

Burrowmoor Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110639
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325189
Inspection dates	11–12 December 2008
Reporting inspector	John Francis

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	458
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	17
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Julie Southwell
Headteacher	Ms Anna Traer-Goffe
Date of previous school inspection	31 October 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Burrowmoor Road March Cambridgeshire PE15 9RP
Telephone number	01354 652330
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a much larger than average primary school. Most of the children are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and even fewer with English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly in line with that expected for children of this age, although there are weaknesses in their communication, language and literacy skills. The proportion of pupils that has learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. In September 2008, the school extended its Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) provision by opening two Nursery classes. It also opened a pre-nursery class for children between two and three years of age. Additionally, there is out of school care for children aged three and over.

The school has a number of awards including, Healthy School status, Investors in People, the International Award and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Building on its last inspection, the school now provides a good education for its pupils and shows a good capacity to continue this rate of improvement. This progress is due to the skills and abilities of those who lead and manage the school, from the headteacher and the leadership teams, to the active and knowledgeable governing body.

By maintaining the strengths already there and developing other areas, school leaders have ensured pupils achieve well. Standards have continued to rise year-on-year across the school. By the end of the EYFS, Year 2 and Year 6, standards are above average in virtually all areas of learning. For the oldest pupils, standards in science are well above average. With a well-structured programme in place, children in the EYFS have made excellent gains in their understanding of letters and their sounds (phonics). Only in the writing element of English are there weaknesses across the school. Pupils do not have a deep enough understanding of the skills and techniques that produce consistently high quality writing. Through a broad curricular approach, planning is beginning to link subjects more closely. Pupils enjoy this move towards their 'creative learning journey' that develops skills across the curriculum. Pupils also achieve well in other subjects, and music, in particular, is strong across the school. Listening to the tuneful and well-phrased singing of the youngest children in school was a real treat for the inspectors as well as the parents.

Pupils have progressed not only in the academic areas but also in their personal development. Good quality teaching generates a great willingness to learn. This ensures pupils enjoy their lessons and play an active role in all aspects of their learning. Comments from parents, such as, 'the school develops an enthusiasm for learning' and 'my child can't wait to come to school', reflect the views of the vast majority. Strong and supportive relationships develop where pupils work together during the many opportunities teachers provide for paired or group work. Teachers build well on this with probing questions that stem from good subject knowledge. Generally, good planning, based on an accurate analysis of data, presents most pupils with an appropriate level of challenge. However, for the highest attainers, the extension work planned does not always allow them to demonstrate fully their mastery of a skill by applying it to new situations. Too often, the tasks merely reinforce what most of them can already do.

Outside of lessons, pupils contribute well to the school community through the school council and the 'inclusion group' and enhance their understanding of issues in the wider world, for example, through their support for schools in Kenya. Where the school is less well developed is in broadening its community links. The school is creating good plans to expand its work in improving wider community cohesion and links, but it is still at an early stage.

The senior leadership team and the many other management groups work well to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school's provision, leading to continual improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The recent expansion of the EYFS to include a Nursery class and a pre-nursery group is proving a very positive step for the school, although at an early stage of development. It is enabling the school to tackle weaknesses in children's knowledge, such as their language skills, early. Children make good progress, with the vast majority reaching the expected goals in most areas. There are particular strengths in their personal and creative development. The welfare of children

is afforded a high priority and the well-structured programme for teaching phonics in Nursery and Reception is enjoyed by the children and producing very impressive results. Those who have recently moved into Year 1 are already working at a level previously seen for the Year 2 pupils. In some aspects of the work in the EYFS, the school was cautious in its self-evaluations. While the leadership is confident in identifying the good achievement and improving standards, they are more cautious in their judgements on the quality of other aspects of the provision. However, these are all good, matching the judgements for the rest of the school. This careful reflection and evaluation is a key element that makes the leadership and management so good. Evaluating what is working well and taking action to remedy weaker areas is very much part of the school's culture. Teaching is good, staff in the Nursery and Reception work together well and there is very good support from skilled teaching assistants. This creates a pleasant learning environment and the children respond well to this. They behave well, develop good relationships with each other and enjoy the wide range of activities available to them. This was evident in the excitement generated by their Christmas performance for parents and the rest of the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise writing standards by ensuring pupils explore the range of skills and techniques used by authors and incorporate these into their own writing.
- Ensure that the tasks for higher achieving pupils enable them to apply their skills to different situations rather than practising what they already know.
- Extend the work on improving community cohesion, including how the school will evaluate the impact of this.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils of all abilities achieve well and standards have risen steadily over the last three years. At Year 2, pupils exceed the national averages, especially in writing and mathematics, with boys doing particularly well at the higher levels in mathematics. This good progress continues through Key Stage 2 and the most recent test results at Year 6 show standards are again above average in mathematics and well above average in science. The proportion of pupils who attain the higher Level 5 in science is well above the national average and is the result of a very practical and investigative approach to the subject. Only in English, last year, were standards in line with the national average. However, these pupils still made good progress from a low starting point. Nevertheless, many pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2, do not know the key features needed to produce high quality writing. Additionally, a small number of pupils are not wholly secure in the basic skills of punctuation or their understanding of common spelling rules.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The whole culture of the school centres on encouraging respect for others regardless of any differences. As a result, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' good contribution to the life of the school comes through aspects such as the work of the school council and the 'inclusion' group. Good behaviour in and around school ensures everyone's safety and means that there are few interruptions to learning in class. Pupils' ability to work together successfully and complete everything asked of them to a good standard is a reflection of this. Their very positive attitudes and good social skills, linked to good achievement, prepare them well for the future. Pupils have a good understanding of what they need to do to stay

healthy. Healthy school meals and snacks, physical education and personal, social and health education lessons all enhance this and are reflected in the Healthy Schools award. Attendance is in line with the national average.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

While the overall standard of teaching is good, there are examples of outstanding lessons that take pupils' learning forward at a great pace. Excellent knowledge and great passion for the subject are the key aspects of this, along with the teacher's ability to generate tremendous enthusiasm from the pupils. An outstanding English lesson in a Year 5 class had all of these. The detailed analysis of the work of a popular children's author gave these pupils the skills to improve their own work. All teachers produce detailed lesson plans and increasingly, collaboration between teachers in year groups is a key feature of their work. Teachers' expectations of what pupils are to learn are clearly set out at the start of lessons. The best examples also involve the pupils in identifying the key features that will enable them to judge how successful they have been. However, in some lessons, the work planned for higher achievers does not fully extend their learning, but merely rehearses what they already know. The effective use of technology, such as the interactive whiteboards, is a common feature in most lessons and generates a high level of interest and involvement. This, along with good classroom management skills and good pace to lessons, keep pupils engaged and well motivated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Enhanced by a good range of visits, visitors, and extra-curricular activities, the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils. The wide range of subject displays in classrooms and around school demonstrates the broad and balanced nature of the curriculum. The provision for music is particularly strong. The development of a practical, problem-solving approach for subjects such as science supports a good skills-based curriculum. The more recent developments into planning 'creative learning journeys' and linking many subjects of the curriculum, while at an early stage, are becoming increasingly effective in extending pupils' skills and knowledge. This is something about which pupils are very positive. Where needed, a modified curriculum caters well for those pupils who find learning more difficult to ensure they also make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides a safe and secure environment. Well-formulated systems for managing risks ensure pupils' well-being, including the new provision for the pre-nursery children. There is a strong commitment by staff to all aspects of pupils' health, safety and welfare. Governors, along with the School's Business Manager, have a good oversight, ensuring the school fulfils its legal requirements. Safeguarding and recruitment procedures meet requirements and are reviewed and updated regularly, as are those for child protection. The school works well to promote inclusion and racial equality. Academic guidance, although good, continues to develop and improve as the school moves towards an even more detailed and analytical system for recording and tracking pupils' progress. Pupils understand their targets. Teachers generally make effective use of these in their planning and often refer to them during lessons. Detailed

marking gives pupils good guidance. As one pupil said, 'Teachers never say, 'that's wrong', they just tell you how to improve.' The after-school club links well with the work of the school day, for example, by encouraging healthy eating and keeping fit.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher sets a clear direction for the school, with a strong focus on raising standards. Her very effective leadership has been instrumental in bringing improvement in the school. The senior leadership team and subject leaders have a clear vision for the school and the direction it needs to go. The analysis of the school's strengths and areas for development is accurate and reflected in the good progress seen over the last three years. The detailed school leadership plan has commonly agreed priorities and key personnel to lead each initiative. There is a real sense of involvement of all staff. Those with management roles have clearly defined tasks and accountability to everyone else for their progress. Detailed data analysis, monitoring and well targeted training for all staff are leading to continuous improvement. The active support of the governing body through their monitoring and their willingness to hold the school to account has been an additional factor in school improvement. A national accreditation for financial management in schools recognises the high quality systems that are in place. The school is at an early stage in the development of their strategy for improving links with the wider community. A working group is currently preparing a draft action plan but this remains work in progress.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

15 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burrowmoor Primary School, March, PE15 9RP

Many of you will remember our visit to your school a little while ago. Thank you for making us so welcome. We were pleased to find how keen you were to share your thoughts about your school and we have tried to reflect some of those in the report. However, this letter is especially for you to tell you what we found out about your school.

Like you, we think Burrowmoor is a good school and recognise that all of you play a very important role in making it as good as it is. Many of you work very hard to help others and improve your school, and you carry out your tasks very well. All of you make a good contribution to your school but we thought the work of the 'inclusion group' was particularly good. You told us how much you enjoy school, work hard and try your best, and we can see this in all the things you do. We also agree with you that your teachers make your lessons interesting, but you play a big part in this by the way you behave, work well with each other and concentrate on your tasks. We particularly enjoyed the excellent singing of the children in Reception and Nursery and could see how proud their parents were. You also told us that everyone in school gets on well and this shows in the way you work and play together. All of the adults take good care of you and work hard to make your school an interesting place to come to.

To help you do even better we have asked the teachers to tell you more about what you can do to improve your writing skills. We have also asked the teachers to make sure the work for those of you who are particularly good at some things lets you practice these in a different way so you can show your good knowledge and understanding. Finally, we have asked Mrs Goffe and the governors to look at ways that the school can become even more involved with the wider community.

We hope you continue to enjoy school and work hard for the future.

John Francis

Lead inspector