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Ms Jane Ramsay  
Headteacher  
Burnside Primary School  
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Northumberland  
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Dear Ms Ramsay

### **Short inspection of Burnside Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 8 March 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 March 2012.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

Since the last inspection, you have provided exceptional leadership, which has driven the development of the school and improved outcomes for pupils. Along with other school leaders and governors, you have accurately identified the school's strengths and priorities for improvement. The school's self-evaluation and development plans map out the next steps to drive improvement. The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

You and your staff have created a vibrant learning environment where displays of high-quality work celebrate pupils' work across the curriculum. Along with your leaders and governors, you are ambitious to help all pupils to achieve the best outcomes. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour and attitude to learning were exemplary. At playtime they engaged in a range of activities, which encourage pupils to be active, friendly and to socialise well. In the classrooms, which we visited together, pupils worked hard and with persistence when they were grappling with challenging work. The online parent questionnaire, Parent View, shows high levels of parental satisfaction with the school.

Leaders and staff have successfully tackled the two areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection. Firstly, you have worked hard to improve the quality of teaching and to raise achievement. Peer coaching approaches have enabled your teachers to work in small groups to share good practice. You and your leaders check carefully that teaching has a positive impact on pupils' outcomes. As a

result, pupils' outcomes are very strong across the school. However, you recognise that there is still more to do to improve pupils' progress in mathematics to bring it up to the higher progress levels found for reading and writing.

The second area to address, which included both refining your approach to checking the progress of pupils and engaging more effectively with parents, has also been tackled. Your comprehensive termly reports provide useful evaluations of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress. These reports include detailed analyses of individual pupils' progress, as well as reviews of the performance of key groups, such as boys and girls, disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. With respect to parental engagement, you have helped inform parents about your approaches to teaching in English and mathematics as well as the arrangements for national assessments. This is helping parents to support their children with their learning.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Leaders and governors have ensured that current safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are of a high quality. You, your staff and governors give the highest priority to keeping pupils safe. Leaders carry out appropriate checks for all staff, governors and volunteers. Staff understand the safeguarding procedures and their own responsibilities. Leaders manage referrals to other agencies effectively. Your recently updated safeguarding policy, which is about to be ratified by governors, meets current requirements. Staff and governors receive regular and appropriate training so they know how to keep pupils safe, including training about how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism. The headteacher and governors have a good understanding of how this training applies to the community the school serves. Leaders follow the safeguarding guidance for policy and practice provided by the local authority diligently.

Staff provide pupils with teaching and guidance about how to keep themselves safe, including when they are online. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms that bullying can take and know that staff will help them if they ever have concerns. Pupils also value the playground buddies who they know will provide them with peer support. Pupils say incidents of bullying are rare in their school. The school's records show that staff quickly address the few incidents of bullying.

### **Inspection findings**

- In 2016, pupils' progress in mathematics was broadly in line with that found nationally. As a result, by the end of Year 6 the proportion of pupils attaining the expected level in mathematics was above that found nationally and the proportion working at the higher standard matched the national average. You, your leaders and governors are determined to improve pupils' progress in mathematics to the higher levels of progress, which your pupils achieve in reading and writing. You have created a specific plan to address this area for improvement. However, the plan would benefit from clearer measures of success related to pupils' outcomes, as well as sharper timescales and monitoring arrangements.

- The recently appointed subject leader for mathematics has begun to take action to improve the subject. These actions include the development of interventions to help pupils who are underachieving and the daily 'times tables rock stars' initiative, which aims to improve pupils' rapid recall of multiplication facts. You recognise that the subject leader is new to the role and have plans to ensure that relevant professional development and senior leadership guidance is provided to develop leadership skills to drive this important school priority.
- Teachers are working hard to respond to the new mathematics national curriculum. There is growing evidence of more opportunities for pupils to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. However, from our visits to classrooms, sampling of pupils' books and review of your pupils' progress information, you agreed that there is still further work needed to improve mathematics teaching.
- You, your leaders and governors check the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities carefully. Your detailed pupil profiles provide a wealth of information to help ensure that you promptly identify any barriers to learning and take steps to overcome them. As a result, these pupils are making at least good progress, and in some cases they are making accelerated progress from their starting points.
- Pupil's outcomes in English are very strong. Most pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points in reading and writing. As a result, in 2016 pupils' progress in these subjects was significantly above that found nationally by the end of Year 6. Pupils' attainment is also high in reading and writing. In 2016, by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 the proportions of pupils working at the expected and higher standards in reading and writing were above those found nationally.
- Teachers ensure that pupils' phonic skills are very well developed. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who achieved the expected standard in the national phonics screening check has been above that found nationally for the last three years.
- Children in the early years get off to a good start to their development and learning. Over the last three years the proportion of children who achieve a good level of development has been above the national average. Your current children's progress information indicates that an even greater proportion of children are on track to achieve a good level of development by the end of their Reception Year. Over time increasing numbers of children are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Overall, your school's attendance is above that found nationally. Pupils enjoy coming to school and understand the value of regular attendance. Good attendance has a high profile around school and you regularly inform parents about attendance levels in school through newsletters. However, over the last two years the levels of absence for some disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs have been too high. You recognise this and agree that leaders and staff could do more to support pupils and their families where attendance levels need to improve.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- a refined action plan to further improve mathematics teaching, which includes a sharper emphasis on improving pupils' progress, is implemented and checked by senior and middle leaders
- strategies for improving the attendance of those disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities who have too high levels of absence are implemented effectively.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the executive director of wellbeing and community health service for Northumberland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Michael Reeves  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During this one-day inspection, I discussed the work of the school with you and the subject leaders for English, mathematics and the early years. I observed and spoke with pupils during playtime and at other times during the day. I held discussions with a representative from the local authority and with three governors who were able to provide me with additional information. I took into account school documentation, assessment information, policies and information posted on the school website. I considered the 79 responses to the Ofsted questionnaire, Parent View. I reviewed the eight responses to the pupil questionnaire. Along with you, I visited six classes to observe teaching and learning. I looked at pupils' mathematics work to help evaluate the quality of teaching and learning over time. I considered behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding.