

Burham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118620
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	358402
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Wendy Simmons

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	118
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Smith
Headteacher	Michelle Grima
Date of previous school inspection	18–19 March 2008
School address	Bell Lane Burham Kent ME1 3SY
Telephone number	01634 861691
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Due to the number of pupils attending the school, one member of the inspection team was only in school for half a day.

The inspectors observed six teachers and visited 11 lessons. Examples of pupils' work were looked at, as well as discussing these with pupils. A sample of Year 1 pupils was heard to read. Additional discussions were held with pupils about many aspects of school life. Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and a sample of parents and carers. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documents including the school's improvement planning and assessment information. Safeguarding procedures were evaluated and included a detailed evaluation of pupils' behaviour. An analysis was made of the questionnaires returned by 32 parents and carers, 64 pupils and 19 staff.

Information about the school

Burham is a smaller than average primary school. The current headteacher joined the school just under a year ago. Pupils work in classes where two year groups are mixed together. This includes the Early Years Foundation Stage Reception class which works with Year 1. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a few from different cultural heritages. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than average, although this has been rising in recent years. A smaller than average percentage of pupils is identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs most often link to language, communication or behavioural difficulties.

The school has met government floor targets in recent years and is on track to maintain this in 2011. The school has the Healthy School award. The school manages an on-site breakfast club.

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

- Burham is a satisfactory school, where pupils are happy, enjoy school and achieve satisfactorily.
- The headteacher's vision and drive have resulted in considerable recent improvement. Parents and carers noted such things as, 'The new head is having a positive effect' and 'The school actively encourages family involvement and feels more approachable.' Inspectors agree with these positive comments.
- The recently strengthened roles of senior and middle leaders contribute to why leadership is satisfactory. Teamwork is now well developed and staff are very proud to be part of this improving school.
- Leaders have developed robust systems to check how well different groups of pupils are doing. As a result, boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as the most able, are doing better. Leaders are correctly focused on further strengthening their achievement to make this good overall in the future.
- Teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good. However, there is variation in teachers' expectations and the challenge for pupils. Writing and mathematics are improving successfully for almost all groups of learners, but aspects of reading and spelling are areas for further development.
- Leaders are strengthening the provision and outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage but there is still more to do on this.
- Inspectors found safety arrangements to be rigorously applied. Pupils'

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behaviour is satisfactory. Leaders recognise that there is a need to keep a very close eye on how well new systems are working to maintain the improving pattern of behaviour. This is especially important, as some parents and carers and pupils noted concerns about behaviour. Nonetheless, parents and carers and pupils agree that pupils are safe and inspectors support this view. Pupils benefit from attending a well-run breakfast club and receive supportive all-round care.

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?

- Monitor rigorously the impact and effectiveness of systems to support and improve pupils' behaviour so that it is good in the future.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that learning, progress and overall achievement are at least good by:
 - increasing expectations and challenges in lessons
 - developing reading opportunities, including guided reading, widening the range of books, strengthening target setting procedures and ensuring that pupils read frequently to adults, especially in Key Stage 1.
 - developing pupils' spelling skills
 - ensuring that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as possible.
- Build on the work already started to improve the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - increasing teacher's expectations of what the most-able children can achieve
 - making activities more exciting and challenging
 - developing the range and quality of outdoor activities
 - widening opportunities for children to do calculating skills
 - making the learning environment more dynamic and engaging to inspire children to be totally absorbed in their investigations and learning.

Main report

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has close links with the pre-school and parents and carers, which helps children to settle into this friendly and happy school. Children's achievement is satisfactory. They make steady progress and are on track to reach the levels

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expected by the end of their time in Reception. In the past, there has been some underachievement. As a result of focused leadership, training and support, this has improved. The daily timetable has been reorganised so that children benefit from a suitable amount of direct teaching as well as self-chosen activities. Teaching allows children to think and learn in different ways. Teachers make adequate use of assessment information to plan the next steps of children's learning. On occasions, opportunities are missed to extend children's learning in their spontaneous play and investigations. Planning is satisfactory but lacks a sharp focus on how to challenge the most-able children.

Children were seen thoroughly enjoying making food for their sea-side shop and this showed how well they cooperate, share ideas and work with sustained concentration. The teaching of basic skills, such as how to use letters and sounds (phonics), has become more systematic, although sometimes lacks challenge. Nonetheless, this enables children to read and write new words adequately and independently. However, some phonic activities do not inspire children as well as they might. Children keenly develop joined handwriting skills and write for a suitable range of purposes, although there is room for activities to be more exciting. Improvements are under way, as seen when boys and girls were writing a service book for bike maintenance in the garage. The lesson on 'The Princess Wizard' showed that the most-able children do sometimes make faster progress in lessons. But, the sample of work seen shows that there is unevenness in children's progress over time. Exciting plans are correctly under way to improve the outdoor learning area. While children work on basic adding up and taking-away skills, opportunities for real-life calculating activities are underdeveloped, which hampers children's wider mathematical development.

Key Stage 1, Years 1 and 2

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and ensures that pupils make satisfactory progress. In the past, there had been some underachievement by different ability groups, especially boys, and those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This was most marked in reading. Teaching assistants and teachers have benefited from extra training about phonics and this is ongoing. There has been a concerted and successful effort to push up the progress and attainment of the average-ability pupils this year, especially boys.

Inspectors confirm leaders' views that pupils' reading skills in Year 1 are at the expected level for six-year-olds. Reading attainment is now on track to be average at the end of Year 2. However, some books are too easy for average and more-able pupils and, in general, books are rather old and worn. The school already has plans to purchase new books. Some pupils do not read often enough in school to accelerate their progress. However, there is strong evidence of children doing well in writing, especially the most-able boys and girls. This was exemplified by good teaching in Year 2 which enabled them to talk and think about how to improve their work. This was very evident when pupils worked on their fantasy space adventure. However, the work seen showed that some pupils with special educational needs

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and/or disabilities are often held back by poorly developed handwriting skills. Training about writing helps all staff to understand more about how to make writing fun and challenging.

Key Stage 2, Years 3 to 6

By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is securely average in reading, writing and mathematics. Increasing proportions are reaching the higher Level 5. Achievement is satisfactory and reflects the quality of teaching. There is an increasing proportion of good teaching but there is not enough consistently high expectation and challenge for pupils in some of the mixed-age class lessons.

In a good lesson, pupils were thoroughly engaged when researching television adverts using laptop computers. Effective questioning helped pupils to think for themselves and come up with explanations about how to use persuasive vocabulary, such as slogans, superlatives, flattery and alliteration. This exemplifies why pupils' progress in writing is often good. Pupils learn how to write complex sentences and use a range of interesting vocabulary for different purposes. In science, pupils wrote about different rocks. In another lesson, they compiled letters to explain how to manage litter in Margate following a visit there. However, progress in writing is no better than good because it is hampered by weaknesses in spelling. The new termly 'Super Writing' assessment procedures help teachers to set targets for improvement. Pupils are far clearer about their writing targets than they are about those for reading.

While pupils make satisfactory progress in reading, opportunities to accelerate this through guided reading are underdeveloped. This aspect of the school's work has not been carefully checked by leaders. However, clear plans are under way to improve the library and class book areas. Boys and girls largely make similar progress in reading. However, several boys commented that the choice of books is limited. As one put it, 'School books do not interest me. I want to go to the library and choose a book that I actually want to read.'

Leaders have been working concertedly to improve opportunities for real-life problem solving in mathematics. This was seen when pupils found ways to use multiples to sort numbers into Venn diagrams. The school is working to help pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to do as well as others. There is more to do, however, as this group struggles with basic skills when doing quick calculations.

Behaviour and safety

When the headteacher joined the school, she found that the behaviour of most pupils was usually good but a few pupils were not behaving well enough. Following a complete review, a new behaviour policy has been produced, which complements the better system for sanctions and rewards. Pupils value these improvements. This has led to pupils' behaviour, on a day-to-day basis, being satisfactory. Pupils' behaviour is well supported by the school's clearly defined moral and social code and

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understanding of the rules. There has been a complete review of lunchtime arrangements, which has resulted in a calm lunchtime routine so that the pupils enjoy plenty of fresh air, exercise and fun.

The staff are working together to help lift behaviour to a good level in the future. This is aided by an improving curriculum, which mostly makes learning enjoyable. Nonetheless, a few lessons are dull. As a result, pupils become restless and their behaviour is no more than satisfactory. Leaders recognise that there is a need to keep a very close eye on how well new systems are working. This is especially important because some parents and carers, although very happy with the school and pupils' safety, have concerns about behaviour. This was important for one class in particular. There remains inconsistency in how well staff understand the needs of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. The headteacher is very knowledgeable about counselling and giving support to this group.

Inspectors found that safety arrangements are carefully applied and that there is regular monitoring. Case study evidence showed that child-protection and safeguarding procedures are robust and reflect the sensitive care provided for individual children. Rates of attendance are now higher than average. Rates of exclusions have fallen. The school follows all of the requirements for the safe recruitment of staff. Even though pupils felt that behaviour was not always good enough, they confirmed that it is improving and only very occasionally interrupts their learning. Pupils confirmed that they feel safe at school and commented that there is very little bullying. Anti-bullying procedures are carefully thought through. Pupils know who they would choose to go to to get help or advice if so needed.

Overall in the school

The school is successfully promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and community cohesion. These features have improved well since the last inspection. Pupils keenly explained how they learn about different faiths while also showing considerable respect and knowledge about their Christian beliefs. Daily worship is planned well and pupils' multicultural awareness is enhanced by links with other schools and by visits. Pupils delight in singing and taking part in local events.

In the last year, there has been a complete review of the work of the school so that all staff are more involved in the evaluation of pupils' achievement and progress. There is a concerted effort to improve, which underpins the satisfactory leadership. As one member of staff put it, 'It has been an eye-opening experience. Communication is better. All of our views are valued.' Members of the senior management team, like other staff, are being empowered to develop their roles and everyone is enjoying the challenge. Leaders are committed to promoting equality and tackling discrimination. Firm action is under way to narrow the gap between the achievement of different groups. There is a clear sense of ambition, which underpins the capacity to improve. This is aided by the focused support from the governing body.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burham Church of England Primary 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 118 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	15	47	17	53	0	0	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child’s particular needs	14	44	16	50	2	6	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	19	59	13	41	0	0	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	18	56	14	44	0	0	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	14	44	12	38	4	13	2	6
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	6	19	17	53	6	19	1	3
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	12	38	14	44	4	13	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child’s learning	14	44	16	50	1	3	0	0
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	13	41	17	53	1	3	0	0
Q12 The school is well led and managed	15	47	14	44	2	6	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.



23 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of: Burham Church of England Primary School, Burham, ME1 3SY

We really enjoyed visiting your school. I am writing to thank you for spending time talking to us about your school and for filling in the questionnaires.

- You go to a satisfactory school that is improving quickly. This is because your headteacher is really working hard with all the other staff.
- You make steady progress as you move through the school.
- Your writing and problem-solving skills are improving well.
- The teachers help you to be ready in a satisfactory way for secondary school.
- You and your parents and carers told us that sometimes a few pupils do not behave as well as they should. This is improving but there is more to do.
- We were impressed by how well you learn about different religions and think carefully about being respectful to others; well done for this!
- The adults keep you safe in school and you agree.

Your headteacher agrees with us that several important things still need improving.

- The adults will be keeping a close eye on your behaviour.
- They will be working to make teaching good. This means that reading opportunities need to be better. Boys, you will be pleased to hear that the school will be buying books that you will enjoy more! In some lessons, you will notice that those of you who find learning easy will have a few more challenges. Those of you who have extra support will also be helped to make faster progress. We would like you all to work more on your spellings.
- The youngest children in the Reception class will be having more opportunities to learn outside and a few more exciting challenges.

You can help by continuing to work hard and by helping everyone to behave as well as possible. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Simmons
Lead inspector

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