

Burgoyne Middle School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109676
Local Authority	Central Bedfordshire
Inspection number	356602
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Elaine Taylor HMI

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

Type of school	Middle deemed secondary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	9–13
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	277
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Councillor Anita Lewis
Headteacher	Mr R Walmsley (acting headteacher)
Date of previous school inspection	8 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. Twenty lessons were observed and every member of staff was seen teaching at least once. Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders and other key staff, with groups of pupils and with governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's most recent analysis of pupils' progress and key documents provided for the team. The responses to pupil and staff questionnaires were considered and 81 parent and carer questionnaires were analysed.

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

- the progress pupils make in lessons, especially the more able pupils, in order to assess the level of challenge in the tasks set
- the progress all pupils are making in English
- the extent to which leaders and managers at all levels are driving improvement through monitoring provision and taking effective action.

Information about the school

Burgoyne Middle School serves the community in the town of Potton and the surrounding rural area. Burgoyne is much smaller than most other middle schools. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly above that normally found, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs is average. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds with English as their first language. The school also provides for a small number of Traveller children. The previous headteacher retired at the end of 2009 and the school is currently being led by the deputy. Since the last inspection the school has gained Healthy Schools status.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. The satisfactory achievement of pupils in the school is the result of satisfactory provision, but there are stronger elements within that profile. Aspects of pupils' personal development are good as a result of those features of the curriculum and teaching which support their social, cultural and moral development and enhance their enjoyment. Pupils are effectively cared for and the school instigates successful strategies in order to overcome barriers to learning. Consequently all groups of pupils make similar progress and no groups underachieve.

Inspectors observed some good and outstanding teaching in the school, but there was also some that was inadequate. The school has already identified where additional support is required and is monitoring teaching regularly and taking effective action to ensure the quality is raised. Assessment is a weaker feature in many lessons. Teachers do not consistently provide activities that are matched closely enough to the needs of all levels of ability, especially for the more able pupils. The range of strategies they employ to assess the progress being made in lessons is limited and this impedes their ability to adjust their teaching as the lesson proceeds, to ensure all pupils make better progress.

Pupils enter the school having attained standards that are above average and leave having maintained that level. Progress is better in science than in mathematics and English, where progress in reading is weakest. In 2010, girls made slightly better progress than boys from the end of Key Stage 2 to the end of Year 8. Pupils are sensible and mature in their dealings with each other and with adults in the school. Consequently, the school is a calm and pleasant place to be and pupils attend regularly. They told inspectors that they feel safe, but sometimes are unsure where to go if they have a problem. They appreciate the worry boxes that have been re-introduced so they can make their concerns known. Behaviour in lessons is generally good when teachers provide interesting and engaging activities. However, when the tasks they are given lack a suitable level of challenge, pupils remain passive and a small minority become disruptive.

There have been changes in leadership and some staffing difficulties, particularly in English, which have resulted in a challenging time for the school and, as a result, there has been a dip in standards since the last inspection. However, the acting headteacher and the new leadership team are working hard to put in place the initiatives necessary to remedy this. The school was able to point to small but significant signs that the decline is being reversed. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met and provides satisfactory support and challenge for the school. New systems to coordinate the information the school collects on the progress pupils are making have not yet had time to have a positive impact across all subjects and year groups. More systematic processes to monitor the work of the school and challenge subject leaders are being established. Nevertheless, the school has an accurate picture of areas of strength and those requiring

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further development and has made a good start in putting into place an action plan to address any weaknesses. It therefore has satisfactory capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of progress in lessons by:
 - ensuring all teachers use information on the levels pupils have attained in order to set tasks that are suitably challenging for all levels of ability
 - extending the range of assessment techniques which teachers use to assess learning during lessons and adjust their teaching accordingly.
 - Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - developing a clearer focus on literacy and numeracy across the curriculum
 - refining and embedding systems for tracking the progress individual pupils and different groups are making so that issues can be identified as soon as they arise and tackled promptly.
 - Significantly reduce the variability in the quality of teaching by sharpening the systems for monitoring and evaluation.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Inspectors observed the majority of pupils making at least satisfactory progress in lessons. Pupils steadily acquire knowledge and improve their skills and understanding and apply themselves to their work well. Consequently there is a purposeful atmosphere around the school and in classrooms.

The school has identified the need to raise standards in English, in particular the level of boys' writing in Key Stage 2. Progress is better for all groups in Key Stage 3. An area of success is in the above average achievement in science. Also pupils make better than expected progress in mathematics from the end of Year 6 to the end of Year 8. Progress in English for these year groups is only average especially in reading. The small numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups or with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress and attain standards in line with other pupils in the school. The traveller children make the same progress as others and settle well into the school. Pupils with special needs and/or disabilities make the same satisfactory progress as other pupils.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to lead healthy lives and many take part in a wide range of sporting activities inside and outside school. Pupils take the initiative in promoting events to raise inter-cultural understanding and make a positive contribution to the school and wider communities through the school council, the school choir, by acting as librarians and by supporting younger pupils. Pupils are developing good workplace skills despite only satisfactory attainment in English. For example, they are becoming confident speakers and can explain clearly when asked to contribute in lessons and have good team working skills as shown by their ability to work successfully in groups. Pupils are benefitting from the good opportunities they are given to develop their curiosity and their

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creative and imaginative thinking. They demonstrate respect for others and are polite and welcoming to visitors. Pupils' cultural understanding is developing well and they show that they are aware of and appreciate cultural differences. Attendance is above average and pupils are consistently punctual. Over the last few years persistent absence has risen despite the range of strategies the school has in place to tackle this. This is largely due to the poor attendance of a small number of pupils.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	3
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ 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?

Teachers have good subject knowledge and this ensures their explanations are clear and activities are suitable to meet the general aims of the lesson. Pupils enjoy many of their lessons and demonstrate this in their attentiveness and considerate behaviour. Teachers also make satisfactory use of new technologies including information and communication technology to engage and motivate pupils. Although activities are planned in a logical sequence with clear reference to what students are aiming to learn, lessons often involve all students undertaking the same tasks whatever their individual needs. Teachers make insufficient use of sophisticated questioning techniques to check the progress the students are making and adjust their teaching accordingly. Not enough use is made of questions to challenge and increase the depth of understanding of the most-able. Where other adults are supporting pupils who are in need of additional help with their learning, they do so effectively and as a result these pupils make the same progress as others. Teachers mark

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books regularly but do not always give feedback to the pupils on how they can improve their work in order to attain higher levels

The curriculum is balanced and provides a broad range of experiences, including a wide range of sporting opportunities and other activities and clubs. Elements of the curriculum such as personal, social, health and citizenship education contribute well to those stronger elements of pupils' personal development. Cross-curricular provision and ways through which subjects can support and promote key skills are still developing. The school is still in the process of reviewing the Key Stage 3 curriculum, for example, in developing pupils' enterprise skills.

Pastoral care in the school is good and involves successful intervention at key times. For example, there are sessions provided by teaching assistants in the mornings for pupils identified as needing extra support with their behaviour. The school is building links with the upper schools in order to improve the quality of the advice and guidance for pupils and ensure continuity in their learning. There is scope for strengthening the academic care of pupils needing additional support by ensuring all staff share fully in the responsibility for their development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

School leaders are implementing a range of strategies to improve the provision but the impact is yet to be felt. Development planning is satisfactory and systems to enable the school to gather and analyse data on pupils' progress are relatively new, as are the raised expectations on subject leaders to audit and evaluate work in their areas of responsibility. However, the commitment to raising achievement is clear and small signs of improvement are beginning to emerge, for example the improvement in standards in English. A relative strength in the leadership is seen in the positive attitudes of staff in the school and their commitment to developing the provision. Targets now have a greater degree of challenge and are being used more effectively to drive improvements.

The school works hard to ensure parents and carers are kept informed about their children's progress. The acting headteacher is a visible presence at the school gates at the start and end of the day so he can be contacted easily. Reports sent home are detailed and helpful booklets have been produced to raise parents' awareness of levels of attainment. The school has made a good start in developing its understanding of how it promotes community cohesion and meets requirements, but it recognises that some aspects of this work are underdeveloped.

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Governors support and challenge the school and fulfil their statutory duties. For example, secure safeguarding arrangements are in place. There is a missed opportunity to make all lines of accountability more clear and to involve parents more in the review of procedures. The school adequately gathers information on the performance of different groups of pupils, but the systems are new and so sometimes the actions taken are not yet concerted and targets for these groups lack ambition.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Views of parents and carers

The large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire are completely satisfied with the school. Some expressed concern about behaviour and whether their children were making enough progress. Inspectors judge that while satisfactory, there is scope for both to improve. Most expressed satisfaction with the way the school helps their children to feel safe and be happy. Many parents and carers of pupils new to the school commented favourably on how well their children have settled in.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burgoyne Middle 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 81 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 277 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	46	40	49	4	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	44	41	51	3	4	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	22	51	63	7	9	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	31	43	53	8	10	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	23	28	51	63	4	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	21	52	64	8	10	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	23	54	67	3	4	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)	27	33	47	58	1	1	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	26	32	44	54	7	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	26	44	54	9	11	3	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	14	17	53	65	7	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	25	50	62	6	7	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	36	48	59	4	5	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burgoyne Middle School, Sandy, SG19 2PG

Thank you for the way you welcomed us into your school. I am writing to tell you what we found. Your school is satisfactory.

The strengths of your school are:

- your sensible attitude to your work
- your appreciation of the way teachers provide you with interesting activities that you enjoy
- the progress you make in science
- your good attendance and punctuality
- the many examples of the way you care for others and contribute to making life better in your school and community.

We have asked the school to:

- improve the standards you reach in English and mathematics by making sure you practise in all your subjects (you can help in this by reading more of the interesting books in the library and practising number work whenever you can)
- make sure all your teachers give you work that challenges you (you can help by asking more questions in class)
- check regularly that you are all making enough progress and make all teaching as good as the best.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Elaine Taylor

Her Majesty's Inspector

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