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Ms Caroline Boyle  
Headteacher  
Buckingham Primary School  
Buckingham Road  
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TW12 3LT

Dear Ms Boyle

### **Short inspection of Buckingham Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 19 June 2019 with Sean Flood HMI, 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 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 leadership team lead and manage the school very well. You have ensured that pupils' learning and well-being are at the centre of the school's work. Leaders at all levels know their pupils and families well. They use this knowledge effectively to drive improvements.

Leaders, including governors, are accurate in their evaluation of the work of the school. They are honest in identifying areas where further focus is necessary. Leaders' improvement planning addresses weaker areas and their regular checks make sure that the actions of all staff make a positive difference.

Leaders have addressed the areas for improvement identified at the previous inspection. They have invested heavily in ensuring staff have access to high-quality professional development. They work alongside the local authority and the local network of schools to enhance teachers' subject knowledge. As a result, leaders have secured improvement in the quality of teaching and learning overall. Leaders have also created plenty of opportunities for children in the early years to develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills, both indoors and outdoors. As a result, a higher proportion of children in the early years now achieve the early learning goals in these subjects.

Parents and carers are delighted with all that the school offers. Parental responses to the online Parent View questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive. They appreciate that leaders and teachers are approachable, and they value the enrichment opportunities for pupils which complement the curriculum. Parents typically say that the school staff are a 'truly dedicated and caring team'. Also typical of their comments was: 'Even though the

school has grown in size, it has retained its friendly and family-oriented atmosphere.'

Governors are committed to ensuring that all pupils in school, regardless of their starting points, make strong progress in all areas of the curriculum. They offer sharp and timely challenge to leaders. They deploy resources strategically to enable pupils who require additional support to catch up with their peers.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

School leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. They ensure that checks on the suitability of staff are thorough and that they meet requirements. Records are detailed, organised and maintained to a high standard. Staff training is kept up to date.

The safeguarding team has a review group to monitor any concerns that the school may have for vulnerable pupils. Records show that swift action is taken to protect children should the need arise. Leaders know families and individual pupils very well. Staff and governors have a clear understanding of safeguarding issues in the local community. Pupils who make up the 'junior safeguarding team' regularly communicate recommendations to leaders and governors on how to make the school even safer for pupils.

The pupils I spoke to all report that they feel safe in school. Bullying is rare and they can all identify an adult in school that they can talk to if they have any concerns. Pupils are polite and well behaved in lessons and when moving around the school. Pupils are aware of how to keep themselves safe online. They can explain clearly what steps they would take when working online. Parents are kept well informed to help them keep their children safe when accessing online materials at home.

### **Inspection findings**

- During our initial discussion with leaders, we identified writing as a key line of enquiry. This was because progress in writing by the end of key stage 2 has been significantly below average for the last three years. This was particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. Attainment has been broadly in line with the national average over the last three years. Leaders had correctly identified this as their key priority in their own evaluation.
- Standards in writing have risen in key stage 1 and current assessment information shows that they are expected to be above the national average this year. Detailed scrutiny shows that leaders evaluate accurately and work seen matches teachers' own evaluations. Teachers are eager to ensure that their own assessments are accurate and reflect pupils' abilities.
- In key stage 2, the school has improved the range of interesting texts available for pupils to read. Across the school, pupils read engaging texts to develop both their vocabulary and their enthusiasm to write. This is motivating pupils in their writing, including boys and disadvantaged pupils. Teachers have received extensive training to deepen their skills in teaching writing. Leaders have further plans for 'English champions' to support teachers in every year. Teaching assistants have also received training. School leaders ensure that support staff are deployed to where they are the most effective.

- Pupils' attainment in writing has risen this year and their progress is stronger. However, further work needs to be done to improve outcomes in writing for all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, so that all pupils make strong progress.
- We also looked at reading as a key line of enquiry. This was because in the past, the progress made by pupils in this subject was below the national average. This has also improved recently. However, in 2018, the progress made by disadvantaged pupils remained below that of other pupils nationally.
- Leaders have reviewed the way reading is taught across the school. Building on the strong outcomes in reading in key stage 1, teachers in key stage 2 focus on developing pupils' comprehension skills. Teachers are effective at probing pupils' understanding of what they are reading. Teachers also ensure that pupils develop a rich vocabulary, for example by studying the type of language authors use. Pupils show well-developed reading skills, including the more sophisticated skills of inference and deduction.
- Pupils have a genuine love of reading. They talk about the books they read at home and at school with enthusiasm. Pupils we heard read did so fluently and expressively. As a result, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in reading.
- Finally, we looked at mathematics in key stage 2. We wanted to explore what accounts for the strong progress pupils make in this subject, compared with reading and writing.
- Mathematics is a strength of the school. Leaders have put in place a well-sequenced mathematics curriculum. Across the school, teachers build on pupils' prior learning to develop their mathematical knowledge. Pupils receive plenty of opportunities to practise and consolidate calculation and number skills, therefore demonstrating mastery. Teachers regularly check pupils' depth of understanding, for example by introducing mathematical problems in a variety of ways.
- Pupils regularly engage in challenging activities. Most recently, leaders focused on developing pupils' ability to reason mathematically. Across the school, pupils are now confident in articulating their learning in mathematics. Consequently, pupils, including disadvantaged pupils across key stage 2, make good progress over time. The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, often make strong progress.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make strong progress in their writing so that they reach the standards of which they are capable.

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

Yours sincerely

Edison David  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During this inspection, we discussed the work of the school with you and with members of the senior leadership team. We spoke to pupils to discuss their experiences in lessons, the extent to which they feel safe, and their views on learning and behaviour. We held discussions with a representative of the local authority. We considered 124 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, 29 responses to the staff survey and 13 responses to the pupil survey. We met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. We also considered documentation provided by the school and information posted on the school's website. We looked at the single central record of staff suitability checks, and the school's analysis of pupils' attendance and behaviour. Together with school leaders, we visited classes to observe learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. We listened to pupils read from across the ability range.