

Burwood School

Avalon Road, Orpington, BR6 9BD

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

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

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. Teachers do not always use the information they have about students to set work at the correct level of difficulty. As a result, not all students are making as much progress as they should be.
- Some books are not marked regularly enough. Consequently, students do not get enough feedback about how to improve their work.
- Some students do not achieve as well as they should in English or mathematics because of the variable quality of teaching. In mathematics, students do not always have the knowledge required to be able to complete the work they are set.
- Teachers do not have enough opportunities for training in order to improve their work. The best practice within the school is not shared effectively between them.
- Teachers do not have management responsibilities. They are not contributing enough to the overall development of the school.
- The attendance of a significant number of students is not good enough. As a result, these students do not achieve as well as they should.
- Too many days are still lost due to students being excluded because of behaviour difficulties.
- Leaders do not use information well enough to ensure that the Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding is making a difference to eligible students.
- Staff do not always provide enough support for students to achieve their individual social skills or behaviour targets.
- Some teachers' expectations of what students should achieve are too low. As a result, students do not always put as much effort into their work as they could.

The school has the following strengths

- The school is recovering well following a period of instability. This is as a result of strong leadership from the interim executive headteacher and the interim executive board. As a result, the quality of teaching is improving.
- Most teachers have a good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They are able to share this with students in ways that interest and engage them.
- Students' behaviour has improved significantly in recent months. Attendance has increased and the number of students being excluded has much reduced.
- The buildings have been upgraded so that they now provide a suitable learning environment.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are effective and meet statutory requirements. As a result, students like school and feel safe.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in eight lessons and an assembly. He spent time talking with students at break and lunch times to gain their views of the school. Senior leaders accompanied the inspector for all of the observations.
- Meetings were held with members of the interim executive board (IEB), which included a representative from the local authority.
- Discussions took place with the executive headteacher, members of the senior leadership team, a group of teachers, two officers from the youth policing team, and the chief executive officer of the Safe 'N' Sound youth project.
- Students' work was looked at, along with a wide range of documents. These included information about students' progress and achievements, attendance records, the school's own assessment of its strengths and weaknesses, and information about safeguarding procedures.
- The inspector examined 18 questionnaires that staff members completed.
- There were not enough responses from Parent View, the Ofsted online questionnaire, for the inspector to consider.

Inspection team

Andy Lole, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Burwood School is a small special school providing for boys who have a statement of special educational needs for behavioural, emotional or social difficulties, or an education, health and care plan for social, emotional or mental health needs.
- Many of the students have additional needs such as specific or moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication difficulties, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or autistic spectrum disorder.
- Often students have been excluded from mainstream schools before arriving at Burwood School. Many of the youngest students transfer from a local pupil referral unit. The school has very high levels of mobility, with students arriving and leaving throughout the year. Some students have to travel for up to an hour to get to school.
- Most students are from White British backgrounds. All students speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of students eligible for the pupil premium, which is additional government funding for children who are looked after by the local authority or who are entitled to free school meals, is very high compared to the national average.
- Since the previous inspection, two headteachers have left and there have been a number of changes to the staff team and the governing body. The local authority dissolved the governing body in November 2014 and replaced it with an interim executive board. A new temporary executive headteacher and head of school both started in January 2015.
- A long-term strategic plan has been established whereby the school will become part of a local academy trust, which includes a pupil referral unit, alternative provision for primary aged pupils with social, emotional and mental health difficulties, and Bromley College. The school's interim executive headteacher is the executive headteacher of this trust.
- Some students attend alternative provision at the Archway Project, working towards a diploma in engineering, or a construction course at Bromley College.
- The school has not been able to recruit a permanent English teacher for some time. Students have been taught by a variety of different temporary teachers.
- Students are not entered early for GCSE.
- The school is being supported by a national leader of education (NLE) from New Rush Hall School, an outstanding special school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, so that all students make good or better progress, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use accurate information about students' achievements to set work at the correct level
 - ensuring that work is marked regularly, giving students clear feedback about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve
 - sharing the best practice within the school to improve the quality of teaching and raise teachers' expectations of what students can achieve.
- Improve behaviour and safety at the school by:
 - ensuring that all staff actively support students to achieve their targets for improving their behaviour and social skills
 - improving rates of students' attendance so that these are in line with those of similar schools nationally
 - continuing to reduce the use of fixed-term exclusions.
- Strengthen leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - middle management roles are developed in order to build capacity and support whole-school developments
 - all staff members are given regular opportunities for professional development
 - the interim executive board monitors the impact of additional government funding.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Following an extended period of significant difficulty that resulted in high levels of student aggression, two headteachers leaving, and many changes of staff and governors, the new senior leadership team and interim executive board have quickly stabilised the school. Under their strong leadership, the school has accurately identified what needs to be done to make improvements and has a detailed plan in place to achieve this. As a result, there have been improvements to the quality of teaching and students' achievement. This shows that leaders have the capacity to continue to improve the school.
- The school is developing a culture and ethos where good behaviour can flourish and students feel cared for and valued by the staff, and where students are confident they will receive the right support and encouragement to do well. This has replaced a culture where behaviour was often managed through physical restraint. Students report that the school is now a safe place.
- The senior leadership team have an accurate view on the quality of teaching through regular monitoring. However, systems to check the progress of pupils are not yet fully effective because previous assessment information is unreliable. These systems have greatly improved, ensuring the school now has an accurate starting point to measure future rates of progress.
- Student attendance and incidents of behaviour difficulties are carefully tracked. Effective action has been taken to improve both of these over recent months.
- School leaders regularly monitor the progress, behaviour and attendance of students when they are attending external placements.
- The local authority have provided a good level of support to the school. This has included funding for improvements to the site and providing specialist support through regular educational psychology and speech and language input. Representatives from the local authority are also members of the interim executive board.
- Teachers do not currently hold any middle management responsibility. As a result, the capacity of leadership is underdeveloped and they are not contributing sufficiently to whole-school developments. However, they speak positively about the impact of the new senior leadership team and have confidence that the school will continue to improve.
- The school is improving the way in which it supports students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is increasing opportunities for students to be involved in local projects, such as Kick London and impact days run by the London Fire Brigade. More people have been coming into the school to talk with students, such as the police and the local vicar. All of these experiences are helping students become more aware of the needs of other people. Student engaged well, for example, in an assembly led by the head of school, which looked at the links between freedom and respect. They were able to discuss issues around possible conflicts between personal wishes and being part of a democratic society. They are now being well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Recent improvements have broadened the range of subjects that are being taught and made them more relevant and meaningful to students. English, mathematics and science teaching is now more focused on developing students' practical abilities, better preparing them for adult life and the world of work. However, the curriculum is not yet enabling them to make good progress in these subjects. The new information technology teacher has introduced a much more specialist approach to studying this subject. A new construction course has been introduced.
- The school provides equality of opportunity for all students and their achievement is improving. It tackles discrimination effectively. Students do not feel bullied. No students are aware of any discrimination happening at the school and all feel included within the school community.
- The school uses Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium funding in a wide variety of ways to support students' engagement and enjoyment in learning. However, leaders do not have enough information about the progress of these students to accurately monitor the impact of this spending.
- Effective careers guidance and advice is offered to students. Lessons are taught on how to complete application forms and how to prepare for an interview. Visits to local colleges are arranged to help encourage students to continue with their education when they leave the school. This has helped all recent leavers transfer onto suitable college courses.
- The school's arrangements for safeguarding students are effective and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The interim executive board meets every two week to ensure that rapid progress is being achieved to improve the education of the students. Minutes of these meetings show detailed communication around all aspects of the school's progress, and a good level of challenge and support from the board. Board

members visit the school regularly so that they can check progress for themselves. As a result, they have a realistic picture of how the school is performing. They are well informed about the quality of teaching and about what action is being taken when any member of staff is performing poorly.

- Although the board members manage the budget well, they do not yet have enough information about students' progress to know exactly how well students are performing. In particular, they are unable to assess how effectively Year 7 catch-up and pupil premium spending are used.
- The interim executive board has an allocated member who ensures that the school fulfils its safeguarding duties well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of students requires improvement. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is much improved in recent months. When students become upset or annoyed, staff quickly and effectively intervene, talking to them to reassure or comfort them. However, some students do not always put as much care and effort into their work as they should.
- Police officers from the local youth police team reported a significant improvement in student behaviour. During the six months to December 2014, the police were called to the school on 35 occasions to deal with a range of concerns, including missing persons, disorder, assaults on staff, and criminal damage. Since the start of January 2015, they have only attended on a couple of occasions. Both of these were for minor incidents.
- Students are engaging well with a team of workers from the Safe 'N' Sound project, who are based in the school for five weeks. The project works with a group of the most vulnerable students and their parents. The project aims to boost students' self confidence and self-esteem, and reduce the likelihood of them joining gangs. As a result, some parents now have more frequent contact with the school and some students' rates of attendance have improved. Parental contact with the school is generally beginning to increase.
- The students to whom the inspector spoke all said they liked the school and the adults working in it. They know who to speak to if they are feeling upset. They all said that they felt they were making good progress in their learning.
- Incident records show that there has been a marked reduction in the use of restraint of students in the last six months. Since March 2015, there have been no such occurrences. Also, the use of short-term exclusions is much reduced. However too many days are still lost due to students being excluded because of behaviour difficulties.
- The structure for recording incidents of aggressive or anti-social incidents does not take into account the recent training staff have received for de-escalating incidents or physically managing students. Leaders are tightening procedures to improve the way in which incidents are recorded and monitored.
- Staff are not always aware of students' individual targets to improve their behaviour and social skills. As a result, these targets are not as effective as they should be in improving these elements of students' personal development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Careful checks are carried out to ensure that students on placements with other providers have attended, and are safe.
- Major improvements have just been completed on the school buildings and external boundary. The site is now in good repair and provides a safe environment for students.
- The school has worked hard to ensure that all students attend school as frequently as they should. With the support of the local authority, a number of students who were reluctant to come to school have been moved to more appropriate provision. Despite recent improvements, attendance rates are still some way below what is expected. The school now accurately records students' absence.
- Procedures for recruiting staff are carried out well. All staff have an appropriate level of safeguarding training.
- All staff have completed training to support a consistent approach to managing challenging behaviour. This is resulting in a much calmer environment where behaviour is managed consistently.
- A new approach to teaching students about keeping themselves safe has been planned and will be introduced shortly. This will include looking at issues such as staying safe on the internet and drugs

awareness.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching requires improvement. It is much improved since the executive headteacher arrived but remains too variable. The information teachers have about students' progress is not consistently accurate. As a result, teachers do not always provide students with tasks that enable them to make good progress.
- Teachers' expectations of students' work are sometimes too low. English and mathematics work books from all year groups contain a mixed standard of work. Some work of higher ability Year 10 students is of good quality while the work of others is scruffy and unfinished. All work from art and literacy intervention lessons is completed with care and a good level of effort.
- Some students' work is not marked regularly enough. As a result, students are not consistently being given enough feedback for them to know how well they are doing or what they need to do to improve their work.
- Opportunities for students to practise the skills and knowledge they have learnt in English and mathematics lessons are not planned for when they are in their other lessons. This means that they do not have the chance to extend their learning as much as they should.
- In mathematics, work is sometimes not planned in the most effective way to help students learn to the best of their ability. For example, some students are expected to complete work when they do not have enough prior knowledge to know what to do. Also, lower ability students are not always provided with the practical resources to understand abstract concepts.
- In English, teaching is beginning to improve. The current temporary teacher has high expectations of what students can achieve. With careful support from adults, students are able to be successful in their lessons.
- Students who are falling behind in reading are provided with individual teaching sessions. School data indicate that this enables most of these students to increase their rate of progress.
- Most teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach. They usually present learning in a way that interests the students and engages them for the entire lesson. In an information technology lesson, for example, the teacher helped a student modify the design of a computer game he had created in a previous lesson. He listened intently to the teacher's advice and then was able to adjust the speed of the different characters.
- Students benefit from the practical nature of much of the teaching. Year 7 students, for example, made good progress in making a crystal radio receiver as part of a resistant materials course. The combination of drawing their own diagrams of an electrical circuit, and then being able to apply this learning in practice, was an effective way to support their learning.
- Relationship between students and their teachers and teaching assistants are good. Students allow adults to support them when they are finding learning difficult. Even when students say they do not want to stay in their lessons, staff are usually able to persuade them to keep going with their work.
- There has not been a systematic approach to staff training. As a result, teachers do not receive as much professional development as they need. Teachers have not benefited from sharing the best practice that already exists in the school.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Students' achievement requires improvement because some students are not making good enough progress in English and mathematics. While work in books shows improving levels of achievement, some pupils are making slower progress from their different starting points.
- Some students' knowledge of basic number and English skills is weak. They have not developed strategies to improve these skills. When attempting calculations, such as $9+12$ or 9×12 , they do not know how to work the answer out. In English, Year 10 higher ability students are still learning how to identify verbs, adverbs and adjectives.
- Students respond well to the new English teacher's high expectations and the interesting topics she encourages them to work on. As a result, achievements in English are improving.
- All students who left the school at the end of Year 11 in July 2014 achieved some accredited qualifications. They all transferred to Bromley College to continue their education.
- The progress made by disadvantaged students, funded by the pupil premium, in reading, writing and mathematics is not enabling some of them to catch up with other students.

- Some higher achieving students do not make as much progress as they should. Work is sometimes not pitched at a high enough level for them and expectations of progress can be too low.
- Students on placement at Bromley College and the Archway Project make good progress. The school receives regular reports on how well they are achieving.
- The best progress is in students' attitudes to learning. Throughout the inspection, all students demonstrated a willingness to learn either independently or with the support of an adult. However, not all students put enough effort into their work and the targets set to help them improve these elements have not been used effectively.

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	132008
Local authority	Bromley
Inspection number	462181

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

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	11–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	31
Appropriate authority	Interim executive board
Chair	Kevin Saunders
Interim executive headteacher	Mary McKeeman
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 June 2013
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