Inspection of Burford School

Marlow Bottom, Marlow, Buckinghamshire SL7 3PQ

Inspection dates:	12 and 13 November 2024
The quality of education	**Good**
Behaviour and attitudes	**Good**
Personal development	**Outstanding**
Leadership and management	**Good**
Early years provision	**Good**
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are incredibly proud of their welcoming school. They are kind and caring to each other and become confident and resilient learners. Pupils achieve well across the curriculum. Parents and carers receive a range of information which allows them to support their children with their learning. This begins from the moment children start school in Nursery or Reception, through regular invitations to visit the school and participation in workshops.

Staff set high expectations for pupil's behaviour, and these are communicated clearly through the widely known school values and the 'Burford Body'. Pupils live up to these expectations and are enthusiastic learners. They enjoy their breaktimes exploring the school grounds and playing with their friends. Pupils are happy and know that their safe adults always help them if they have any worries.

Pupils benefit from a range of rich and impressive musical opportunities. They enthuse about their music lessons and additional opportunities, such as participating in the incredibly popular school choirs. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn how to play musical instruments and perform for the school community. Singing assemblies are joyous occasions and give pupils a real sense of belonging as well as strong technical musical knowledge.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils at this school. This is reflected in the strong curriculum design which gives pupils the knowledge and skills they need for their next educational steps. Disadvantaged pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, are appropriately supported because the school identifies and addresses their needs well. Staff are well supported with their workload and are proud to be part of the Burford school team.

The school places reading at the heart of the curriculum, with the view that it serves as a passport to access all learning. Staff teach pupils to read using a phonics-based approach. In early years, children successfully apply their growing knowledge of letter formation and sounds in their writing. As pupils, move through the school years they read with increasing fluency and confidence. Those who need extra help receive it in a timely and effective way. Pupils benefit from their frequent interactions with authors, as a result of the school's strong links with a local bookshop. Pupils have a love of reading and demonstrate in-depth analytical and comprehension skills.

Children in early years and Nursery are settled and happy. They are well-cared for by staff who meet their emotional and social needs. The learning environments allow children to be curious and explore, as well as build on their taught sessions. Their interests are skilfully woven into their learning. This includes awareness of the school site and the creatures who live in it, such as birds and insects, as well as observation of seasonal change. Children are keen and enthusiastic to learn. They show sustained concentration

when playing and completing activities. However, there are times when their language and vocabulary is not built on and developed as well as it could be.

Pupils behave well and are attentive learners most of the time. This is because there is consistency in the way staff communicate the high behaviour expectations. Pupils know the school values well and what it means to be resilient and show perseverance with their learning.

Pupils benefit from the school's impressive personal development programme. It is carefully shaped to give pupils experiences which prepare them well for life beyond school. The school offers pupils an extensive range of leadership roles including peer mentors, eco-warriors, playground leaders and house captains. These roles, alongside the weekly 'votes for school' system, mean that pupils have a strong voice and contribute to school-wide decision making. Pupils benefit from their interactions with community groups and participation in local events. This means that pupils have a strong awareness about local environmental issues and the part they can play in initiatives to address them.

The school does not monitor and promote pupils' attendance as rigorously as it should. As a result, the high level of persistent absenteeism is not reducing. This means that some pupils miss valuable learning time and do not benefit as fully as they could from the school's wider opportunities.

The governing body show expertise in their strategic oversight of the school, particularly in terms of the quality of education that pupils receive. While governors use a wealth of information to understand how well pupils learn, they do not scrutinise information about attendance in the same way. This means they do not have a clear understanding about how well pupils attend the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Persistent absence of some pupils remains too high. As a result, these pupils do not fully benefit from the education and wider opportunities that the school offers. Leaders, including governors, need to ensure that they have strong oversight of pupils' attendance and evaluate the impact of their actions to improve it.
- Staff do not routinely and consistently develop children's language and communication skills. As a result, younger children do not confidently engage in conversation about their learning. The school should ensure that all staff understand how to promote high-quality discussion.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use Ofsted Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further guidance on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for published performance information about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	110314
Local authority	Buckinghamshire
Inspection number	10341281
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	413
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sally Hillyer
Headteacher	Tracey Marshall
Website	www.burfordschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	14 May 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school currently uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school has nursery provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024, will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspection team met with school leaders as well as representatives from the governing body and the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, computing and music. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum for all subjects and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspectors analysed responses to the staff survey and spoke to staff about their views of the school.
- The inspectors took account of the responses to the Ofsted online parent survey, Ofsted Parent View and the additional free-text responses. Inspectors also spoke with parents on each day of the inspection.
- The inspectors evaluated responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Matthew Rixson	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Woodbridge	His Majesty's Inspector

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