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Mrs Ash Atherton  
Headteacher  
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Dear Mrs Atherton

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

Following my visit to the school on 10 April 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 March 2014.

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

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

Following the last inspection there was a period of considerable staffing turbulence, including among senior leaders. During this time pupils' outcomes plummeted to well below the national average at key stage 2, and pupils' behaviour deteriorated, with rates of fixed-term exclusion almost double the national average.

In 2016, the school became part of the Hope Academy Trust and in September 2017 an interim headteacher and an experienced Year 6 teacher were appointed. They began the process of improvement, and in 2018 pupils' outcomes at the end of key stage 2 improved markedly to be above the national average in combined reading, writing and mathematics. Raised expectations for acceptable levels of pupils' behaviour were also established. Following your appointment in September 2018, you have built on these firm foundations most admirably. Your determination to turn around the fortunes of the school and your enthusiasm and commitment to the pupils and staff of Burton Green shine through everything you do.

You have inherited an equally committed deputy headteacher, who shares your determination to provide the very best education for the pupils in your charge. As you eloquently said, 'I want all children to have the same starting point and to love their school and to love learning.' Your strong vision for excellence continues to transform the school. Governors and the trust are immensely supportive of you, and

value greatly all that you have achieved so far. They applaud your leadership and the confidence you have instilled in such a short space of time.

One of your first actions was to invest heavily in the environment. New furniture and resources, redesigned shared spaces and carpeted corridors and classrooms have provided a welcoming and homely place to be. Calming music plays in classrooms and corridors and has had the desired effect to contribute to reducing any additional stresses for pupils successfully. Such investment has had an enormous impact on pupils' well-being. Those pupils who I talked to were keen to say how much better things are since you have been the headteacher. Pupils' sense of pride and belonging is tangible and they are thriving as a result of your leadership.

This sense of pride extends to the wider community, including parents, who were equally complimentary about the improvements you have brought. They value greatly the support you and your staff provide, particularly in times of need.

Pupils now behave exceptionally well, and they show much respect to adults and to each other. The strong values and explicit and consistently applied behaviour management system are firmly embedded in all year groups. Pupils comply with your high expectations for good manners and respectful behaviour and any serious misdemeanours are handled proportionately. Such is the high regard in which you are held that pupils simply do not want to let you down. As one Year 6 pupil said, 'I don't want another red card, ever!' As a result, exclusion is a last resort and the use of this sanction has reduced dramatically since your appointment. As a visitor to your school, it is difficult to believe that pupils' behaviour was anything less than exemplary.

Your high expectations extend to all aspects of the school's effectiveness. You invest heavily in providing pupils with a wealth of exciting and engaging experiences to extend pupils' vocabulary, and enrich the curriculum and bring pupils' learning alive. For example, at Christmas Year 6 pupils made gifts and cards to give to members of our emergency services, as special people who look after us. Staff share your view. They value greatly the support and guidance you provide. They respond positively to your high expectations and are enthusiastic practitioners. As a result, classrooms are a hive of purposeful activity, with pupils highly engaged and keen to contribute. This is a happy school, where staff morale is high.

You use the expertise of trust staff and local authority officers to regularly review the quality of teaching and learning in the school to ensure that you are doing all that you can to build further on pupils' improved outcomes. As a result, you have an accurate view of the strengths in your school and what more you need to do.

You and governors ensure that additional funding is spent on those for whom it is intended, particularly disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You are resolute that the higher incidence of persistent absenteeism for disadvantaged pupils will not impact negatively on their achievements. However, we discussed that your pupil premium strategy document

is not reflective of this. In its current form, your actions are not linked sharply to the barriers to learning faced by disadvantaged pupils.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

The leadership team has ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Detailed employment checks are completed on anyone wishing to work at the school, to ensure that they are fit to do so. They are recorded on a single, centrally held record. Minor omissions to this record were put right during the inspection.

Staff undertake frequent training and receive weekly updates from the designated leader to ensure that they remain vigilant. Staff are clear about the process that they must follow to report any concerns that they may have.

Strong relationships enable staff to notice even the slightest changes in pupils' behaviour and that of the wider family members. Designated staff ensure that any concerns are reported in a timely manner. They readily seek the advice and guidance of fellow professionals to ensure that pupils are safe, but do not shy away from professional challenge if they feel strongly that it is in the child's interest.

A review of child protection records during the inspection shows a detailed chronology is maintained by staff and a high level of support and care is given to pupils and their families in times of need.

### **Inspection findings**

- In 2018, pupils' outcomes in mathematics at the end of key stage 2 did not improve at the same rate as those of reading and writing. Pupils' progress was average and no pupils attained the higher standard. I wanted to find out what actions you had taken to improve this. You have established a cohesive and consistent approach to the teaching of mathematics across the school. All lessons are structured to follow the same sequence. All lessons begin with a mental arithmetic starter to improve this aspect of pupils' mathematical knowledge. Pupils then practise their mathematical fluency to ensure that they have the skills they need to move onto more demanding reasoning and problem-solving tasks. Occasionally, I found that the most able pupils are completing fluency activities, of skills that they have already accomplished, before moving onto more demanding tasks of which they are capable. This slows their progress and prevents more pupils from reaching the higher standard.
- Leaders' actions are undoubtedly leading to improving current pupils' outcomes in mathematics, with pupils achieving more highly than was previously the case. A review of assessment information correlates with pupils' work in their books. Pupils' books are very well presented and reflect study of a range of mathematical concepts. However, pupils find it difficult to explain their reasoning and to have a range of skills that they can use to work confidently and systematically to solve more complex problems. At times this leads to unforced errors, and we discussed that this was one of your next steps for improvement.

- Similarly, you have ensured that phonics teaching is consistent. Pupils in Reception and Year 1 receive a daily phonics session, which is highly structured to ensure that pupils make speedy progress in acquiring their early phonics knowledge. Staff have accessed much training and support to ensure that they deliver high-quality phonics sessions. As a result, more pupils in the current Year 1 have already reached the required standard for success in the national phonics screening check than last year and this number is already above the national average seen in 2018.
- I also wanted to check the actions leaders are taking for those older pupils who did not reach the required standard in their Year 1 phonics screening check. There is a dedicated programme of phonics catch-up in place, as well as regular opportunities to read aloud to an adult. Although some pupils have still not acquired the skills to read to the required standard this is mostly linked to other needs.
- Pupils' historical absence rates have increased over time, as has the proportion of pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, who are regularly absent from school. Leaders, including governors, have established an agreed strategy for managing pupils' absence. High expectations for good attendance and punctuality are communicated effectively and pupils enjoy the rewards they receive for their efforts. Even though you have had much success in improving pupils' attendance, there is still much to do to reduce pupils' absence in general and the number of pupils who are persistently absent.
- In 2018, children's outcomes at the end of the Reception class declined and were below the national average, and below those achieved in 2017. Issues with recruitment and staff absence contributed to this, but you also recognised that significant investment in resources, particularly for the outdoor learning space, were also needed. You appointed a new leader of the early years who has transformed both the Nursery and Reception classes. Children are thriving in this exceptionally well-run and well-organised unit. Children's behaviour is excellent, and they readily share equipment and patiently take their turn. As a result, more children are achieving more highly, particularly in the prime area of learning associated with communication and language, than was previously the case.
- My final focus for the inspection was to review the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND. Historically, their outcomes have been lower than the national averages and variable between subjects. A new leader of SEND was appointed by the trust in September 2017. She is highly knowledgeable and experienced, and methodical in her approach. She has established effective procedures, which are supporting the accurate identification of pupils with SEND. This, coupled with the extensive staff training she has provided, means that staff now have greater confidence and skills to manage a range of pupils' needs effectively. Although the same number of pupils are identified with SEND as was the case at her appointment, she has ensured that pupils' primary need is now identified and being supported well. As a result, pupils with SEND make good progress, and increasing proportions of pupils are now supported through an education, health and care plan.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils, particularly the most able pupils, are challenged to think hard about their learning and access more demanding activities, so that more pupils are able to attain at the higher standard in mathematics
- there is greater emphasis upon developing pupils' mathematical reasoning and problem-solving skills so that they become increasingly self-assured to explain their thinking and to have a range of skills that they can deploy when completing extended mathematical problems
- they continue their efforts to reduce pupil absence in general and reduce the number of pupils regularly and persistently away from school so that both figures are at least close to the national average.

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

Yours sincerely

Diane Buckle  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

## **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you and the deputy headteacher to discuss the effects of the action you are taking to continue to improve the school, and to discuss your safeguarding arrangements. We observed learning together in the early years and key stages 1 and 2. While in lessons, we looked at pupils' work in their books and talked to pupils about their learning. I took account of the views expressed by several parents at the end of the school day because there were too few responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. I held meetings with members of the trust, including the chief executive officer, the chair of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. I talked to a group of pupils formally and groups of pupils informally at playtime and lunchtime. I listened to some pupils read. I scrutinised a number of documents, including a range of safeguarding documents, the school's written evaluation of its work and the improvement plan. I also reviewed minutes from recent governing body meetings.