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Jenny Cook  
Headteacher  
Burton Joyce Primary School  
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Dear Mrs Cook

### **Short inspection of Burton Joyce Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 12 March 2019, 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 your predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection.

At the last inspection, the school had undergone significant and rapid changes to move from special measures to good within nine months. At this time, you were the acting head of school and both you and the executive headteacher soon realised that this was just the start of the school's improvement journey.

You have since become the substantive headteacher and two new assistant heads have also been appointed. Together, you have grown into a strong leadership team and your actions have been appropriately focused. You have embedded and built on the changes made in the rapid improvement period leading up to the last inspection, successfully maintaining the impetus to improve. Through engaging and regularly consulting with parents and carers, you have repaired a relationship that was damaged when the school went into special measures. Parents trust leaders now and are highly supportive of the school's work. Many support their children with homework projects and attend special events, for example. On the recent World Book Day, around 100 parents came to school for breakfast and read with their children. On the whole, parents are assured that their children are happy, well looked after and are making good progress and that staff respond well to any concern they raise.

There have been significant changes regarding the governance of the school. The school is now an academy with the Equals Trust (the trust) and also has a firmly established local governing body. The former executive headteacher is the chief executive officer of the trust. He knows the school well but also seeks evaluations and advice from external sources, such as the local authority. Together, the trust and the governing body provide rigorous support and challenge for school leaders to improve outcomes for pupils.

Leaders have maintained high expectations for staff and have invested carefully in their professional development to motivate and enable them to improve. Staff are enthusiastic and quickly take on board new strategies. Staff are universally positive about the support they receive and the improvements made in the school.

Pupils are a real strength of the school and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are articulate, reflective, polite and well mannered. They embody the school's vision and values, being 'ready for anything', and they are highly motivated to learn and improve. Pupils' attendance is above average, which reflects how much they enjoy the school. The pupils I spoke with said they love everything about their school, which has so many good things about it. They talked enthusiastically about the great environment, the exciting curriculum activities, the great teachers and simply that 'everyone is nice'. The school has achieved the School Games Gold Mark, and pupils especially enjoy the many sports and tournaments they take part in. The school has won many competitions, and pupils are rightly proud of the crammed trophy cabinet. One child graciously said: 'We are very competitive but we still work well as a team.'

At the last inspection, leaders were asked to further improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement through ensuring that pupils are engaged when teachers are explaining to or questioning the class. They were also asked to ensure that pupils are well supported and challenged as required, when they are introduced to new content. When we visited lessons together during the inspection, pupils listened carefully during teachers' clear and succinct explanations and responded thoughtfully to questioning or encouragement to provide better responses. Teaching assistants were deployed well to provide effective support for low-attaining pupils to work alongside their peers on age-appropriate content. Teaching assistants also support a more personalised curriculum for pupils with more complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

Systems, policies and procedures are securely in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The school business manager maintains meticulous recruitment records and checks on all adults who work in the school. There are detailed records of safeguarding training for staff around a range of safeguarding issues. Knowledgeable staff are confident in reporting any concerns, which are followed up immediately. You keep meticulous records regarding your work with agencies such as social services, ensuring that the help given by these agencies is timely. The trust ensures that the school fulfils its responsibilities by supporting the governors

to carry out regular, rigorous and thorough checks. As a result, pupils, parents and staff unanimously say that pupils are safe in the school.

The curriculum enables pupils to learn how to keep safe and well. Pupils have learned how to stay safe when they are playing games online, for example. They know not to share any personal information and to block people they do not know from joining their games. Pupils have also been learning about mindfulness to help with their mental well-being. Pupils say that bullying is rare and that they have never experienced cyberbullying but would immediately report this should it occur.

## **Inspection findings**

- In 2018, pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 dipped in all subjects and fell below the national level in mathematics. Progress is not as strong as it could be, and not enough pupils achieve the higher standards of attainment at the end of both key stages. You are fully aware that this is an area of underperformance and have correctly identified which pupils are not doing as well as they could. You have begun to take action and have successfully raised everyone's expectations to ensure that these pupils are appropriately challenged in lessons.
- You are particularly focusing on this in mathematics. Through working with the local 'Maths Hub' and collaborating with other schools in the trust, you have introduced a completely new approach to teaching mathematics. Although you are following a quite prescriptive method, your mathematics leader has begun supporting staff to tailor the delivery so that pupils receive further challenges as soon as they need them. A group of Year 6 pupils told me they enjoy these regular challenges. These pupils particularly referred to the new mathematics text books, explaining how these books break their learning up into meaningful parts, which helps them gain a deeper understanding. As this is a very new approach for the school, the full impact on pupils' outcomes is not evident yet, but you are confident that pupils are making improved progress. However, you need to ensure that pupils are consistently taught in sufficient depth in all areas, so that more pupils can achieve higher standards.
- Although pupils' attainment of the standard expected in writing is broadly average by the end of key stage 2, progress in writing for the largest middle-attaining group of pupils has been significantly below the national level for at least two years. This is particularly the case for boys throughout the school, who you found had not enjoyed writing or felt motivated to do their best. You and your leaders are tackling this and your actions so far are beginning to impact positively.
- Writing activities are now built around a theme or class text and are interesting and purposeful. During the inspection, many pupils were writing about scientific journeys, linked to their 'Science Week' theme. Year 6 pupils were improving a letter written between two characters from their class text, 'The Boy in the Striped Pyjamas'. Pupils explained that they will be visiting the Holocaust Centre and are learning about Judaism, which is helping them to better understand the text and bring their ideas together. They talked enthusiastically about working together on an independent piece of writing for this theme – they particularly like

the idea of 'no teacher involvement'. Pupils also told me that they are expected to produce their best standard of writing in all subject areas, and the success criteria recently introduced in pupils' topic books support this.

- Together, we saw writing or grammar lessons in all classes. On the whole, pupils appeared keen and confident and were mostly enjoying writing. We saw pupils analysing and improving writing, using ambitious vocabulary and extending their good ideas. Pupils generally do well in the statutory grammar and punctuation tests, and their sound grasp of grammar was clear in their sentence construction. During discussion or when giving feedback, some teachers used graduated success criteria to challenge pupils to improve their language choices or use more ambitious punctuation, for example. However, punctuation was not always accurately applied or corrected within the lessons.
- You and your leaders have correctly identified that pupils' spelling is an issue, and your staff have begun to address this. Pupils in older classes in particular are expected to correct their work, using words cards or a dictionary, and practise correcting errors which have been identified by their teacher. However, most of the highlighted incorrect words relate to common words or associated spelling patterns and rules that should have been mastered when the pupils were in earlier year groups. For example, a Year 6 pupil capable of achieving greater depth in writing was misspelling words such as 'scream' and did not know how to apply the 'ful' suffix.
- You have begun to develop your new middle leaders to improve the effectiveness of the school's leadership. With the support of senior leaders and external advisers, the leaders of English and mathematics have started to analyse assessment information, check pupils' work in books and monitor what is happening in classrooms. As a result, these leaders are more aware of where improvements need to be made and have been leading the implementation of new approaches to teaching and learning. In order to drive improvements in their areas more effectively, middle leaders now need to be more precise about how to bring about improvement and develop more focused improvement plans.
- At the last inspection, achievement in the early years was outstanding in all areas. However, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has since plateaued, while it has improved nationally. Although their development is strong and above average in most areas, boys do less well with their development in writing and, in 2018, with number.
- When I visited the Reception classrooms, they were calm and productive while the children focused well on engaging activities that clearly reflected their interests and needs. The knowledgeable early years leader, who is also an assistant headteacher, has taken a focused approach to improving writing. Initially, the leader and her skilled team had identified weaknesses in the children's development of fine motor skills and had adapted their teaching and the classroom provision accordingly. Recent work with the local nursery has meant that fine-motor-skills development has improved significantly, and now staff are concentrating on improving the children's letter formation and handwriting. They have a clear rationale for their approach to this, and it is clear that both boys and girls are making good progress with their writing. Evidence in

the children's independent writing books and in their number work shows more children are on track for reaching a good level of development this year.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- all pupils are taught in sufficient depth to enable more of them to achieve the higher standards of attainment
- they improve pupils' spelling and accurate application of punctuation, so that more pupils, particularly boys, reach the expected standard and greater depth in writing
- they further develop middle leaders' monitoring and evaluation, so that these leaders can pinpoint where improvements need to be made and develop more-focused action plans which enable them to drive improvement in their own areas.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Nottinghamshire County Council. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Claire Stylianides  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I held meetings with you and your senior and middle leaders. I also met with the chief executive officer and an education adviser for the trust. I met with the chair of the local governing body and spoke on the telephone with another member of the local governing body and the trust. I spoke with the school business manager and several other staff. I visited all classrooms with you and examined a range of pupils' books. I spoke with pupils informally during lessons and during a group discussion about their experience of school and I also looked at the 15 responses to Ofsted's pupil survey. I observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons.

I took into account the 27 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, and I spoke with a number of parents at the start of the school day. There were 17 responses to the Ofsted staff survey, which were also considered. I examined a range of documents, including safeguarding records and policies, the latest assessment information, a summary of the school's self-evaluation and its improvement plan, and information relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour. I also examined an external evaluation report received from an education adviser from the local authority.