

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Miss Claire Hodgson  
Headteacher  
Burstow Primary School  
Wheelers Lane  
Smallfield  
Horley  
Surrey  
RH6 9PT

Dear Miss Hodgson

### **Short inspection of Burstow Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 2 July 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 June 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 provide impressive leadership for your school, leading with clarity of vision, determination and good humour. You work constructively with your staff team and have secured notable improvements in the quality of teaching and learning since your appointment in January 2017. You have established an effective team of senior and middle leaders and have developed an atmosphere in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to do their very best, regardless of background, ability or personal circumstance. You have introduced a greater sense of urgency about improving the school's work since your appointment. As a result, the pace of development in the school has accelerated. Staff morale is high, as the school continues to improve.

You and your team have introduced notable improvements to the quality of teaching during the past 18 months. As a result, pupils achieve increasingly well in English, mathematics and science, and standards are rising across the school. The results of the Year 1 phonics screening check were higher than the national average in 2018, and standards at the end of key stage 1 were similarly positive in reading, writing and mathematics.

You were understandably disappointed that outcomes in reading and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 were below the national average in 2018. Since then, you

and your team have worked hard to close the gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding caused by historic weaknesses in teaching. Pupils are catching up quickly, and the quality of pupils' learning continues to improve as developments in teaching take hold. However, you are right to focus on making sure that improvements in mathematics teaching are fully established across key stage 2 so that pupils achieve as well as they should by the end of Year 6.

A number of staff changes during the past year have frustrated your attempts to secure improvements in teaching and learning in some year groups, particularly in key stage 2. Nevertheless, the teaching of writing has improved and a consistent approach to teaching writing skills is now in place across the school. Outcomes in writing increased in 2018 and were in line with the national average at the end of both key stages. You are now building on this good start by focusing on improving pupils' spelling.

Strong relationships and consistent routines ensure that children in Reception Year settle well into school life. Adults provide a stimulating range of activities which enthuse children about learning and prepare them well for the next stage of their education. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of early years increased substantially in 2018 and was higher than the national average. Parents speak very positively about their children's earliest experiences of school during Reception Year.

Pupils enjoy school and behave well. They work hard in lessons and play sensibly during playtimes. There was great excitement during the inspection, as pupils visited their new classrooms in preparation for September. Pupils behaved sensibly throughout, chatting to each other happily as they got to know their new teachers.

Parents have every confidence in the school. They speak enthusiastically about their children's learning and know that you and your team are genuinely interested in their views. Parents who spoke with me during the inspection said that their children are welcomed each morning by smiley teachers and teaching assistants. One commented, 'You know that staff really care about the children and are interested in their learning,' a view echoed by pupils' evident enjoyment of school. Some parents, however, would like to see improvements in the quality of communication between the school and parents, an area which I know that you are also keen to develop.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You and your team of governors pay close attention to pupils' safety. Clear expectations of staff and pupils, combined with well-established safety procedures, ensure that the school operates smoothly on a daily basis. The school grounds and premises are maintained to a good standard so that pupils are able to learn and play safely. Parents are very pleased with some of the improvements in safety procedures introduced since the previous inspection, such as locking and unlocking the school gates at a set time and the introduction of a policy which requires all adults to leave mobile phones in the office.

You use a range of activities and checks, including audits of the school's safety procedures completed by safeguarding specialists and governor visits, to ensure that safeguarding arrangements are effective and consistently followed. You take prompt action if you or your staff have any worries about pupils' safety, and you make sure that recommended actions are put in place. You and your team maintain good relationships with agencies, including the local authority safeguarding team.

Teachers are alert to pupils' safety in lessons. For example, they make sure that pupils use equipment safely during cookery activities and remind them to wash their hands before lunch. Good levels of supervision during playtimes mean that pupils can relax and have fun with their friends confidently and securely. Strong and caring relationships ensure that they feel comfortable and secure. Adults value pupils' views and respond sensitively to any worries. Pupils say that their teachers take good care of them in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- I focused particularly on the following areas during the inspection: the extent to which leaders have improved teaching and learning in mathematics since the previous inspection; how well disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are supported; and pupils' attendance.
- Leaders have taken effective action to develop the quality of mathematics teaching since the previous inspection, and particularly in the last 18 months. As a result, pupils' learning has improved substantially. Leaders have reviewed and updated the mathematics curriculum to ensure that teaching builds pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills more effectively than in the past. Good use of staff training has strengthened teachers' understanding of how to teach aspects of mathematics using a range of methods, including practical equipment. As a result, pupils develop a more secure understanding of mathematical concepts than in the past. For example, pupils in Year 1 recently used two- and three-dimensional shapes to explore shape, angles and measurement. Confident understanding of shape meant that they were able to tackle subsequent mathematical problems successfully.
- Improvements in mathematics teaching are particularly noticeable in early years and key stage 1. The number of Reception Year children achieving well in number increased sharply in 2018, while outcomes in mathematics at the end of Year 2 were above the national average. These notable improvements in teaching and learning mean that the younger pupils in the school are securely equipped with the knowledge and skills needed to achieve well in mathematics during key stage 2.
- It has taken longer for improvements in mathematics teaching to become established in key stage 2 than in early years key stage 1. Most teachers are diligent in following the school's revised policy for teaching mathematics. However, developments are still at an early stage and are not fully established during key stage 2, consequently some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Despite this, however, standards in mathematics are much higher than they were

a year ago, including an increase in the proportion of pupils on track to achieve greater depth of learning at the end of Year 6 in 2019.

- Leaders have strengthened the focus on making sure that all groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, are supported effectively. For example, they have invested in additional specialist services, including speech and language therapy, educational psychology and the family liaison officer. As a result, leaders are able to identify and support pupils with additional needs far more quickly than in the past.
- Good-quality training during the past 18 months has strengthened teachers' understanding of how they can support all pupils, regardless of context, background or ability. Improvements in teaching mean that disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND make similar progress to other pupils. Pupils with SEND make strong progress from their starting points, and the differences in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils are narrowing.
- Parents of children with SEND say that all members of the staff work very well together to support their children. Parents know who to contact if they would like advice or if they wish to discuss their children's progress. They say that the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) is approachable, interested in their views and responsive.
- Rates of attendance for all groups of pupils have improved during the past three years and are currently much closer to the 2018 national average than previously. However, disadvantaged pupils' attendance is lower than the national average, despite improvements. Leaders continue to work constructively with parents to ensure that all groups of pupils attend regularly. For example, the school's family liaison officer works closely and effectively with parents to support pupils' welfare and attendance, often acting as a linchpin when it comes to directing families to specialist advice or support beyond the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- recent improvements in the teaching of mathematics are fully established in key stage 2
- disadvantaged pupils attend regularly
- arrangements for communicating with parents are strengthened.

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

Yours sincerely

Julie Sackett  
**Ofsted Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

I visited nine classrooms with you and your SENCo during the inspection. I spoke with pupils and looked at their work during these visits. I also spoke with pupils informally during breaktimes. I met with you, your deputy headteacher and other senior and middle leaders. I also met with two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I met with several members of staff to discuss the school's work and reviewed a sample of pupils' workbooks. I took account of 65 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 62 free-text comments, and a letter received from a parent. I reviewed the school's website and considered a range of documents, including your summary of the school's effectiveness and the school improvement plan. I also looked at a range of safeguarding documents and information about pupils' behaviour and attendance.