

Burbage School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131141
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	381307
Inspection dates	3–4 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Jon Carter

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	342
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janine Killough
Headteacher	Nicola Horton
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 October 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 16 lessons taught by 12 teachers and held meetings with school leaders and managers, representatives from the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at assessment information, the school's analysis of pupils' progress, curriculum plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of the school leaders' lesson monitoring and many other documents. They analysed responses from the 78 questionnaires received from parents and carers, as well as those from 93 pupils and 15 staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school's curriculum and professional development for teachers is contributing to accelerated progress in writing.
- How effectively leaders and managers at all levels ensure that pupils make rapid progress through improved use of assessment, particularly in mathematics.
- How effectively the Early Years Foundation Stage is developing children's basic literacy skills through well-targeted learning activities.

Information about the school

Burbage is a primary school of much larger than average size. The largest ethnic group in the school is made up of pupils from White British backgrounds. The school has a higher-than-average percentage of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, a small minority of whom are at a very early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The school has a slightly higher-than-average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These are mainly moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs and behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one Nursery class and two Reception classes. A period of extensive change has resulted in most teaching staff, including those in senior positions, being appointed to the school in the period since the previous inspection.

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

Burbage is a satisfactory school. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning and show sound development in their personal skills. Improvements brought about by the staff team under the leadership of the headteacher have helped to ensure the school has a calm and purposeful atmosphere through the development of a consistent approach to managing behaviour. Consequently, pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and their behaviour around the school is good.

As a result of a recently established partnership with a successful local school, pupils' progress in lessons is now improving securely and quickly. An increasing proportion of pupils are now making good progress, particularly in their literacy skills. This is because teachers have begun to plan more structured learning activities, which build on what pupils know and can do, with increasing effectiveness. This is particularly true in Key Stage 2 classes. However, these changes are not yet consistent across the school and have not been in place for sufficient time to impact on the school's most recent test results. Consequently, attainment is low.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. In a minority of lessons, where teaching is good, pupils make good progress because clear objectives are set for learning. In these lessons, pupils engage well with learning activities which are suitably challenging and well paced. As a result, their learning moves on swiftly. However, these levels of pace and challenge are not consistently established in all lessons. The quality of written feedback to pupils is becoming more consistent across the school because teachers are guided and supported well by school leaders and advisers. Teaching assistants are usually deployed appropriately to support the most needy pupils. However, the quality of support they provide varies considerably from class to class. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, activities are planned to ensure learning in the classroom and outdoor area is closely linked. However, there are too few resources available to effectively support the development of early writing skills.

Leaders and managers at all levels have an accurate understanding of where the school has strengths and the areas that need further development because self-evaluation processes are satisfactory. However, middle leaders' involvement in school improvement is not always sufficiently well structured. Many are new to their positions of responsibility and have not yet received training specific to their roles and the needs of the school. Nevertheless, the success of the partnership between the two schools and the positive response of leaders and managers at all levels to local authority support over a short period of time demonstrate that the school has

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satisfactory capacity to improve.

Pupils' attendance is low. Systems in place reward high attendance and provide support for those pupils whose attendance is of concern. In a few cases, this support for individuals has been successful in improving how well they attend school. However, targets for raising pupils' attendance are based at whole school, rather than individual, pupil level.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve the quality and consistency of pupils' progress in lessons by ensuring that:
 - pupils in all classes are set appropriately challenging learning tasks, based on accurate and recent assessment information, that move their learning on rapidly
 - teaching assistants provide pupils with consistently high quality support in whole class and independent learning activities
 - the consistency of good practice is developed across the school through extended use of successful partnerships with staff at other schools
 - children in the Early Years Foundation Stage have access to high quality resources to support the development of their writing skills.
- Increase the capacity of the school to improve by accelerating the development of middle leaders through more structured involvement in leadership activities and personalised professional training aligned to school improvement priorities.
- Improve attendance to at least national average levels by routinely setting a realistic and achievable short-term target for each pupil, which is reviewed regularly through the school year.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the school with levels of development that are generally below age-related expectations, particularly in language and number skills. Although attainment by the end of Year 6 is low, this represents satisfactory progress overall from pupils' starting points. Successful partnerships have recently contributed strongly to accelerated progress for older pupils because teachers are responding well to training and professional development. Consequently, the attainment of an increasing number of pupils is improving quickly, particularly in English. However, the improvements in teaching, enabled by the support of staff from the partnership school, have not yet extended to all classes and consequently this quality of learning and progress is not consistent across the school.

In lessons, pupils make at least satisfactory progress and enjoy their learning. In the

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best lessons, pupils respond enthusiastically to the challenges set for them. Pupils’ literacy skills develop with increasing pace, from limited starting points, through highly structured learning activities and interesting links with organisations outside the school. For example, Year 6 pupils demonstrated secure improvement in writing skills while composing a letter of thanks during an English lesson. The connection with work done at the ‘Ministry of Stories’, together with clear explanation from the teacher, enabled pupils to enthusiastically produce well-constructed letters that showed increasing use of interesting and exciting vocabulary. Progress in numeracy and information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language make progress at similar rates to their peers because they are effectively supported both in the classroom and in small groups that focus on particular needs. Overall, boys do less well than girls.

Pupils increasingly feel safe while at school. Their behaviour in lessons and in the playground is almost always good. Pupils make a positive contribution to the school being a welcoming and harmonious community because they have developed a satisfactory understanding of cultural similarities and differences. They take positions of responsibility seriously, for example by participating in the school council, although there are limited opportunities for them to be active on behalf of the wider community.

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	4
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	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	4
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

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

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Teaching is underpinned by positive relationships between teachers and pupils. Learning environments are bright, exciting and well resourced, with particular emphasis on support for reading and writing development. Lessons are planned satisfactorily so that pupils’ learning is structured and takes account of the range of abilities although expectations of what pupils can achieve are not always high enough, particularly in Key Stage 1. Where learning and progress are good in a minority of lessons, assessment of what pupils know and can do is thorough and accurate due to consistent application of a rigorous marking system. This detailed information is used well to ensure that planning takes good account of what pupils know and can do. Consequently, pupils are motivated to learn and progress because the work they do is suitably challenging. Their involvement in reviewing their learning supports their improving progress well. However, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school because the effective support from the school’s partners that has brought about this improvement has initially focused on raising the quality of teaching and learning in Key Stage 2 classes.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and improving as a result of partnership working with other schools and organisations. Recent changes to the curriculum are beginning to support improved learning and progress in pupils’ literacy skills. The structured approach to developing pupils’ understanding of phonics (the sounds letters make) and improving reading skills is giving pupils, especially boys, increased confidence and enjoyment. Enrichment of the curriculum, through enterprise activities and an artist-in-residence, for example, ensures that pupils’ future economic well-being and spiritual development are increasingly well supported. Extra-curricular activities are popular and well attended.

Secure systems are in place to ensure pupils’ well-being. The school-wide adoption of the ‘stay on green’ behaviour system and restorative approaches to the resolution of problems are increasingly successful in improving classroom and playground behaviour and reducing bullying and exclusions. The welcoming and caring ethos of the school and its staff ensures that new pupils quickly feel safe and comfortable. Management systems ensure that pupils who are persistently absent from school are identified and supported and that parents receive information about their children’s attendance rate. However, pupils do not routinely receive realistic, personalised targets to aim for.

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

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How effective are leadership and management?

Much of the work of the headteacher since the previous inspection has focused on managing significant and challenging staffing changes. As a result, improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils’ attainment have been difficult to secure. However, the school now benefits strongly from the support of the headteacher and staff from the partnership school as well as the local authority in improving teaching and learning, especially through the development of more rigorous and effective assessment systems.

The staff team and the governing body are committed to the agenda of improvement which has been clearly communicated by the headteacher. However, the capacity of the school to develop without the continued support of its partners is currently no better than satisfactory because of the need to appoint permanent members of staff to senior positions in the leadership team and develop the skills of recently appointed middle managers.

The quality of teaching and its impact on pupils’ learning and progress are monitored regularly and accurately although areas for development are not always systematically followed up during formal observations. The governing body provides a satisfactory level of support but recognises that its members have not provided sufficiently well-focused challenge to school leaders to promote rapid improvement.

Pupils, parents and carers have noticed, and are appreciative of, the improvements made since the previous inspection. Parents and carers are increasingly involved in their children’s learning due to initiatives such as regular toy library sessions in the Nursery and coffee mornings with the headteacher. These are enabling them to provide better support at home through an improved understanding of how their children are taught and what they are learning at school. Such activities have also contributed strongly to breaking down perceived barriers between parents and carers from different backgrounds, promoting satisfactory community cohesion.

Arrangements for ensuring that pupils are adequately safeguarded are satisfactory. Staff are trained regularly and recruitment procedures comply with requirements. The promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory in all aspects of the school’s work, and it takes suitable steps to tackle discrimination. The progress of the most vulnerable groups of pupils is monitored. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their peers and the school operates harmoniously on a day-to-day basis.

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	3

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school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	
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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make satisfactory progress across the Early Years Foundation Stage. Adults have warm and caring relationships with children, which helps to ensure that they quickly settle and develop confidence as learners. Assessment of children’s development is satisfactory and increasingly robust through more rigorous baseline assessment. Literacy teaching follows the same model used in Key Stage 1 and 2 classes, providing improved systems for monitoring children’s progress and developing their phonics skills. However, these assessments are not yet used consistently to ensure that learning activities are planned to develop children’s skills systematically, particularly in the Nursery. Children’s physical development and coordination skills are adequately supported by activities in the outdoor area which are appropriately linked to learning themes in the classroom. However, the development of improved literacy skills is not sufficiently well supported with high quality displays and resources to inspire and encourage emerging writing skills in these areas.

Children particularly enjoy participating in role play activities which help to promote their literacy skills. For example, children in a Reception class, acting out the story of Hansel and Gretel, developed improved comprehension and retelling skills through the effective use of visual resources and adult support. However, adult-led activities tend to dominate the curriculum and there are not always sufficient opportunities for children to make independent choices and direct their own learning. The leader responsible for the Early Years Foundation Stage understands the strengths and weaknesses of the setting. The staff team develops good relationships with parents through regular activities such as the toy library and ‘stay and play’ sessions.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

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The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
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Views of parents and carers

A lower-than-average proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. They indicated that overall they were happy with their children’s experience at Burbage but more so with their personal development than their learning. They were pleased about the improvements in teaching since the previous inspection. Of greatest concern to a few parents and carers was whether the school was meeting their children’s particular needs, and whether they were making enough progress. Inspectors found that learning and progress were not consistent in all subjects and in all classes but that progress overall was satisfactory and improving securely and quickly, including for those children with different types of special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burbage 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 78 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 342 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	49	37	47	3	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	38	49	39	50	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	34	44	34	44	8	10	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	29	37	39	50	9	12	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	29	37	44	56	3	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	36	42	54	4	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	36	45	58	4	5	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)	33	42	35	45	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	19	24	46	59	10	13	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	33	41	53	8	10	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	29	43	55	8	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	31	47	60	5	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	32	41	36	46	9	12	1	1

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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 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.



7 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burbage School, London N1 5JD

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave to us when we visited your school recently. We were pleased that you were keen to speak to us about how you think your school is improving and tell us that you feel safe at school because of those improvements.

I am writing to tell you that you go to a satisfactory school. The teachers at your school are working well with staff from other schools to improve how well you learn. An increasing number of you are making better progress than before and your good behaviour is helping this to happen – well done! The changes that have been made to the curriculum that you are taught and the improved marking are helping to make sure that your reading and writing skills are getting better quickly.

We have asked your headteacher to do the following to help improve the school further.

- Improve how well you learn by making sure pupils in all classes get challenging work to do and are well supported by staff.
- Extend the partnership work with other schools to classes for younger pupils.
- Make sure the teachers who lead different areas in the school work to help everyone make better progress.
- Improve attendance by giving you challenging targets to aim for.

You can all help by making sure your attendance at school is as high as it can be.

Yours sincerely

Jon Carter
Lead inspector

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