

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
[www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)



24 April 2019

Mrs Alison Anderson  
Headteacher  
Buckden CofE Primary School  
School Lane  
Buckden  
St Neots  
Cambridgeshire

Dear Mrs Anderson

### **No formal designation inspection of Buckden CofE Primary School**

Following my visit to your school on 19 March 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to confirm the inspection findings.

This inspection was conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 and in accordance with Ofsted's published procedures for inspecting schools with no formal designation. The inspection was carried out as a result of Ofsted's risk assessment procedures.

### **Evidence**

I scrutinised a wide range of information relating to safeguarding and child protection arrangements, including school policies and the single central record of pre-employment checks. I gathered a range of first-hand evidence by meeting pupils, all teaching staff working at the school and leaders. I held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and, by telephone, with a representative from the Diocese of Ely. I also considered the 150 replies to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents and carers. I reviewed work in pupils' books and, together with you and the deputy headteacher, visited all classes in key stage 2 and the early years foundation stage (EYFS) to see pupils' learning.

Having considered the evidence, I am of the opinion that at this time safeguarding is effective and the current overall effectiveness of the school remains outstanding.

### **Context**

The school is a Church of England faith school within the Diocese of Ely. The school is an average-sized primary school with 296 children. The school has been an academy since its conversion in November 2011. The school has recently become a

teaching school and is currently setting up the A1 Teaching School Alliance, of which it will be the lead school.

Most pupils at the school are White British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

The school was last inspected in July 2015. At that time, the school's overall effectiveness was judged to be outstanding, with all aspects of the school's work outstanding except EYFS, which was good.

## **Main findings**

Safeguarding is effective. All statutory requirements are met. Pupils feel safe. Their well-being, including mental health, is a priority for leaders. Pupils know there is someone they can go to with any problems. Very nearly all parents responding to Parent View said their child is happy and safe. Staff and governors are trained appropriately.

At the start of this inspection, I met with you and senior leaders to discuss the pertinent issues about the school and the focus of the inspection.

One key line of enquiry was to check the actions that have been taken by leaders and their success in maintaining high standards. In the summer 2018 national tests, outcomes for Year 6 were below those in previous years. Progress and attainment in writing remained very high but fell dramatically in mathematics. Progress and attainment over a three-year period remain strong. An unusually large number of pupils have joined the school during key stage 2. Pupils that have been part of the school since Year 1 do very well.

Leaders were rightly disappointed by last summer's results. They have identified the reasons and the unusual set of circumstances. They have taken appropriate and effective action to ensure that the progress of current pupils is even better than it was before the dip. The school's internal information, backed up by work in pupils' books and discussion with Year 6 pupils and their teachers, gives confidence that pupils' outcomes in mathematics are rapidly catching up with the very high standards in writing.

Leaders have introduced a new mathematics scheme which is ensuring that improved progress in mathematics is found throughout the school and not just in Year 6. Leaders identified that 'reasoning' is the area of mathematics that pupils find most challenging. Teachers have adjusted pupils' work to provide more activities to build pupils' skills in this area. Leaders have also identified that insufficient familiarity in working under time pressure has led to pupils being unable to fully demonstrate their ability in mathematics. They have introduced more

opportunities for pupils to regularly practise responding to mathematics problems under time pressure. Leaders have increased the time spent on dedicated teaching of mathematics, with an additional 20-minute arithmetic session daily.

Given the dip in results last year, I wanted to check on the extent to which the school's curriculum remains broad and rich. It does. Year 6 pupils have opportunities to practise the national tests and, in the run-up to this year's tests, this has been stepped up. However, Year 6 pupils told me that their favourite subjects include science, physical education, mathematics, English and art. Other subjects mentioned were religious education and history. Pupils' knowledge and understanding in French are built up sequentially over time. The curriculum promotes a thirst for knowledge and understanding and a love of learning. Leaders are continually reviewing the curriculum to keep it relevant and highly engaging.

Subject leaders ensure that the subject requirements are fully covered, although year teams are also encouraged to innovate and provide memorable experiences. Such experiences include the Year 6 residential trip to France, the Year 4 residential trip to Norfolk, trips to museums, including some in London, themed days such as Anglia Water days, science days and the enterprise week. The 'Aspiration' day, involving more than 40 different professionals inspiring all the children in key stage 2 with the wide variety of jobs and professions, is an exemplar of the latest government guidance on how primary schools should begin careers advice and guidance for pupils.

The curriculum in the EYFS has improved since the previous inspection. There has been major investment in the outdoor area, with all activities firmly based on the EYFS 'areas of learning'. The improved curriculum contributes well to the children's strong progress.

Finally, published information on last year's results showed disadvantaged pupils possibly making less progress than other pupils nationally. The numbers are low and so comparisons must be treated with caution. I wanted to check how effectively additional funding is used to tackle barriers to learning for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders can track how additional funding is used to support each individual and analyse the impact. Several of these pupils joined the school in key stage 2, limiting the opportunity for the school's effective work to be fully demonstrated in their progress. It is clear that funding is used effectively. It is also clear that the school's partnership work, for example with the armed forces, and its work on promoting mental health have a positive impact on disadvantaged pupils.

### **External support**

The school has several external partnerships which have a positive impact on the quality of education, for example work with the University of Cambridge's Faculty of Education on supporting pupils with dyslexia and work on the school's curriculum. The school benchmarks its provision using external awards and assessments such

as leaders either attaining or being about to attain specialist leader of education status. Leaders are working towards the Dyslexia Friendly Quality Mark and have submitted an application for the Primary Science Quality Mark. Leaders use consultants from the Diocese of Ely to check on the quality of education.

### **Priorities for further improvement**

- Raise attainment and progress in key stage 2 national tests in mathematics to match those found in writing.

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

Yours sincerely

Adrian Lyons  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**