

# Inspection of Burnt Mill Academy

First Avenue, Harlow, Essex CM20 2NR

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Inspection dates: 22 and 23 February 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils learn in a disruption-free environment where pupils behave well. They are keen to contribute to interesting lessons and have many opportunities to discuss and debate ideas. Pupils receive appropriate support, where they need it, as teachers regularly check what they know.

Leaders have ensured that a new curriculum, with high expectations, is now in place. Pupils now build the depth and breadth of their knowledge effectively over time. They learn important knowledge well and produce high-quality work. Some pupils leaving school have not made the progress they should in some subjects. This is because of weaknesses in the previous curriculum that have now been addressed.

Pupils are happy and safe. They have trusted adults who they go to if they have worries. Pupils value worry boxes and kindness buddies. Those who need extra support can talk issues through with staff and resolve them. Some pupils and parents still have worries about how issues such as bullying are followed up, as staff do not always communicate their actions well enough.

Almost all pupils participate in a rich range of extra-curricular opportunities. They take pride in their 'Be More' passports, where they record the range of challenges they participate in.

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

Leaders identified that the previous curriculum, which included early entry to examinations, did not help some pupils to achieve as well as they could. Pupils studied a wide range of subjects, but some did not build the depth of their knowledge well enough over time. Consequently, some pupils did not make the progress they should. Leaders have developed a new curriculum to address this effectively. Pupils now build the depth of their knowledge, from Year 7 to Year 11, well. Leaders have increased significantly the number of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate (EBacc). The EBacc is a set of subjects that provides a pathway to higher-level qualifications and offers a broad foundation of knowledge.

Leaders have involved teachers in developing the new curriculum. They have provided high-quality training to ensure subject specialists teach it effectively. Pupils now learn and retain important knowledge well. They produce high-quality work. Teachers use a range of highly effective ways to check what pupils know. They adapt learning effectively where pupils need this.

Leaders check closely that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified effectively. Pupils with SEND receive the support they need to be fully included in the same learning as their classmates. Consequently, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils who struggle with reading receive targeted support which helps them to read more fluently. Teachers ensure that lessons are accessible and suitably adapted for early readers. Many pupils have developed a love of reading. What they read is tracked and celebrated.

Pupils listen well and actively take part in lessons. Leaders have set high expectations about conduct, so disruption to learning is rare. Pupils behave in a calm and orderly way around the school, as staff apply expectations consistently. Pupils attend well as they want to come to school. Leaders ensure that appropriate support and follow-up are in place when pupils do not meet expectations or have worries about how others have behaved towards them. However, leaders have not always communicated their actions well enough, so some pupils and parents question the effectiveness of these.

Pupils benefit from a rich range of well-attended extra-curricular opportunities. They have meaningful opportunities to develop their leadership skills through roles such as prefects. Leaders have ensured that pupils develop their understanding of spiritual, moral and cultural issues well. For example, pupils recently explored issues of euthanasia and the death penalty. Pupils benefit from a well-planned programme of careers education that gives them high-quality access to employers.

Leaders engage effectively with staff. They appropriately consider staff workload and well-being. Leaders have not always communicated with parents well enough, so some are not fully supportive of leaders' actions.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured staff are well trained to be able to identify safeguarding issues and where pupils might be at risk. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to secure the support pupils need.

Leaders diligently maintain safeguarding records and have made sure effective safer recruitment processes are in place. Staff are clear about who to report concerns to.

Leaders have put in place a well-planned programme of personal, social and health education and relationships and sex education, so pupils are well informed about risk. Pupils have a range of staff they can share worries with.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The previous curriculum in some subjects did not enable pupils to develop a deep and secure understanding of important subject knowledge. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils have not made the progress they should over time.

Although leaders have now taken action to implement a new effective curriculum, leaders must ensure that this new curriculum enables all pupils to build the depth of their knowledge effectively over time, so that pupils make the progress they should.

- Leaders have set high expectations for pupils' behaviour which are largely followed. Although suitable support and follow-up are in place to support pupils effectively where they do not meet these expectations, leaders have not always communicated well enough with parents regarding this. This includes communication regarding the effective support that is put in place to support pupils' well-being. As a result, some parents and pupils question the effectiveness of support and follow-up, as they have not had it well enough communicated to them. Leaders need to ensure that support and follow-up regarding concerns about behaviour or bullying are clearly communicated, so parents and pupils feel confident about the support they receive and how incidents are addressed.

## 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	137694
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10265606
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	1108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Drayton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laura McGlashan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.burntmillacademy.org">www.burntmillacademy.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	22 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider and one unregistered alternative provider.
- The school's most recent graded inspection, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, was in November 2012, when it was judged to be outstanding. The school was inspected in May 2019 under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, mathematics, science, history and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with curriculum leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors conducted meetings with the headteacher, the chief executive officer, members of the local governing body, a representative of the local authority and leaders of provision for pupils with SEND, behaviour and attendance, pastoral, personal development and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors spoke to a range of pupil groups.
- Inspectors met with leaders to discuss the use of alternative provision and the small number of pupils on part-time timetables. An inspector spoke to a representative of the registered alternative providers that pupils attend.
- Inspectors evaluated the school's safeguarding culture through viewing safeguarding records and procedures, meeting with a range of pupils and staff, and talking to safeguarding leaders.
- Inspectors considered the 206 responses and 137 free-text responses from parents to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also considered the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and the 91 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

## Inspection team

James Chester, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Simon Warburton	Ofsted Inspector
Jess Pearce	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Lawrence	Ofsted Inspector
Russell Ayling	Ofsted Inspector

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