

Burwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132008
Local Authority	London Borough of Bromley
Inspection number	360350
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Mike Kell

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	10–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	44
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jim Harrison
Headteacher	Lynn Key
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2009
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Age group	10–16
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. There were limited opportunities for lesson observations because Year 11 students were out of school on study leave throughout the inspection, and two of the five remaining classes went on an educational visit for the whole of the second day. Seven lessons were observed, each taught by a different teacher, as well as all classes' personal, social and health education (PSHE) sessions at the start of the day. Meetings were held with groups of students, members of the leadership team and the Chair of the Governing Body. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation such as assessment and attendance data, behaviour and incident logs, and school development planning. The eight questionnaires returned by parents and carers were analysed, as were those completed by staff and students.

Information about the school

Burwood is a smaller than average sized special school, with places for 50 students in total. It was judged to require special measures when it was inspected in 2007. The most recent inspection, in 2009, confirmed that the school had made sufficient progress to be removed from this category. Since then, the school's designated age range has reduced. It now admits students at the age of 10 years rather than seven.

All students have a statement of special educational needs for social, behavioural and emotional difficulties. Many have additional learning needs too, such as speech, language and communication difficulties and autistic spectrum disorder. Almost three quarters of the students are known to be eligible for free school meals, and a few are looked after children. Students come from a range of ethnic backgrounds, although the large majority have a White British heritage.

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	3
Achievement	3
Teaching	3
Leadership and management	3
Behaviour and safety	3
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

- Burwood is a satisfactory school. It provides students with a satisfactory range of learning opportunities, although too much time is devoted to unplanned activities rather than developing key literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. Local partnerships open up opportunities for individual students, and the skills centre makes a very good contribution to the school's work-related learning programme.
- A well-planned programme of PSHE at the start of each school day makes an important contribution to students' personal development, as well as settling students and preparing them well for the day ahead.
- Students' progress and achievements are satisfactory, in response to satisfactory teaching and appropriately challenging learning targets. They learn well in some lessons, but teachers do not always have a clear focus on precisely what they expect students to learn and the activities that they subsequently provide do not always match students' ability levels. This limits students' progress and their ability to work independently.
- Attendance is improving, but too many students still fail to attend on a regular basis.
- The school provides a high level of day-to-day care, and students feel safe. Adults and students generally have good relationships, with many positive interactions throughout the day in lessons and around the school. Behaviour and safety are satisfactory, although staff do not manage minor disruption in lessons consistently well.
- Senior staff and the governing body provide satisfactory leadership and management. Satisfactory self-auditing procedures provide appropriate information about the school's performance. However, assessment data are not analysed rigorously enough to show whether all students are reaching their potential, and while students' behaviour is monitored closely, the results are not

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used fully or creatively to improve provision.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, and where leadership and management are no better than satisfactory, may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of students' progress by:
 - developing a consistent approach to lesson planning that encourages teachers to focus on what they expect students to learn, and enables them to determine the progress made
 - ensuring that teachers routinely provide challenging activities that match individual students' targets and capabilities and accelerate their learning
 - raising the level of attendance
 - increasing the proportion of planned taught time.
- Make more productive use of the information that is collected through monitoring and self-evaluation systems to:
 - develop and implement a curriculum model that provides a balanced range of learning opportunities for every student
 - ensure that all students, and groups of students, are performing as well as they are capable of doing
 - build on the good start that has been made in supporting and guiding students' behaviour and personal development
 - implement a consistent approach to behaviour management.

Main report

Students generally enter the school with a history of disruptive behaviour and subsequent periods of exclusion, frequent non-attendance and low self-esteem. The school does a satisfactory job in helping them to re-engage with education, and in encouraging their parents and carers to become involved in their children's education. As students move through the school, there are signs that they become more responsible for their own behaviours as they grow in confidence and improve their communication skills. Although students' attainment varies in line with the severity of their learning difficulties, it is broadly average. While most students enter the school working at a low standard, a minority are performing at a level that is in line with national benchmarks. Students' progress and achievements are satisfactory. The very few students who took accredited examinations in 2010 achieved only a small number of GCSE passes at grade C or above in subjects such as art and science. More are in line to take GCSE examinations this year and a bigger proportion is predicted to achieve this standard. However, although attendance is improving slowly, it remains low. Too many students miss out on their education.

Burwood is a safe school. Despite the concerns raised by a minority of parents and

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carers, students are unanimous in confirming that they feel safe in school. Secure safeguarding arrangements maintain a high level of health and safety; policies and procedures meet requirements; and staff are suitably trained. Staff provide a caring environment in which students are happy to discuss concerns with an adult with whom they feel comfortable.

A small minority of students, and their parents and carers, do not think that behaviour is good around the school and report that lessons are disrupted. Although there are instances of unacceptable behaviour, students generally behave in a satisfactory manner. More extreme cases of misbehaviour are taken seriously and dealt with accordingly, such as through fixed-term exclusions. This includes bullying. A large majority of parents and carers and most students confirm that instances of such behaviour are relatively low and managed well. Leaders tackle any other form of discrimination equally effectively. However, more minor disruptions and disturbances are not managed in the same way in all lessons, so students receive mixed messages about which aspects of misbehaviour trigger a 'warning' and this occasionally has an adverse impact on learning. Returned questionnaires show that a small minority of staff take the same view. This is one factor that explains why school leaders have only been partially successful in raising the quality of teaching since the previous inspection, although there are pockets of good practice and encouraging indications that teachers are developing common features of effective teaching. Staff have good subject knowledge and they use ICT well to engage students and to enliven teaching, although very few students were seen using ICT as a learning tool during the inspection.

Staff use praise and encouragement well, and relationships are generally strong. Disruption is rare in lessons where students are enjoying their learning because the activities are interesting and challenging. In this small minority of good lessons, staff plan carefully and at a level of detail that clarifies exactly what they anticipate individual students will learn. They then provide activities that encourage students to tackle them independently. In these circumstances, students make good progress. Learning is less rapid in other lessons because teachers do not meet the learning needs of individuals so well. Planning is not so precise in recognising individuals' prior learning and capabilities and, therefore, activities do not always cater for the wide range of different attainment levels in the class. Effective teaching assistants help students to access the activities, but this occurs at the expense of promoting independent learning. Overall, students made satisfactory progress in the lessons observed.

Some further factors inhibit more accelerated learning and rapid progress. The curriculum in each key stage is not based on a sound rationale that underpins and explains the range of learning opportunities provided. The curriculum is adequately broad, with a good focus on PSHE, which is an integral element of the school's provision for promoting students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school takes reasonable steps to develop these personal qualities, including an appreciation of modern multicultural Britain. Consequently, most students become more aware of the needs of others and develop understanding of how their actions

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impact on others. Events such as a residential trip extend their horizons and give them some insight into living in a small community. The skills centre, which offers courses in the construction industry, work experience and college links, makes a strong contribution to preparing students for leaving school. The particular learning needs of a very few more-able students are met through a good partnership with a local school. However, this good preparation for adulthood is not supplemented by a rapid acquisition of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills because leaders have not ensured that the curriculum is balanced as well as broad. Not enough discrete time is devoted to developing these key skills. Furthermore, the time available for planned learning is not used efficiently. Too much time is set aside each day for students to choose activities such as cycling and games as a reward for appropriate behaviour. As they are chosen on a day-by-day basis, there is no continuity in the groups that come together and so the sessions cannot be formally planned.

Assessment information on students' achievements is collected regularly, and is used in two ways: by staff to set learning targets for students, and by leaders to assess students' progress. Targets are generally suitably challenging and they indicate the new subject skills, knowledge and understanding that each student should be aiming to achieve. Students recognise the value of this. A very large majority confirm that they know how well they are doing at school and that staff explain what they need to do to improve their work. Years 10 and 11 students have a clear understanding of the examination grades that they should be aiming for in the range of accredited subjects and courses that they follow. The use made of progress data is less effective. Leaders examine assessment data and then compare the collated information with datasets that illustrate the performance of similar students nationally. On the basis of that comparison, leaders make a broad judgement of overall progress within the school. While this procedure has some merit in that it attempts to introduce some objectivity and a comparative measure, it is too blunt a procedure because it does not use the datasets as they are intended to be used. The school's process fails to recognise individuals' actual National Curriculum levels, and these are critical when evaluating whether the measured progress is above, below or in line with that of similar students elsewhere.

Despite this lack of refinement when examining students' comparative progress, individual tracking sheets show that students make satisfactory progress from their various starting points. Some group analyses have also been carried out to check that all students have the same equality of opportunity. These show that there are no discrepancies in performance between students who are known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children, or students from different ethnic backgrounds.

Just as leaders do not use academic assessment data as effectively as they could, they do not make the maximum use of the information gathered from good day-to-day monitoring about students' behaviour and personal development. The extent to which students achieve their behavioural targets is checked in all lessons. The information is used effectively to generate intervention strategies to support and guide individuals who have particular difficulties in managing their behaviour. While

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this system provides daily information about students' responses in individual lessons, the school is at an early stage of exploring the monitoring information more deeply, such as teasing out potential triggers for individuals' misbehaviour or patterns of such behaviour.

The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. Leaders have an ambitious view of how they want the school to develop to best meet the needs of its students, and they have communicated this well. The staff are unanimous in confirming that they know what the school is trying to achieve. Some effective management systems, such as monitoring of the quality of practice and the action plan for promoting community cohesion, are improving the school's performance. Other systems are either not clear or sufficiently well embedded, such as behaviour management, or not sufficiently refined to provide the information that leaders need, such as assessment data analysis. In addition, although the governing body challenges leaders in some areas, such as financial decisions, it is under strength and not in a position to gather first-hand knowledge about the school to support its ability to challenge leaders in other ways.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burwood 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received eight completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 44 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	4	50	2	25	0	0	2	25
Q2 My child feels safe at school	3	38	2	25	2	25	1	13
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	5	63	2	25	1	13	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	5	63	2	25	1	13	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	4	50	3	38	0	0	1	13
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	4	50	3	38	1	13	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	4	50	2	25	1	13	1	13
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	2	25	3	38	1	13	1	13
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	5	63	1	13	1	13	1	13
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	4	50	3	38	0	0	1	13
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	5	63	2	25	0	0	1	13
Q12 The school is well led and managed	4	50	3	38	1	13	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 achievement of all pupils■ behaviour and safety■ the quality of teaching■ the effectiveness of leadership and management <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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.



27 May 2011

Dear Students

Inspection of Burwood School, Orpington BR6 9BD

Thank you for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school. A special thanks goes to those of you who gave up your time to speak with me.

Burwood is a satisfactory school. You behave satisfactorily most of the time, but some of you lose learning time when your behaviour becomes disruptive. You told me that you feel safe in school and that you know how to avoid situations that might put you in danger. The staff take good care of you and I know that there is always someone you can talk to if you have a problem. Lessons are satisfactory and you make satisfactory progress in your work, although too many of you stay away from school too often.

The people who run your school do a satisfactory job. They have ideas about how to make the school even better and I have asked them to do the following in order to help them to achieve this.

- Make sure that teachers always provide you with work that is set at just the right level so that you can tackle it on your own.
- Get more of you to attend school more often.
- Check that every one of you is doing as well as you possibly can in your work.
- Change the school timetable so that you do not have activities every afternoon.
- Help you to manage your own behaviour better by making sure that everyone deals with misbehaviour in the same way.

You can help them to make these improvements by going to school as often as you possibly can, working hard, and behaving responsibly at all times. Finally, I wish each of you success in the future, especially if you are taking examinations and leaving school this year.

Yours sincerely

Mike Kell
Lead inspector

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