

Inspection of Burfield Academy

Oaklands Way, Hailsham, East Sussex BN27 3NW

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 January 2022

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know that expectations are high. Everybody works to help them do their best in every aspect of school life. Pupils exude pride in themselves, their school and their work. They achieve well and develop the attributes they need to continue to thrive in the future.

The school has clear routines for learning and behaviour. These help pupils to develop a clear understanding of what is expected. Pupils routinely sit up, listen and follow instructions because guidelines are continuously reinforced. Everyone models respect for each other. The very few incidents of bad behaviour or bullying are dealt with quickly and effectively.

Pupils enjoy school. They relish working hard, but also appreciate their social times together. There is a happy buzz of conversation in the dining hall and on the playground. The very youngest children gain confidence through using cutlery and carrying their lunch trays. Older pupils act as play leaders, supporting games.

Pupils know that school is a safe place. They have confidence in staff to help with any problems or worries. The need for this is rare. The school's exceptionally effective personal development programmes help pupils to develop the maturity needed to resolve potential conflicts before they become problems.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders' relentless drive for improvement continues to propel the school forward. The expertise provided by the trust has helped to support, train and develop staff so that everyone has the tools they need to do their best for the pupils. Staff appreciate the support that planning in teams across the trust means for their workload. Morale is high. Everyone is proud to work at the school.

The curriculum is ambitious. The curriculum is planned well in English and mathematics. Leaders' rationale for decisions about what should be taught in these subjects, and when, is strong. Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics as a result. However, curriculum plans do not always set out what pupils need to learn in all year groups, including early years, in subjects other than English and mathematics.

Leaders ensure a strong focus on teaching to read from the moment children join the Nursery. For example, children enjoy activities such as joining in with nursery rhymes and exploring rhyming words. Children in Reception Year move quickly on to learn about the sounds letters make and how to blend them together to make words. Adults provide effective support for children who find this tricky so that they do not fall behind. Leaders make sure that all children have lots of regular practice and are able to take home carefully chosen books. This means that pupils learn to read quickly and successfully. They use these skills to good effect as they move up through the school. For example, pupils have regular opportunities to explore

information across the curriculum and enjoy a wide range of high-quality books and literature.

Pupils benefit from regular opportunities to recall the facts they know in mathematics. They apply this knowledge carefully to a wide range of problems. Teachers assess learning regularly and quickly spot and address any confusion. This helps pupils to grow in confidence and avoids misconceptions. Children in early years enjoy singing along to counting rhymes or using their number skills as they play and explore.

Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly in early years. Adults ensure that children with SEND have the help they need to master phonics and early reading skills. However, support for pupils with SEND is not as well developed in key stages 1 and 2, particularly in subjects other than English and mathematics. This means that pupils with SEND are not always able to access learning or achieve as well as they should.

The school's well-designed curriculum helps pupils to build a secure knowledge of the wider world. For example, they learn about a range of cultures and beliefs in religious education (RE), which helps them to shape their own views and beliefs. During the inspection, for instance, pupils in Year 5 who had been studying Hinduism maturely explained their own ideas about reincarnation.

Pupils' behaviour in classes and around the school is excellent. Leaders have carefully considered how to help pupils grow into responsible citizens. Personal development is a priority. Respect, manners and courtesy are evident in pupils you meet. This starts from Nursery and is exemplary. Pupils value roles of responsibility, such as being part of the school's pupil parliament. They consider concepts such as equality regularly, both through the taught curriculum and through occasions such as assemblies. Pupils know how to apply what they have learned to their lives in school and to issues around the world. For example, their recent suggestions have included fundraising ideas for a local food bank.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have maintained a rigorous and meticulous approach to safeguarding. They reinforce and strengthen staff's knowledge of safeguarding through regular exercises. This ensures that everybody knows what to look out for and knows what to do if they have concerns.

Leaders respond swiftly when pupils are identified as needing help. This includes working with other agencies to help to keep pupils safe from harm when necessary.

Leaders make sure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including online. Pupils retain this knowledge well. They know what to do and whom to tell if they have worries or get into difficulty.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not mapped out the sequence of knowledge fully enough in all foundation subjects. This means that teachers are not always sufficiently clear about what to teach, or when. Consequently, pupils are not always learning the essential knowledge in the right order or at the right time. Leaders should ensure that knowledge is coherently sequenced in each of the foundation subjects from Nursery through to Year 6.
- Teachers do not always adapt work well enough to enable pupils with SEND to access the school's ambitious curriculum. Some struggle to complete the work as a result. Leaders should develop staff's expertise in knowing how to adapt the work set to best support pupils with SEND.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	140384
Local authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	10211706
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	200
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Rama Venchard
Headteacher	Jeremy Meek (Executive Headteacher) Danielle King (Head of School)
Website	https://burfieldacademy.org/
Dates of previous inspection	9 and 10 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Burfield Academy joined the STEP Academy Trust in 2017, just prior to the previous inspection. At that time, it was one of two local schools to be part of the trust. There are now four schools in the area who are part of the STEP Academy Trust. The schools work in close partnership with each other.
- Since the previous inspection, Burfield Academy has expanded to include a key stage. This process was completed earlier in this academic year, so the school now has classes across the primary range.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- During the inspection, the lead inspector met regularly with senior leaders. Inspectors also held meetings with other school leaders, including the inclusion leader. The lead inspector had a remote meeting with the chair of the academy committee. The lead inspector also met with representatives from the trust.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography and RE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector listened to some pupils reading.
- Records associated with safeguarding were reviewed, including the single central record and appointment procedures. The inspectors spoke to staff about their safeguarding training and spoke to pupils about the support they have in understanding how to keep safe.
- The lead inspector reviewed responses to Ofsted's parent, pupil and staff questionnaires.
- The inspectors met with groups of staff to discuss their views about the school, including their views on workload and well-being. The inspectors met with several groups of pupils, as well as speaking to pupils during lessons, in the playground and in the dining hall.

Inspection team

Deborah Gordon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

James Broadbridge

Her Majesty's Inspector

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