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Mr Steve Springett-McHugh
Executive Headteacher
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Dear Mr Springett-McHugh

Short inspection of Bushfield School

Following my visit to the school on 16 November 2018, 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 March 2015.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I am of the opinion that the school has demonstrated strong practice and marked improvement in specific areas. This may indicate that the school has improved significantly overall. Therefore, I am recommending that the school's next inspection be a section 5 inspection.

Together with the associate headteacher, and well supported by a highly effective team of staff and governors, you have created a very strong culture of aspiration in which staff and pupils reach for the highest standards. Your vision that everyone will achieve exceptionally well is very clear. Leaders share your vision, as well as your commitment to make this vision a reality. You have developed an extremely strong and dedicated team to continually improve the school. This was reflected in the comment made by one member of staff who said: 'I love it, I cannot imagine working anywhere else.' The school is vibrant and happy, where pupils make very rapid progress and those who need to catch up do so quickly. One parent said: 'My child is extremely happy to attend Bushfield every day.'

Pupils said that the school is friendly and welcoming. They told me that the adults are caring and that they like their school a lot. One pupil said: 'There is always an adult to go to if you need to.' Pupils' behaviour is very good at all times of the day, including at playtime, as they move around the school, and when they are in

lessons. They are keen to do well. They work extremely hard and participate very enthusiastically in lessons.

Parents and carers say that you and the staff are approachable, readily listen to their concerns and help quickly. They say that you have created a nurturing school and instil good values for the children. This is reflected in the comment by one parent who wrote: 'The school has fuelled a love of learning in my children, academically, through PE, sport, dancing and music.'

Governors share your ambition for the school. They are, collectively, highly strategic and effective. Governors know the school very well and bring a wide range of skills to their roles. They challenge you and senior leaders very strongly to make sure that pupils achieve the highest standards.

You have dealt effectively with the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection. You were asked to ensure that teaching improved, by making sure that teachers give pupils, particularly the most able pupils, more-challenging work. Teachers take full account of the pupils' knowledge and understanding and set work that fully meets their needs, including the most able pupils.

You were also asked to ensure that pupils read a wide range of appropriately demanding texts in different subjects so that they can apply and improve their comprehension skills. Pupils read widely and purposefully. Teachers select texts that provide pupils with high levels of challenge. The texts have meaningful links to other subjects. Through your wider curriculum, pupils are given a sense of the experiences behind the words. As a result, pupils' reading skills are very strong. You acknowledge that very occasionally the effectiveness of adults' questioning varies. When this happens the pace of learning slows.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team has created a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders, including governors, have ensured that the safeguarding systems and procedures in place are fit for purpose, pupils are kept safe and records are of high quality. Staff know what to do if they feel that a pupil is at risk, and they know to whom they must report any concerns. This is because staff are well trained and their training is updated regularly.

Senior leaders and governors carry out regular and thorough checks to ensure that the suitability of processes for appointing staff are secure. The governor responsible for safeguarding meets with the designated safeguarding lead on a regular basis to ensure that all procedures are executed effectively.

Pupils told me that they feel safe in school. Staff feel that they are helped effectively by leaders when providing support for pupils, particularly vulnerable pupils. Relationships are strong in the school and are built on a culture of mutual trust and respect. This means that pupils quickly get the help that they need at the right time.

Inspection findings

- I examined pupils' achievement in reading. Leaders have significantly strengthened the teaching of reading through very effective support for staff. This is having an extremely positive effect on pupils' skills and their understanding of what they read. Adults use precise language when talking to children with limited reading skills, to illustrate very clearly the sounds that letters make. This helps pupils to develop the phonics skills of blending words and sounds accurately.
- Older pupils are challenged very effectively because teachers use a wide range of texts that make pupils think hard about the meaning behind words and phrases. For example, teachers in Year 5 expertly led discussions to help pupils gain a deep understanding of the descriptive language used to describe the main character from 'The legend of Frances Brandywine'.
- I also looked at the achievement of the most able pupils. These pupils are provided with well-planned opportunities to ensure that they reach high standards in English, mathematics and other curriculum areas. Teachers provide the pupils with challenging reading and writing tasks, ensuring that they make very rapid progress. The most able pupils' writing is very well structured and shows that they use adventurous vocabulary effectively. In mathematics, the pupils' work shows that they are making very quick gains in their knowledge and skills. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, their planning is strong, and they make effective links between mathematics and other subjects. Teachers use imaginative approaches to help the most able pupils understand a wide range of complex mathematical ideas, for example when learning about shapes and their properties. As a result, a high proportion are on track to reach a greater depth of understanding in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Girls make very rapid progress in reading and mathematics. Evidence in lessons and books shows that girls are using and developing mathematical problem-solving and reasoning skills very effectively. Pupils gave many examples of how their teachers help them to improve their understanding. For example, teachers encourage pupils to use a wide range of practical equipment to support their learning in mathematics. Girls also make strong progress in reading because reading is taught systematically.
- Teachers use high-quality texts very effectively to build pupils' understanding of inference. Pupils are highly enthusiastic about reading, and provide highly detailed explanations when answering questions about a wide variety of challenging texts. Pupils' reading skills are sharpened further because they apply their reading skills successfully across the curriculum. However, there are times when pupils respond to challenges that are too easy, which consequently fail to stretch their thinking.
- Leaders and staff have worked together very effectively to reduce exclusions. The proportion of pupils who had a fixed-period exclusion was previously above the national average. Leaders have ensured that there are clear expectations and sanctions for pupils if they do not adhere to the school's values. Pupils' behaviour and the school's response to any poor behaviour are managed extremely well.

For example, some pupils benefit immensely from expressing their feelings, both verbally and through art, through attending the 'graffiti club'. Staff are adept in analysing patterns of behaviour to limit substantially the times when behaviour falls below the school's high expectations. As a result, there have been no exclusions in the previous and current academic years.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- staff use questions more consistently to develop pupils' understanding and extend learning.

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

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, I met with you, your associate headteacher, and two governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with your deputy headteacher and the leaders of English and mathematics. Together with you and the associate headteacher, we visited classrooms to observe teaching and learning. I also looked at pupils' books and other work.

I spoke by telephone with a representative of the local authority. I met with a group of pupils and a range of staff. I took account of the 57 free-text responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and spoke with parents at the end of the school day. I evaluated information in relation to pupils' achievement, pupils' views, the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan and a sample of monitoring records. I also met with you and two leaders as designated safeguarding leads, and reviewed documentation about how you keep your pupils safe.