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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
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Mrs Rachael Bisset
Headteacher
Butleigh Church of England Primary School
High Street
Butleigh
Glastonbury
Somerset
BA6 8SX

Dear Mrs Bisset

Short inspection of Butleigh Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 1 February 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 February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the previous inspection. There is a clear vision for the school, promoted by you and by governors. This is a small school and, in recent years, you and the governors have not shied away from making some difficult decisions about the organisation and structure of the school. These changes have maintained the quality of education for pupils at your school so that it is still good. Some of the changes brought about as a result of your strategic direction, for example the recent inclusion of the local Nursery provision into the school, provide more stability for pupils' education in the future.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school needed to provide more opportunities for pupils to solve mathematical problems. Evidence seen during this inspection showed that pupils have regular opportunities to think about and solve word problems in their mathematics work. They also use their mathematical skills in other subjects, such as science. For example, pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 used their mathematical skills to investigate forces, helping them find the area of the most efficient parachute canopy.

At the time of the previous inspection, the school was also asked to help pupils develop their enquiry skills and independence. Evidence seen during this inspection showed that pupils can use the skills they have learned in English and mathematics to ask questions and work independently, notably in their history and geography

work.

Safeguarding is effective.

School leaders know the pupils in their care and their families very well. Leaders have ensured that safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and that the records the school keeps are detailed and of good quality. Regular and up-to-date training means that staff and governors know what is expected of them. They understand and implement the most recent government guidance, including how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Governors carefully monitor the school's work to keep pupils safe, for example by jointly conducting safeguarding audits. The school's recruitment procedures ensure that staff who join the school are suitable to work with children. The induction process for new staff places emphasis on the culture of safeguarding promoted by the school.

Pupils say that they feel very safe at school. They are clear that they know whom to talk to if they have a worry or concern and that adults will help them. Parents very strongly agree that their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school. Pupils have a clear understanding of bullying, including cyber bullying. They say that bullying is rare. The school's curriculum helps pupils to learn how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

Inspection findings

- My first line of enquiry was to check how leaders were ensuring effective provision for reading and writing across the school, especially for the most able pupils. By the end of key stage 2, pupils write well across the curriculum. In the most recent Year 6 national tests, pupils made similar progress in writing to other pupils nationally. Leaders have increased the expectations of what is required in writing across the curriculum, with the result that standards of handwriting, spelling and punctuation are maintained well in different curriculum subjects. Pupils enjoy regular opportunities to write at length and in different styles as part of their curriculum work. Teachers model effective writing well. Where this is strongest, adults and pupils share in crafting effective writing. For example, pupils of all abilities in Year 5 and Year 6 demonstrated their fluent use of descriptive vocabulary and appropriate stylistic devices when creating an atmospheric setting for poetry.
- In reading, the school's structured approach to the teaching of phonics means that pupils of all abilities and ages read well and with enthusiasm. Pupils are confident to use their phonics strategies when reading unfamiliar words. A high proportion of pupils in the current Year 1 are on track to meet the national phonics check and by the end of Year 2, almost every pupil reaches the required standard.
- My second line of enquiry was to check what the school was doing to improve progress in mathematics, especially for the most able pupils and for girls. In 2016, although the number of pupils reaching a high score in mathematics was level with national figures, the overall number of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics was below pupils nationally. Leaders have clearly

analysed the reasons for this and responded briskly. They have focused teaching on increasing pupils' mathematical reasoning and introduced new programmes of study for all pupils in mathematics. Although further work remains to fully embed this approach, it is already strengthening and challenging the understanding of pupils. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that girls and boys are making similar progress in their mathematics work. They spoke of their enjoyment of having more opportunities to think and reason about mathematics.

- My third line of enquiry was to ascertain how well disadvantaged pupils are supported. Leaders keep a careful eye on the progress of disadvantaged pupils in the school, with the result that they are making similar progress to that of other pupils. Sometimes they make stronger progress, for example in reading at Year 6. Governors keep a sharp eye on the spending of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. The work of leaders and the family support worker is helping to reduce levels of persistent absence and improve the overall attendance of disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, their attendance is currently closer to the national attendance of all pupils.
- My final line of enquiry was to check what the school was doing to improve outcomes for children in the early years. The headteacher and governors recognise that in recent years the number of children who reach a good level of development at the end of the early years has not been high enough. In response, they have taken some far-reaching decisions to improve outcomes for children. Reception-age children, who arrive in school from different starting points and with a wide variety of previous experiences, are now taught as a distinct year group. A higher proportion of the current children are now making progress that means they are on track to reach a good level of development by the end of their time in Reception. Nevertheless, leaders recognise that children in the Reception class do not have enough opportunities to choose for themselves activities that promote their learning, particularly in the outdoor classroom area.
- Governors have strengthened the provision in the early years by recently taking on the running of the local Nursery. In the Nursery Year, experienced and knowledgeable staff skilfully plan and provide an enticing range of activities across the areas of learning for the two- and three-year-old children, often originating from the children's interests. Leaders recognise that the addition of the Nursery provides them with an immensely valuable opportunity to strengthen the quality of the school's overall early years provision.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers provide further opportunities for the pupils to develop their reasoning skills and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts and skills
- children in the early years are given more opportunities to choose activities which will extend their learning, particularly in the outdoor classroom area.

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

Yours sincerely

Sarah O'Donnell
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you and your senior teacher. We talked about developments in the school since the previous inspection. I looked at safeguarding records and tested out your recruitment and vetting procedures. I held discussions with four governors, including the chair of governors. I talked to other teachers and support staff around the school. Together, we visited mathematics and English lessons and carried out a learning walk around the rest of the school. We also spent time in the early years, including visiting the new off-site Nursery provision. We looked at the work in pupils' books and spoke with them about their work. I observed pupils during morning break, heard pupils read and talked to pupils about their life in school. I looked at the 27 responses to Parent View and considered the comments submitted. I also considered the responses received to the staff and pupil questionnaires.