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Mr A Gallagher
Headteacher
Burghfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School
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Dear Mr Gallagher

Short inspection of Burghfield St Mary's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 15 November 2017, 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 November 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The school has expanded. There are now seven single age-range classes. The school environment has improved greatly since the previous inspection following completion of the new building. Teachers ensure that classrooms are well organised and welcoming, with bright, lively displays which provide an effective environment for learning. School leaders have successfully addressed the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. The quality of teaching over time is consistently strong. Pupils at the end of every key stage achieve well.

The vast majority of parents are positive about the school, they say that teachers are approachable and supportive of their child's academic and personal needs. Parents say the school encourages pupils to develop their individual talents well. Many of the parents who completed the free text online questionnaire, Parent View, say they are extremely happy with the academic opportunities the school provides as well as the additional enrichment activities in sport, drama and music. Pupils, too, say they enjoy the opportunity to learn the clarinet in Year 4, and take part in the wide range of after-school activities such as judo, netball, hockey and the book club. Older pupils also enjoy the opportunities to be a 'buddy reader' with younger pupils.

School leaders have established successfully a nurturing, supportive culture where pupils thrive and flourish, both in their academic achievements and their personal development. Pupils are polite, thoughtful and caring. The school ethos encourages pupils to succeed and mature into confident self-assured learners. Pupils and a number of parents speak highly of the opportunities the school provides for pupils to lead assemblies and to speak confidently in public. Pupils learn to respect each other and celebrate the unique differences in each other. They understand about democracy and know that they have opportunities themselves to vote for the school council members and for those who will be 'Santa's elves' in the Christmas Grotto. Pupils know that the school council helps to make decisions about improvements they hope to see, for example the building of an outside classroom for science.

Governors are very supportive of the school and make regular visits to classrooms and school events. Parents appreciate this. They know that, together with the dedicated school staff, governors are working hard to continue to improve the school. Governors attend training to increase their skills and abilities to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively. The chair of governors checks that suitable governors with particular skills are recruited to the governing body to ensure effective strategic leadership of the school.

In evaluating the work of the school, school leaders set out the activities that have taken place, rather than citing the evidence of the impact that their actions have had on outcomes for pupils. The school development plan outlines key activities for further improvement, but it is not based on a detailed analysis of the outcomes of all groups of pupils. As a result, it is not possible to measure the impact of the plan, or the difference it has made to improving outcomes for different groups of pupils.

A small minority of parents said they were not happy with the way the school deals with bullying. This was explored during the inspection. Staff all agree that the school deals effectively with any bullying issues that arise. Pupils showed a good understanding of behaviours that constitute bullying. They say bullying incidents are rare and know that there is an adult they can talk to if they have any concerns. However, school leaders' records of the actions and the monitoring of such concerns lack rigour.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders have established an effective culture of safeguarding. Safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff and the vast majority of parents say that the school keeps pupils safe. Pupils say they feel safe. They know that regular fire drills and the lock down procedures are important to help to keep them safe in an emergency. They know what to do, should any such situation arise, because they practise these procedures regularly. Pupils learn about keeping safe on the roads and older pupils take part in bike ability training. During swimming lessons, they learn about keeping safe in the water. Pupils showed a good understanding of how to keep safe online and know what they need to do if they encounter any issues.

Staff have been suitably trained to ensure that they fully understand their responsibilities to keep pupils safe in school. The safeguarding governor checks that safeguarding procedures are in line with statutory requirements. During the summer term, some shortcomings in information and paperwork were identified. School leaders know that thorough records and accurate paperwork are required to ensure that all procedures are effectively implemented. The safeguarding governor continues to ensure that issues are rectified successfully.

Inspection findings

- Attainment at the end of Reception has been consistently above the national average for the last three years. Children get off to a good start in their learning and achieve well, because teaching and leadership in the early years are good. Children enjoy their learning. Adults support them well to develop their knowledge and skills in all areas of learning.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been above the national average overall for the last four years. In 2017, all groups of pupils achieved well. All pupils in Year 2 whose phonics skills were rechecked achieved the expected standard. This is because teachers use effective strategies and are trained well to pronounce phonemes correctly. Pupils are able to use their phonics skills well to blend and segment unfamiliar words.
- By the end of Year 2, pupils' progress continues to be strong. Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for all pupils have been above the national average for the last six years.
- In 2017, all Year 2 pupils achieved the expected standard, and a significant proportion achieved a greater depth of understanding in reading. In writing and mathematics, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard was well above the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving greater depth in mathematics was above the national average. However, in writing, the overall proportion, and the proportion of boys achieving a greater depth of understanding, dipped below the national average.
- The English subject leader has taken effective action to improve outcomes for boys in writing. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their writing, to help them to consolidate their thinking before beginning to write. By implementing this strategy, pupils develop their ideas, particularly in writing stories, which enables them to write about characters and settings of interest to them. This strategy is at an early stage of development and the impact is yet to be measured.
- By the end of Year 6, pupils achieve well. Attainment has been above the national average for the last four years and in many years significantly above the national average. Pupils are prepared well for their secondary education.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading and writing was above the national average for all groups of pupils. All pupils achieved the expected standard in science. In mathematics, the proportion achieving the expected standard was above the national average for most groups; girls' attainment was in line with the national average. Significantly

higher proportions of pupils than found nationally achieved the higher standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

- The mathematics subject leader has implemented effective strategies to enable pupils to gain a deeper and more secure understanding of mathematics. Teachers are implementing effective strategies to extend pupils' mathematical understanding. In one key stage 2 lesson, the teacher provided a range of opportunities for pupils to explore how to solve word problems using different approaches. Pupils were able to explore the method they found most effective and share their ideas with one another. As a result, they were able to multiply three-digit numbers successfully.
- School leaders know pupils well and check individual pupils' progress over time. They can identify individual pupils whose progress is not as strong as expected. However, currently, there is limited analysis of trends in the achievement of different groups of pupils to enable senior leaders to devise their strategic plans effectively. The English and mathematics subject leaders have developed suitable plans to improve outcomes further in each of their subjects. However, these plans are not based on a detailed analysis of the outcomes of all groups of pupils and currently do not determine how they will successfully measure improvements in outcomes for pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- school self-evaluation judgements are based on secure evidence on the impact of the school's work
- school development planning is derived from a thorough analysis of outcomes and sharply focused on improving outcomes for all groups of pupils
- record-keeping procedures are more rigorous and their effectiveness is regularly reviewed.

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

Yours sincerely

Ann Henderson
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, meetings were held with you, your deputy headteacher and your English and mathematics subject leaders. I had a meeting with five governors, including the chair of governors, your school administrator and a group of pupils. I had telephone conversations with a representative from the local authority and the governor with the responsibility for safeguarding. Pupils' progress in their learning over time was checked by looking at their work in books. We observed learning in six classes together. I scrutinised a range of documents, including information on pupils' achievement, the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, external reports and documentation relating to safeguarding.