knowledge of their subject, but also to carry out checks on how well pupils are achieving. They have time to undertake monitoring activities and also provide guidance on how to evaluate pupils' achievement accurately.
- Finally, we looked closely at the effectiveness of leaders' actions on improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. This was also an area for improvement at your last inspection. Disadvantaged pupils achieve well and make good progress. Governors follow the progress of these pupils closely and ask questions to ensure that the additional funding is spent properly. Senior leaders and teachers understand pupils' needs and barriers to learning well and take effective action to help overcome them. For example, leaders understand the need to help pupils to

read regularly at home. As a result of their interventions, several disadvantaged pupils have made very strong progress and caught up with their peers in reading.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in the teaching of writing are embedded and further developed so that a greater proportion of pupils across the school achieve the greater depth standard
- pupils are provided with more opportunities to gain a better understanding of the diverse communities that make up modern Britain beyond the local area.

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

Yours sincerely

Bruce Waelend  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator to discuss various aspects of the school's work. I also met with four middle leaders to discuss the curriculum and spoke to several staff members around the school during the day. Three members of the governing body met with me to discuss their roles in the school. Another governor participated in the meeting by speakerphone. I spoke to a representative of the local authority on the telephone. I visited all classes with the deputy headteacher to observe teaching and learning, to talk to pupils and look at their work. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school, including at playtime. Several pupils spoke with me on the playground during morning breaktime. I met with 16 pupils from Reception to Year 6 to gather their views of the school. I also spoke with parents on the playground at the end of the day. I took into account 34 responses to Parent View, including 19 free-text responses and also considered 16 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.