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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Ms Anna Hayesmore
Headteacher
Burrough Green Church of England Primary School
Bradley Road
Burrough Green
Newmarket
Suffolk
CB8 9NH

Dear Ms Hayesmore

Short inspection of Burrough Green CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 6 March 2018, 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 the school was judged to be good in November 2013.

Based on the evidence gathered during this short inspection, I have identified some priorities for improvement which I advise the school to address. In light of these priorities, the school's next inspection will be a full section 5 inspection. **There is no change to the school's current overall effectiveness grade of good as a result of this inspection.**

Following a period of change in senior leadership since the previous inspection, you started as headteacher in January 2018. All other staffing has remained broadly stable, and this has ensured that the school's caring ethos has been maintained since the previous inspection. You have quickly gained a clear understanding of what is working well and are starting to address the school's weaknesses. For example, you acknowledge that further swift improvements are required to ensure that pupils make stronger progress across key stage 2, particularly in writing and mathematics. You are making this the central focus of your work.

Governors share your determination to improve the school but acknowledge that the low progress and dip in pupils' achievement by the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was not anticipated. Governors know that they did not focus closely enough on the effectiveness of teaching and its impact on the progress that pupils were making across key stage 2 in the previous academic year. Prior to your arrival, governors had not ensured that all leaders had sufficient time to devote to improving standards in their subject areas.

Governors support the changes and are beginning to improve the level of challenge they pose to school leaders about the progress pupils make. It is too soon to

determine the impact of these changes.

During this inspection, parents and carers commented very positively about how well staff know and support their children. Appreciative comments about the 'nurturing and inspiring environment', and those recognising that the school's 'staff truly care about each child' are typical of parents' views. Additionally, parents also appreciate the swift, sympathetic and effective steps that staff take on the rare occasion when they raise a concern about an issue at school. Pupils were similarly positive about the help that staff give them; one pupil summarised what many said by saying, 'Teachers always go the extra mile and someone will always look after you if you have a problem.'

Almost all parents and pupils agree that pupils' behaviour is good. Many parents commented that their children are happy and look forward to coming to school every day. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults, and the school environment is a calm and purposeful one. Pupils settle to work quickly in lessons, and listen to their teachers, and to each other, respectfully. Pupils are keen to engage in class discussion and are eager to answer questions. No disruptive behaviour was seen during the inspection; pupils told me that such conduct is unusual and is dealt with effectively by teachers when it does happen. The school's records confirm this and indicate that more serious misbehaviour is exceptionally rare.

Staff are overwhelmingly supportive of the way in which the school is led. They have welcomed the recent changes that you have made. You are now ensuring that teachers with additional leadership responsibilities have the time that they need to check standards, to plan and to make improvements. This was an area to improve at the previous inspection. The changes you have made to the way in which teachers assess pupils' progress have also been welcomed. The new system is giving teachers more accurate information about how well pupils are doing in English and mathematics. Teachers are using this to identify the gaps in individual pupils' knowledge and understanding. They are providing pupils with additional help, which is beginning to quicken pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.

Children make a good start to their education at Burrough Green. In both 2016 and 2017, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the end of the early years was well above the national average. By the end of key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who achieved at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics was also above the national average.

Safeguarding is effective.

Leaders, including governors, ensure that the school fulfils its statutory duty to keep pupils safe.

Staff understand the responsibilities they have to keep children safe because they receive regular and appropriate training. Adults have a clear understanding of what

to do should they have concerns about a pupil's welfare, and work well with external agencies so that pupils who need additional support receive it in a timely and effective manner.

Governors ensure that the school's record of statutory checks carried out on adults working at the school is accurately maintained and updated.

Pupils explained that they feel safe, and that if they ever have concerns they can talk to any member of staff and be sure that these will be acted on promptly. Pupils could talk about the different ways in which they can stay safe in a variety of situations, including when playing games online or when using social networking sites. They understand the different types of bullying that can take place and the serious impact it can have but explained that it happens very rarely. The school's records confirm this. Pupils told me that, when it does occur, it is typically dealt with well by adults in school. Teachers help pupils to understand how they can look after their physical well-being and mental health.

Almost all parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agree that their children are safe and well cared for at Burrough Green. Inspection evidence supports their views.

Inspection findings

- In 2016, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress in writing was broadly in line with that of other pupils nationally. In 2017, pupils' progress, and in particular that of boys, fell and was too low. This is why we agreed that my first line of enquiry was to establish whether key stage 2 pupils are making good enough progress in writing from their starting points.
- The English subject leader ensures that pupils regularly have opportunities to write at length. Recognising that some boys are reluctant writers, she has revised topics so that boys can write about things that interest them. Pupils are encouraged to be more precise in their use of spelling, punctuation and grammar when completing their written work. Additional 'grammar lessons' have been introduced with the aim of improving pupils' skills in these respects. Pupils are encouraged to improve their writing by planning it carefully and revising it after initial feedback.
- However, these changes have had limited impact and their implementation has lacked urgency. Sometimes, pupils spend too long practising writing skills that they have already mastered. Although pupils frequently complete extended pieces of writing, some do not use what they have learned in their grammar lessons to ensure that they write with enough accuracy. These pupils – typically boys – continue to make the same basic errors, which means that they do not communicate their meaning as clearly as they should.
- Too often, teachers do not make it clear enough what pupils need to do to achieve well before they complete a piece of written work. This means that their efforts are not well focused and that pupils do not understand the standard their work must reach. Although teachers help pupils to identify how they can improve

their writing, such as, for example, in Years 5 and 6 by developing compelling plots or richly detailed characters, they do not always ensure that pupils make the necessary changes. Subsequently, some pupils are not achieving the high standards in their written work that they should.

- My second line of enquiry was to establish whether key stage 2 pupils are making good progress from their starting points in mathematics. In 2016, pupils' progress overall was broadly in line with that of pupils nationally with the same starting points, but in 2017 progress fell and was too low.
- You have acted to ensure that the mathematics subject leader has sufficient time to check standards and to help staff teach more effectively. She has a clear view of what needs to change, is setting appropriate priorities and is working with urgency. Teachers value the support she is offering them as they introduce the school's chosen approach to the curriculum.
- It is too early to determine the impact of these developments. Teachers are not yet consistently effective in planning learning activities that enable pupils to develop their mathematical reasoning skills and their ability to apply their knowledge to problem-solving tasks. Sometimes, pupils revisit topics without this extending their knowledge and understanding or addressing their initial misconceptions effectively. Too often, the most able pupils do not complete work that is sufficiently challenging. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.
- My final line of enquiry sought to establish how effectively pupils learn and make progress in subjects other than English and mathematics. This was because the school's development plan identified the wider curriculum as a priority for improvement, and because at the time of the previous inspection inspectors found that subject leaders had insufficient opportunity to develop their roles.
- Over time, leaders have ensured that pupils have access to a broad curriculum, with strengths in a number of subjects, including religious studies, music and French. Until your recent changes, subject leaders had too little time to plan, to check standards and to lead improvements. As a result, leaders did not track what was taught and the progress pupils made across the wider curriculum carefully enough. You have initiated a review to check that pupils learn the required content across each different subject and to consider the best ways to teach them this in the future, but these changes will not be in place before September 2018.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- governors hold leaders more rigorously to account for the progress pupils make, especially boys and the most able
- leaders and teachers consistently plan and implement programmes of learning in key stage 2 that enable pupils to make rapid progress from their starting points
- all programmes of learning in subjects other than English and mathematics

enable pupils to achieve well

- all leaders monitor the progress that pupils make in subjects other than English and mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Ely, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Cambridgeshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Jason Howard
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

- I held discussions with you and other senior leaders about the key lines of enquiry for this inspection, your evaluation of the quality of education, plans for future improvement and information about current pupils' learning.
- I met with other leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and members of support staff, the chair of governors and four other governors. I also held a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority.
- Documents such as the school's improvement plan; leaders' monitoring and analysis of the progress pupils make; records of pupils' attendance; pupil premium reports; and the school's safeguarding arrangements, records, files and documentation were examined.
- Together with you, I observed children and pupils learning in every key stage 2 class. We also looked at examples of children's and pupils' work to explore the progress they are making over time.
- I spoke with a group of 12 pupils and also with others informally during lessons regarding their learning. I also considered the views of 22 pupils who responded to the online survey.
- I considered the views of parents I spoke with at the start of the school day. I also took into account the views of 26 parents who responded to Parent View, and of the 19 parents who left comments on the free-text service.
- The views of 10 staff who completed Ofsted's staff questionnaire were also taken into account.