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Mr Anthony Tierney  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mr Tierney

### **Short inspection of Burbage Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 11 April 2018, 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 July 2015.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. You are extremely proud of the pupils within your school and are determined that their education within Burbage Primary will prepare them well to 'love learning for life'. The school is extremely popular within the community. Overwhelmingly, those parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, believe that their child is well taught and makes good progress and would recommend the school. Parents praised the 'knowledgeable and caring staff' and the positive impact their work has on their child's achievements and their happiness within school. Many told the inspector that they 'couldn't praise the school enough' and that they wished they had attended such a school when they were children.

Pupils said that they 'love' their school and enjoy their lessons. They told the inspector that they felt the work set for them was appropriately pitched and that their teachers 'give lots of hints, tips and structures' in order that they quickly grasp the learning, apply it and make it their own. They said that they valued the many opportunities they received to learn outdoors and experience nature within the community. On the day of the inspection, tadpoles had hatched in the school pond. This caused much fascination and glee from pupils and their teachers.

You joined the school in September 2015. You were not in post at the previous inspection; however, you have worked tirelessly to address the areas identified for improvement at the time. During this inspection, the inspector identified that

leaders should ensure that all teachers check pupils' prior knowledge to help them plan learning activities which challenge all pupils appropriately. Improving the quality of assessment in order that teachers have an accurate view of pupils' learning starting points has been your significant focus. You are adamant that the quality of pupils' learning is at the heart of the newly developed assessment process. Teachers' planning is now sharply focused to meet pupils' learning needs. A rigorous system of accountability is established and regular checks happen to ensure that pupils are learning and achieving as they should. Although more time is needed to see the full impact of these improvements, there is strong evidence that pupils' attainment has improved and current pupils' progress is accelerating. You are focused on further accelerating pupils' progress, particularly that of the most able.

You said that you believe that the provision within the early years is a particular strength of the school. The early years leader is highly regarded. She contributes significantly to the partnership working within the local school cluster. The proportion of children who achieve a good level of development fell slightly in 2017. Although some children did not attain a good level of development, they progressed particularly well from their starting points. For example, many children progressed well against each of the areas of learning, including reading and mathematics. You said that you were proud of the many successes of these children and the ways in which they are now progressing in key stage 1.

You rightly identify reading as an area of focus for the school. A member of the senior leadership team is now the lead for literacy. She is highly effective in the role. Her work as an external moderator for the local authority has proved to be particularly helpful. Extensive training has happened within school and within the local school cluster to develop teachers' skills, particularly in the assessment of pupils' reading skills. Initiatives such as 'reading bingo' encourage pupils' and parents' involvement in fun reading activities at home. The reading buddy scheme helps to build pupils' confidence and provides them with reading role models.

Fewer disadvantaged pupils than the national average attend the school. The success of these pupils is of high priority to all staff. The leader of this aspect of the school's work is clearly driven to ensure that pupils receive the support and care that they require in order to achieve. Individualised planning is in place so that teachers can successfully address any barriers to pupils' learning.

The curriculum is a developing strength of the school. Care and effort have been taken to ensure that pupils receive a rich experience of learning across a broad range of subjects. Pupils from the early years to Year 6 are taught physical education, music, modern foreign languages and humanities by subject specialists. Pupils thrive because of these experiences.

You are driven to ensure that the school is alive with sport and pupils' activity. Pupils express a real love of the opportunities they gain to be active and to participate. On the day of the inspection, pupils in Years 5 and 6 were involved in orienteering within the local area. The football team are the Derbyshire champions, the netball team, the Buxton champions. Importantly, many chances are found

throughout the school day for all pupils to enjoy being active.

Communication with parents and within the local community is effective. Regular opportunities are found to ensure that parents receive high-quality and frequent information about their child. Events happen so that parents are well informed. On the day of the inspection, an information evening was planned for parents of Year 6 pupils. Events have also taken place to inform parents of the assessment systems within school. Parents' view of the school is extremely positive.

Governors provide effective support. They are knowledgeable and have appropriate skills and a clear determination to ensure that this school is the best that it can be.

Pupils in Year 6 told the inspector that they felt that their headteacher was 'amazing'. They said they valued the interest he and their teachers showed in them and how much effort had been taken so that they can learn lots of things. The vast majority of pupils who responded to the Ofsted pupil survey said that they enjoyed school. All staff that responded to Ofsted's staff survey said that they were proud to work at Burbage Primary School.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

There is a culture of vigilance within the school. All pupils, including the most vulnerable pupils, are well supported. Pupils said that they feel safe and happy in school and that they 'look out for each other'. They said that they could happily approach a range of teachers if they had a worry or needed help.

The senior leader responsible for overseeing safeguarding matters is knowledgeable and highly committed to ensuring pupils' safety and welfare. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. All staff, including governors and volunteers, are well trained. Regular updates happen to ensure that the school community is well informed. The safeguarding policy is appropriate and is up to date. The response to any concerns is rapid. Links with external agencies are good. Where needed, the school sources a range of other support in order to best meet pupils' needs, for example support for pupils' mental health. The systems to manage the single central record of staff are robust. Files associated with staff and staff recruitment are now rigorously kept.

Pupils enthusiastically praised the care and concern shown to them by all staff in the school. All appreciated the specially made ways in which they received the guidance they needed. Dinner supervisors were especially praised for the ways that they provided help during lunchtime, particularly in the playground. They said that they helped 'to make us kind and to help us share'.

Teaching assistants contribute significantly to pupils' welfare. They are a regular point of contact for many pupils and a skilled 'listening ear'. They know pupils and their families well and often provide bespoke help and support where needed. Pupils receive many opportunities to be taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They spoke with enthusiasm about how their teachers promoted their

health, particularly promoting physical activity. Many take part in the morning mile runs, for example. They said that these helped them get ready to learn. Issues such as how to keep safe when using the computer, relationship education and alcohol and drugs education are taught well. Pupils speak knowledgeably and treat these issues with maturity and sensitivity.

### **Inspection findings**

- Leaders have ensured that rapid progress has been made against the areas identified for improvement at the previous inspection.
- The focus on improving the teaching of reading comprehension is showing some impact. There are signs that the most able pupils are making faster progress than they did previously and a higher proportion are achieving at a greater depth in reading. However, improving their achievement across all subjects remains a key priority for the school.
- Within the early years and in Year 1, provision is regularly adapted to ensure that all children make progress suitable to their starting points and stage of learning. Current information indicates that the vast majority of children will achieve a good level of development in 2018.
- Leaders have conducted significant research to establish the most effective learning techniques in order to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly the progress of the most able. For example, a mathematics programme was piloted last year in Year 1 in order to trial a different approach to the teaching of mathematics. This was a success and the programme is now taught across key stage 1. More is known by staff about the learning needs of the most able pupils and much more happens so that pupils use and apply their knowledge and develop their independent-learning and critical-thinking skills.
- In 2017, the lower-than-national proportion of disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as others at the end of key stage 2. Despite this, individual pupils had achieved well. The progress of this current group of pupils is accelerating in all phases.
- The newly established house system has encouraged in pupils a sense of belonging and an ambition that their house will 'be the best'. Rewards are appreciated, as are the many ways in which individual and house achievements are celebrated. Pupils' enjoyment of learning, safeguarding and welfare are of high priority. Pupils said that they feel very proud of their school.

### **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress, particularly the most able pupils' progress, accelerates further and that a greater proportion of pupils achieve at a greater depth.

I am copying this letter to the co-chairs of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Derbyshire. This letter will

be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jayne Ashman  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, the senior leadership team and some governors, including the joint chairs and vice-chair of the governing body. I spoke with all staff during the morning briefing. You and I visited all classes. I met with a group of Year 6 pupils and spoke with parents at the start of the school day. I considered the views of 99 parents posted on Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We conducted an analysis of Year 6 pupils' work across a range of subjects. I evaluated a range of documents, including leaders' self-evaluation, development planning, safeguarding records and policies. Furthermore I considered the views of the 29 members of staff that responded to Ofsted's staff survey and the 74 responses to the pupil survey.