

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Sian Smith
Executive Headteacher
Bursledon Junior School
Long Lane
Bursledon
Southampton
Hampshire
SO31 8BZ

Dear Mrs Smith

Short inspection of Bursledon Junior School

Following my visit to the school on 14 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 October 2012.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You put the pupils at the heart of your vision for the school. They live up to your mantra of 'love, respect and aspire'. You have galvanised a strong and capable team of leaders and teachers who feel valued, respected and trusted. Teachers work hard 'to deliver your vision for the school, and take their own development as educators seriously'. This is reflected in the improvements to teachers' professional development and your coaching programme, which has transformed the quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school. This is a happy and thriving school where staff work tirelessly to achieve the best outcomes for pupils.

Pupils relish the lively and interesting curriculum. There are extensive opportunities for pupils to study the arts, sport and humanities subjects. Pupils' writing across the curriculum shows the care and attention they give to the presentation of their work, including using correct grammar and spelling. For example, in Year 6, pupils researched the significant events from World War Two and placed these on timelines. They later used these to plan and write biographies of Winston Churchill. On the day I visited, a large group of pupils visited the Harry Potter exhibition in London, studying the writing style of J.K. Rowling, and they had written their own texts, mimicking her style and continuing or editing some of her most famous plot lines. Pupils make strong progress and many attain at the expected standard. However, you rightly recognise that this rapid writing progress must be maintained

so that a greater proportion of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils attain at the higher standard.

On the playground, pupils play well in the extensive grounds and take responsibility for their actions. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the 'craze of the week', where a new activity is chosen and presented for pupils to enjoy at lunchtimes. Pupils note that behaviour is good and they are well looked after by adults. For example, when pupils had concerns about bullying, they were in no doubt that adults would put a stop to it. Pupils are confident, well-mannered and work hard in lessons. Pupils are responsible and take pride in their work. For instance, pupils plan and produce their own daily radio show, 'Buzz FM', creating interesting discussion points and scripts that allow them to speak with confidence when live on air. In mathematics, pupils in all year groups develop strong calculation skills. Leaders rightly recognise that, on occasion, the teaching of mathematics does not sufficiently develop pupils' ability to reason and explain their thinking when solving problems.

At the time of the previous inspection, leaders were asked to improve the quality of their monitoring and feedback for teachers. Since you joined the school, systems for developing teachers have evolved extensively. All staff receive regular coaching and first-class training to address their particular area of need. You, ably assisted by your head of school and senior leadership team, offer staff regular, useful feedback on how to improve. All members of staff record their development in detailed, and often very creative, learning journals. These document your colleagues' reflections on what has worked well, what they need to improve, and the next steps in their learning. All staff who responded to the Ofsted staff survey noted that professional development was improving their practice, and felt trusted to take risks and try out new ideas in class. Your actions have ensured that the retention of staff is high, the quality of teaching is strong, and staff are well placed to drive further improvements to the school.

Safeguarding is effective.

Child protection documents are detailed and well maintained. Statutory checks are completed on staff before they commence employment. Excellent training and induction procedures ensure that no staff commence employment without understanding leaders' high expectations and the systems for child protection.

Staff are knowledgeable and highly vigilant. They know their pupils well and, when concerns arise, these are recorded carefully and swiftly passed on to leaders. In turn, leaders take robust action, working with parents and external agencies to secure the help that pupils need.

Governors check the safeguarding records and monitor the security of the site to satisfy themselves that pupils are safe. Pupils report that adults take their concerns seriously and are always on hand to listen. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For instance, they have a clear understanding of the potential dangers of online gaming, and know how to report concerns. Parents receive useful information about e-safety to help them keep their children safe at home.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look at: the effectiveness of safeguarding; the quality of support for pupils who are lower attaining and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities; the progress of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils in writing; and how effectively leaders work across both the infant and junior schools within the Bursledon federation.
- Leaders and governors keep a close eye on assessment information to identify any pupils who may be falling behind. When progress dips, they quickly deploy additional support and resources to ensure that pupils catch up. For example, pupils who fall behind in reading are given excellent support from specialist staff who help them to comprehend the text that they are reading and predict what may happen next. Pupils, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, make strong and sometimes rapid progress from their starting points.
- Teachers have improved their planning to ensure that pupils regularly write at length for a clear purpose. Pupils develop a secure understanding of grammar and punctuation and use this to write interesting texts in a range of subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 studied the Roman Empire and wrote interesting letters. They assumed the role of a Roman soldier and wrote home, explaining what life is like in Britain, and expressing how much they missed their family. While a high proportion of pupils attain at the expected standard, leaders are aware that too few pupils, particularly the most able and the most able disadvantaged, write at the higher standard for their age group.
- You have wisely directed leaders from the infant and junior schools to work across both sites. This has provided much-needed standardisation to the planning and delivery of the curriculum, and gives a smooth transition for pupils who join the school in Year 3. Staff at all levels feel valued and are offered significant opportunities to work with other leaders and develop their skills. Governors maintain a close eye on the development of leaders, particularly those at the early stages of their careers. Governors work effectively with you and the head of school to ensure that the next generation of the school's leaders are well prepared and supported as their careers develop.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- the progress in writing of the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils accelerates so that a greater proportion attain at the higher standard
- pupils receive consistent and regular opportunities to reason in mathematics.

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

Yours sincerely

Daniel Lambert
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

I met with you, six governors, including the chair of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority. I observed learning in six classes, all jointly with you. We looked at pupils' work, including the early years learning journeys and pupils' books. I analysed a range of the school's documentation, including information about pupils' achievement, the school improvement plan and safeguarding checks, policies and procedures. We discussed your evaluation of the school's effectiveness. I considered the 61 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 54 free-text comments, and spoke to parents at the beginning of the day. I met with six pupils from Years 3 to 6 and gathered the views of other pupils throughout the day.