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Mrs Leona Kelly  
Headteacher  
Burnside Academy Inspires  
Burnside Estate  
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Dear Mrs Kelly

### **Short inspection of Burnside Academy Inspires**

Following my visit to the school on 6 June 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 September 2014.

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

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education since the last inspection of the predecessor school. Your determined leadership has brought about improvements to teaching and learning. Well supported by the governing body, you have thoroughly addressed any issues of underperformance, and have brought together a skilled and enthusiastic teaching team. You have identified the strengths and current priorities for the school accurately. You detail further actions to address these priorities in the school development plan, as some of these initiatives are not consistently implemented across the school. Furthermore, the impact of some recent actions to improve outcomes for pupils is yet to show full impact.

You have raised your expectations about what pupils can achieve and improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment through good-quality professional development for staff and by sharing good practice with other schools in the trust. These improvements are now helping pupils to make more secure progress in their learning. You keep a close eye on the quality of teaching, and your feedback to teachers links directly into focused school improvement planning and staff training. You have ensured that refinements to the tracking of pupils' progress lead to accurate analysis of their progress so far, and identify whether pupils are on course to reach the standard expected of their age. However, some teachers do not always pitch work appropriately, and so activities do not fully challenge and stretch pupils.

Governors have a good understanding of how well the school is doing. They come from a wide range of backgrounds and use their experience well to ask challenging and pertinent questions of leaders. Effective systems and procedures are in place

that allow governors to read reports in good time prior to their meetings. This helps them formulate key questions they wish to ask leaders. Governors' overview of pupils' progress across the wider curriculum, especially in respect of the most able pupils, however, has not been sufficiently precise.

The quality of teaching is generally of a high standard. Teachers and support assistants use questioning skilfully to encourage pupils to think deeply about their learning. Teachers explain tasks and new concepts clearly, using demonstrations effectively to support understanding. Pupils' books show that teachers and pupils share high expectations. Pride in presentation and a commitment to improving work is evident. There is scope for further work to ensure that the monitoring and evaluation of teaching in the foundation subjects links more closely to the school self-evaluation development plan.

As this is a small school, your teachers know each pupil very well and are beginning to adapt their teaching skilfully to meet pupils' individual needs. This is exemplified by the good work you do to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Thorough planning, in consultation with parents and carers, has ensured that pupils' needs are well met, allowing them to thrive and make good progress from their starting points.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You undertake effectively the role of the designated safeguarding leader. Policies, procedures and records are of high quality and up to date. Summary records of incidents of concern are meticulously kept. There are very few records of current behaviour incidents or alleged bullying, and pupils who met with me said that no bullying happens at Burnside Academy. All staff receive appropriate training and have a secure understanding of their individual responsibilities for safeguarding pupils.

Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is improving. They said that they feel safe and well looked after. They have complete faith that adults in school will listen to them if they are worried or would like to talk. They are confident that any issues of poor behaviour or mishaps in the playground will be dealt with fairly and firmly. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons and during informal times are indicative of the strength of the school's work in this area. Relationships between adults and pupils are supportive and positive.

The culture of keeping pupils safe and putting them at the heart of the school community is highly evident. The personal development and welfare of all pupils is a main area of focus for the school. The vast majority of parents who made their views known report that their children are safe in school.

### **Inspection findings**

- Aspirations for pupils are high across the school. Records demonstrate that you are diligent in the tracking and monitoring of pupils' progress from their different

starting points in each year group. You and your staff know the key strengths and areas of development for every pupil. As a result, pupils continue to make good progress across the curriculum.

- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhances their effectiveness and impact. Governors receive high-quality information from you. They are linked to different key aspects of the school and are involved alongside leaders in monitoring activities. They have well-thought-through plans to become even more effective in order to support and challenge the staff team further.
- Teachers' ongoing assessments and monitoring of pupils' successes or misunderstandings in their work allow planned activities to be amended or changed, or extra support deployed. Ensuring that pupils, especially the most able, are well challenged is an area you are continuing to address. Teaching observed during the inspection and analysis of work in books suggests that most pupils are usually given appropriately challenging work, but this is not yet consistent across all classes or subjects.
- Children get off to a strong start in their learning in the early years. The systematic and lively teaching of phonics starts in Nursery and moves into Reception. All adults are skilled in delivering phonics teaching, activities are targeted well to meet the needs of every pupil and work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils in Year 2 read well to me and were able to build and blend unknown words. Pupils read widely and often, and are developing a love of reading. Pupils in key stage 2 are beginning to develop skills of inference and deduction when reading.
- Leaders' commitment to improve the quality of teaching across the school has ensured that expectations are high, relationships are strong and pupils' attitudes to learning support the good progress they now make. Effective use of pupil premium funding has ensured that support for disadvantaged pupils across the school is increasingly effective. Differences are diminishing between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points, and have been eliminated between their peers in some year groups. Further work is still required to strengthen the progress of this group of pupils, especially of the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Since your appointment, one of your key aims has been to develop leadership roles across the school. You have done this successfully and distributed responsibilities for key priorities to other staff. This has created shared remits, which have led to more innovative approaches to learning. Staff also work closely with other schools in the trust to ensure moderation of work and sharing of ideas. As a result, pupils continue to experience high-quality teaching and learning.
- You have ensured that the school continues to work tirelessly for the safety and good care of all pupils. The environment is secure and well looked after, with a range of opportunities for play and exploration. The strong relationships in school and high levels of trust between adults and pupils underpin the good conduct of pupils in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite, caring, considerate and friendly to each other and to visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions, during

which pupils play happily together. Their behaviour is a real strength of the school.

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

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- teachers' expectations are well matched to pupils' needs and abilities and that teachers consistently provide suitable challenge for all, especially the most able pupils
- subject leaders evaluate the quality of work in the foundation subjects to ensure that pupils routinely extend their skills and deepen their knowledge and understanding.

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 Sunderland. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Geoffrey Seagrove  
**Ofsted Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

During the inspection, I met with you, the deputy headteacher and the English and mathematics leaders. You and I visited lessons in key stage 2. I met with two members of the governing body, the school's local authority improvement partner, and the chief executive headteacher from the Inspire Trust and I spoke with the educational consultant employed by the trust. I spoke to pupils about their work and their view of the school. I listened to pupils read and looked in workbooks with you when in lessons. A range of documents were considered relating to safeguarding and external evaluations of the school. I examined the school's self-evaluation and assessment information about current pupils' progress. I also scrutinised pupils' achievement in the 2018 statutory assessments and considered responses from parents to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.