

Burston Community Primary School

Crown Green, Burston, Diss, IP22 5TZ

Inspection dates

6–7 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Achievement requires improvement because the most able pupils are not identified quickly enough so that they receive the right level of difficulty in their work straight away.
- Too much of the teaching is not yet good because not all teachers check that pupils understand what they are learning about and adjust the pace and challenge of the work during their lessons so that everyone achieves well.
- Pupils are not always given sufficient time to read and understand the comments made by teachers in their books and so miss opportunities to improve their work.
- The behaviour of a few older pupils is not handled consistently well and occasionally learning is disrupted.
- The high number of staff changes means that the leadership has not been able to systematically improve the quality of teaching over time.
- Parents do not receive sufficient information about the school's plans for the future and their impact on their children.

The school has the following strengths

- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make a good start to their education.
- By the end of Year 6, the vast majority of pupils reach or exceed the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils who have disabilities, those with special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium make good progress because the school is quick to put into place well targeted additional support.
- Most pupils feel safe at school and look after one another.
- The acting headteacher has identified exactly the right priorities with the Governing Body. Changes made are already leading to improvements in teaching, achievement and the organisation of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons. Of these, six were joint observations with the acting headteacher.
- The inspector made other visits to classes, looked at pupils' workbooks and listened to a sample of pupils read.
- The inspector held discussions with pupils, the acting headteacher, other staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector took account of the 17 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The inspector also spoke with a number of parents. The responses to 12 staff questionnaires were considered.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information on pupils' progress, planning and management documentation, the school's self-evaluation, the records of how the school uses its funding, especially how the money from pupil premium is spent, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Robert Greatrex, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much smaller than average primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (the extra government funding for children looked after by the local authority known to be eligible for free school meals or whose families are in the armed services) is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is slightly above average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- Pupils are taught in three mixed age classes. Reception children are taught alongside Year 1 pupils. Year 2 to Year 6 are taught in the two other classes.
- There were too few pupils in Year 6 in 2012 to make comparisons with government's floor standards, which are the minimum expected for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has had some changes in leadership since the last inspection in 2010. The current acting headteacher has been in place since September 2012. There have also been a relatively high number of changes in teaching staff, including the use of temporary teaching staff.
- The school is federated with another nearby smaller-than-average primary school. The schools share a governing body and the acting headteacher leads both schools.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - making sure that what different groups of pupils will learn is always clearly explained and that pupils understand how they will know they have achieved this
 - improving teachers' questioning skills so that pupils have more opportunities to explain their ideas and are challenged to think more for themselves
 - improving marking so that pupils better understand comments for improvement in their work, giving them time to reflect and checking that they respond.
- Raise the attainment of the more able pupils by:
 - improving systems for identifying these pupils and checking on their progress
 - ensuring there is always sufficient challenge in the work provided in lessons, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Improve pupils' behaviour by:
 - providing more guidance to staff on how to manage behaviour
 - ensuring all staff consistently apply the school's behaviour policy and procedures.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - improving communication with parents so that they receive adequate and timely information about the decisions taken that affect their children,
 - seeking further ways to engage parents and staff more in the long term plan for the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Burston Primary is a very small school with an average of about eight pupils in each year group. Because of this, children's knowledge and skills on entry vary considerably and the results of the national tests in Year 6 and assessments in Year 2 vary considerably from one year to the next.
- Children of Reception age make good progress in all areas of learning because the teaching is good and has been stable since the last inspection. The outdoor learning environment has also been improved. Children of Reception age started school in September 2013 with skills typical of those expected for their age. They have made good progress because of good teaching, the rich learning environment and the good ways in which they are quickly settled into school.
- Older pupils entered the school with much more varied skills and experiences which were, overall, below expected levels. Over the last three years, by the end of Year 6 almost all pupils make at least expected progress from their starting points or exceed this. Most achieve the test results expected in English and mathematics with some achieving better than expected results. However the most able pupils do not always attain the high standards in writing and mathematics of which they are capable.
- Pupils who have disabilities and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points because the school carefully checks on how well these pupils are doing and provides effective extra help for them when needed.
- The pupil premium funding is spent effectively on additional support so that eligible pupils in all years are making good progress. However in 2012 there were too few such pupils to comment on their attainment without identifying them.
- Although pupils' performance in the Year 1 phonics check (how to link letters and sounds) was low in 2012, the numbers were very small. This is now taught more systematically so standards are improving. Year 2 pupils have made up much of the gap because of this and the current Year 1 pupils demonstrate a good ability to sound out new words. Older pupils achieve well in reading. They say how much they enjoy reading a wide range of books. When faced with unknown words, they use their knowledge of letters and sounds well. Volunteers contribute by regularly hearing those read who need further practice.
- Basic skills in literacy and numeracy develop well because pupils have good opportunities to practise them in other subjects. For example, numeracy skills were used well in calculations of rationing quotas, and tablet computers are used to record, research and photograph.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching needs improving particularly for pupils in Years 2 to Year 6. In both of these classes pupils do not always understand what they are meant to learn in a lesson and how they will know they have achieved this, because it is not well enough explained to them. In addition the different year and ability groups are sometimes kept working together for too long. This slows pupils' progress, particularly of the most able.
- In the youngest class, children are actively engaged in their learning because they are given interesting tasks. They want to learn, ask for 'harder challenges', and feel a real sense of

accomplishment when they succeed.

- Occasionally, teachers use questioning well to engage all pupils in lively discussion. In these lessons, the questions probe, clarify and extend pupils' thinking. However, in many discussions, teachers talk for too long so pupils begin to lose interest and questions asked require little thought to answer and do not challenge pupils sufficiently to work out things for themselves.
- When teachers create interesting and imaginative learning opportunities, for example making a large scale model of a story plan, there is a real 'buzz' to learning. Pupils enjoy working together, listen to one another's suggestions and share and improve on each other's ideas well.
- When lessons start in the youngest class, the teaching assistant will often work with some so the teacher teaches a group all on a similar level. Teaching will be carefully planned and precisely aimed at what they need to learn next. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teaching assistants generally work well with pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. They give them support carefully tailored to their needs so they make good progress in their English and mathematics work and in their confidence.
- Teachers often make good links between subjects, so new learning in one subject area reinforces or consolidates well previous learning in another.
- Teachers do not routinely check that pupils have understood their marking, nor how it should be applied to their future learning. Few checks are made that pupils answer the questions their teachers put to them in this feedback. This has not improved since the last inspection.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

- The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. However, a few older pupils occasionally disrupt the learning of others. Although this has improved recently because of good support from the local authority and training for staff, nevertheless there are still instances of disruptive behaviour. This is partly because some staff do not consistently apply the school's behaviour policy.
- Nearly all pupils have positive attitudes to learning, want to learn and respond well to teachers and other adults. When they are given the opportunity to work by themselves, for example when making cakes from a 1940s recipe, they concentrate and persevere well.
- The school has a 'family feel' and the vast majority of pupils readily look after and help one another. They enjoy positive relationships with staff and say they mostly all get on with each other.
- Pupils and parents say that behaviour varies in classes, too, because boundaries and expectations vary between the different teachers who teach the same class. This confuses pupils, especially those with behavioural needs who are most in need of consistency.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their role in it. They feel listened to and have a genuine voice in the everyday life of the school. Pupils lead assemblies, using a range of presentation techniques including technology.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe, for example when using the internet or using the roads. They and their parents say that bullying is rare, but if it does occur they have

confidence staff will sort it out quickly and fairly.

- Attendance is broadly average. The school follows absence up quickly and regularly stresses to parents the importance of full attendance. Pupils receive suitable rewards for good attendance, which they are keen to achieve.

The leadership and management

requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not yet secured consistently good teaching for all pupils at the school, particularly the most able. This is a concern from some parents who think they receive insufficient information about staffing issues and how this affects the quality of teaching their children are receiving.
- Governors, staff and parents are united in their desire to see Burston Primary thrive. They all share the goal of providing high quality education for pupils.
- The acting headteacher has quickly identified with governors what must change so that the school improves quickly. The school's plans for improvement are clear about how the effectiveness of these changes will be measured. Appropriate and timely changes have been put into place, some of which such as the approach to phonics and staff training for managing behaviour have already started to pay off.
- Most pupils have continued to make good progress despite the high staff turnover because pupils' progress is tracked carefully so that anyone falling behind can be given extra help. However, checks are not routinely used to ensure the more able pupils make faster progress.
- The quality of teaching is checked regularly and useful advice provided so staff improve. Permanent staff say that they have the support they need and that good quality training is offered to help them improve the quality of their teaching.
- This is a highly inclusive school that welcomes all and values the uniqueness of each child and family. However the school is aware that in order to ensure equal opportunities for all, teaching for all pupils, but particularly the most able, needs to improve and as does the behaviour of a small number of pupils.
- The curriculum is effective, particularly the way subjects are linked and basic skills supported in other subjects. Much is done with other local schools to enrich the curriculum, particularly the partnership school. Spiritual, social and cultural development is good, moral development less so, because there is still some difficult behaviour to eradicate.
- Good practical support from the local authority is helping the school improve, For example support is given to the teacher in charge when the acting headteacher is at the partner school. The local authority have also provided effective training for the acting headteacher and supported the school in developing its behaviour policy.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is increasingly effective because governors have a good range of expertise and have had training that helps to ensure that they understand and fulfil their responsibilities. As a result the governing body is rapidly improving, and now holds the school leadership to account appropriately. Permanent staff now have clear targets and good support which have led to improvements in teaching. Finances are managed carefully and the impact of spending decisions checked on, including the pupil premium funding. They know, for

example, that these pupils achieve as well or better than their classmates. Governors ensure all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding. They know what pupils are thinking because they listen to them regularly. They share parents' views that the school has been through a turbulent period and are actively seeking to create a stable staffing structure. However, they also recognise that more must be done to improve communication with parents and staff, particularly to keep them informed and to involve them more when planning for the school's development and future.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120793
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	401968

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	55
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Adshead
Headteacher	Carol Green (Acting Head)
Date of previous school inspection	3 February 2010
Telephone number	01379 741256
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