

# Burford School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	110314
<b>Local Authority</b>	Buckinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	356717
<b>Inspection dates</b>	30 November 2010–1 December 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Grainger

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Leanda Robson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karol Whittington
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	4 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Marlow Bottom Marlow SL7 3PQ
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<b>Email address</b>	office@burfordschool.co.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 20 lessons taught by 14 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, members of the governing body and staff with management responsibilities. The school's work was observed and documentation, such as the records held on pupils and the school improvement plan, was scrutinised. Account was taken of the 142 parental questionnaires received.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The quality of the start given to children in the Reception Year, and how it has changed since the last inspection.
- The level of challenge provided for more-able pupils in writing, and the effectiveness of the provision for all pupils in mathematics.
- How well pupils develop independence, contribute to the community and gain understanding of the diversity of modern society in the United Kingdom.
- The effectiveness of action taken to promote better attendance.
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels in improving provision so that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

## Information about the school

Most pupils in this large primary school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties although a few have complex needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free schools meals is very low. In 2009, the school gained Healthy School status and its Active Mark award was renewed.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?****2****The school's capacity for sustained improvement****2**

## Main findings

Burford School has improved significantly since its last inspection and it now provides pupils with a good education. Parents and carers rightly have high expectations of the school and most are pleased with the changes that have been made. As one commented, 'We are very impressed with the progress that has been made over the last few years.' Another noted how hard the school has worked to move forward.

Pupils' consistent good progress throughout the school means that attainment is significantly above average by the end of Year 6. Particularly strong gains are made in reading and writing, but progress in mathematics is not quite as good. Some good features of English lessons, such as pupils discussing their work in pairs during whole-class sessions, are less effective in mathematics lessons. As a result, there are some missed opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and deepen their understanding of mathematical concepts. Many aspects of the mathematics curriculum are covered in good depth. However, pupils do not always have enough opportunities to develop and apply their mathematical knowledge and understanding through problem-solving and investigative activities. To some extent, this is because of limited resources for hands-on learning.

Pupils' good progress is a result of good teaching and an imaginative curriculum, including many relevant links made between subjects. In Year 2, for example, pupils have undertaken some particularly good investigations into how to ensure that teddy has a coat that keeps him dry in the rain. This project has promoted high quality learning in both science and design and technology. Teaching is focused on what pupils should learn next, is based on high expectations, and is creative and exciting. In a lesson in the Reception Year, for instance, children were excited by writing their names in the snow.

Although teaching has a good overall impact on progress, the school recognises that raising the quality of the remaining pockets of satisfactory teaching is the key to making it even more effective. Not all teachers are involved enough in systematically reviewing the impact of teaching on learning, and the most effective teachers are not used to the full to help other teachers develop their practice. While marking is mostly good and there is much oral feedback to pupils about how well they are doing, there are some occasions when the next steps to be taken are not communicated clearly to pupils. This is particularly the case in mathematics. Even when marking is extremely thorough, its impact is diminished when pupils are not required to act quickly on the advice they are given.

Pupils develop into mature and confident young people. They have good relationships with each other and with the adults in school. As one parent observed, 'This school is good at creating rounded, caring children.' Pupils are prepared well for their future lives with high

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academic standards and many positive personal qualities, although their understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity is relatively limited. ♦

Since the last inspection, teaching, the curriculum and the quality of care, guidance and support have all improved from satisfactory to good. This track record of strong development, resulting from action based on effective self-evaluation, shows that the school has good capacity to continue to make progress.

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

- Accelerate pupils' progress in mathematics by giving them more opportunities to:
  - discuss and reflect on their learning during whole-class sessions
  - be involved in problem solving and investigative activities supported by good resources.
- Ensure that teaching is consistently good by:
  - increasing the involvement of all teachers in objectively evaluating the impact of teaching on learning to improve their practice
  - making better use of the most effective teachers to develop excellence across the school
  - ensuring that marking provides all pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their performance and that pupils are required to act on the advice given.
- Increase pupils' understanding of the rich cultural and ethnic diversity of modern society in the United Kingdom.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

Pupils' learning, progress and achievement are better than at the last inspection, although not quite as good in mathematics as in English. Children's attainment on entry to the Reception classes is above the level expected nationally. Pupils' work was significantly above average in most of the lessons observed, and the high standards reached by the end of Year 6 represent outstanding achievement. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels for their age is significantly above average, which is a marked improvement in writing in particular. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are also progressing well and doing better than in the past.

Pupils are independent and well motivated. They rise well to challenges and usually pay good attention at all points in lessons. Just occasionally a few do not maintain strong involvement in whole-class sessions, particularly if these last quite a long time. Pupils in Year 1 responded well and thought very carefully when asked to interpret and discuss imagery from a poem about sounds in pairs. Learning through collaboration is a good feature in all classes. Pupils in Year 6, for instance, shared ideas well and enjoyed evaluating the presentation of the witches in a variety of extracts from productions of Macbeth.

Behaviour is good about the school and in lessons. Pupils are pleasant, courteous and polite. They treat adults and each other with consideration and respect. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong. While they respect differences and pupils from all

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backgrounds and abilities get on well together, pupils' understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity is a relative weakness. Nevertheless, pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community, undertaking responsibilities diligently and raising significant funds for charities.

Pupils enjoy school as shown in the recently improved and above average attendance rate. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe when using the internet and when out of school, such as when close to traffic. They are keen to keep fit and healthy through sport and a balanced diet. These good outcomes reflect the school's achievement of Healthy School status and the Active Mark.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The level of challenge for more-able pupils has increased since the last inspection. Pupils are now given a good range of opportunities to write for different purposes. Teachers communicate high expectations through the level of the work set and the clarity with which they explain what they are aiming for pupils to achieve. Pupils are given clear criteria against which they can evaluate their success. Often, they help to formulate these success criteria themselves and this helps them to maintain a strong focus and purpose as they work individually or in groups.

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Teaching assistants are usually well deployed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Occasionally, however, the support for these pupils does not keep them fully involved. This was evident, for example, in a mathematics lesson in Year 1 when pupils with learning difficulties did not have access to hands-on resources that would have helped them. Overall, the use of practical and investigative activities for pupils of all abilities is an underdeveloped aspect of mathematics provision, as is the use of discussion during whole-class sessions. In contrast, there are examples of excellent promotion of first-hand and practical learning in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils in Year 2, for example, visited the woods adjacent to the school. Photographs of this experience were projected onto the interactive whiteboard the next day to stimulate writing. At the same time, a recording of their voices was played to remind them of the imagery they had used to describe what they saw and felt.

The curriculum is now more engaging for pupils than at the last inspection. The many strengths in the enrichment of day-by-day lessons through visits, visitors and clubs have been maintained. There are limited opportunities, however, for pupils to develop a real insight into other cultures, for example through the arts and humanities.

Pastoral care makes a good contribution to pupils' growth as well-rounded individuals. Effective action has been taken to address a dip in the attendance rate.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Under the good leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, there is a shared commitment to improvement. Staff are rightly focused now on the provision for mathematics. They have already implemented good changes, for example, in the way data are used to identify and rectify any individual underachievement. A factor presently preventing teaching from being even better is that despite the clear improvements in teaching practice, not all teachers are intensively enough involved in evaluating teaching and developing excellence.

The governing body has good systems for working with senior leaders. Their partnership work in driving improvement in the provision for reception children is particularly impressive. A parent governor has worked with the reception teachers to provide workshops to help parents and carers support their children's learning. As a result, a strong partnership with parents and carers is forged at the outset. The school also has effective links with external agencies to support it in successfully including pupils with complex needs. Although the school is effective in including all its pupils well, in promoting equality of opportunity and in tackling discrimination, its wider promotion of community

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cohesion is only satisfactory. Some important steps have been taken but pupils are not yet fully prepared for life in a modern multi-ethnic society. At the time of the inspection, arrangements for safeguarding pupils met current government requirements well. Procedures reflect best practice and good arrangements are in place to cope with emergencies.

The progress made by the school since its last inspection and its attention to the right development points now shows that there is good capacity for further improvement.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

**Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children get off to a good start in the Reception Year as a result of the right balance of adult-led and child-initiated activities across all the areas of learning. Although the immediate outdoor area is limited by its size, staff make good use of the school grounds, adjacent woods and nearby park to provide exciting learning opportunities.

Thorough assessment of children's learning ensures that adults promote the next steps in learning well. However, staff do not always make the best use of opportunities to increase problem-solving activities, or of equipment such as laptop computers and cameras to challenge the most able children.

Attention to children's safety and welfare is very good. As a result, children are very confident, settled and behave extremely well. Strong leadership of the reception provision has ensured that the many strengths noted at the last inspection have been maintained and built on.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

The responses to the survey and comments made by parents and carers who spoke with an inspector indicate that most parents are very pleased with the school. In their written comments, a few parents and carers raised concerns about inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in the support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Inspectors found that both of these areas of provision have improved and, although practice varies in quality, they found none that is inadequate.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burford School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 142 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 420 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	95	67	45	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	103	73	37	26	1	1	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	70	49	70	49	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	42	75	53	5	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	69	49	71	50	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	69	49	64	45	8	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	76	54	32	44	2	1	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	61	43	70	49	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	39	74	52	10	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	53	37	73	51	5	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	37	73	51	6	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	74	52	64	45	1	1	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	75	53	63	44	3	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



2 December 2010



Dear Pupils



### **Inspection of Burford School, Marlow SL7 3PQ**



Thank you for helping us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. Those of you who spoke to us were very polite and friendly. We found that your school has improved since it was last inspected three years ago and that it is now providing you with a good education.

You get off to a good start in the Reception Year and then make more good progress by the end of Year 6. You do well because teaching is good and activities are relevant and interesting. However, you make better progress in reading and writing than in mathematics. You also do better in some lessons than in others.

To help you to do even better, we have asked the adults to give you more opportunities to discuss your learning in mathematics lessons like they already do in English lessons. We have also asked the adults to give you more opportunities for problem-solving activities in mathematics.

We have said that the adults should work closely together looking at why some teaching helps you to learn really quickly, so that they can try to make all your lessons as good as the best. We found that although marking is good, there are occasions when it could be even clearer in telling you how to improve. Please make sure that you always act on the advice teachers give you to improve your work.

The adults look after you well. You have many good personal qualities that show you are well prepared for your future lives. We have asked the adults to help you to find out more about the many different backgrounds and traditions of people living in the United Kingdom. We think you would find this interesting because you will meet many people from different backgrounds as you grow older.



Please keep working hard, doing your best and being kind and considerate to others.



Yours sincerely



Alison Grainger  
Lead inspector

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