

INSPECTION REPORT

BURBAGE CE VC INFANT SCHOOL

Burbage, Hinckley

LEA area: Leicestershire

Unique reference number: 120121

Acting Headteacher: Mrs A Allen

Reporting inspector: Mrs A Coyle
20603

Dates of inspection: 3rd – 5th April 2000

Inspection number: 190825

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Grove Road Burbage Hinckley Leicestershire
Postcode:	LE10 2AE
Telephone number:	(01455) 239391
Fax number:	(01455) 618467
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs A Crabtree
Date of previous inspection:	December 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Burbage Infant School is situated in Burbage near Hinckley, Leicestershire. It is a popular school, serving the surrounding catchment area and is always over-subscribed. The number of pupils on roll is higher than it was when the school was last inspected in 1996; there are currently 274 girls and boys in the school. Children enter the school on a part time basis when they are four years old and start full time education at the beginning of the term in which they are five. Attainment on entry varies, but is above average, overall. Only two per cent of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and none learns English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than the national average, at three per cent. The school has 17 per cent of its pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is lower than the national figure and no pupils have statements for their needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is a very effective learning environment in which pupils achieve very high standards and the quality of teaching is very good. The acting headteacher and governors provide strong leadership and management and ensure that very good value for money is maintained.

What the school does well

- The oldest pupils attain very high standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design and technology.
- The quality of teaching is good, overall; it is often very good in English, mathematics and science, and occasionally excellent in Year 2.
- The pupils are eager to learn and have very good attitudes to their work.
- The school is led and managed well by the acting headteacher, governors, senior management team and subject co-ordinators.

What could be improved

- Links with parents and the local playgroups are not extended sufficiently to help the school identify targets for children's learning in their personal and social skills when they first enter the school.
- The marking of pupils' work does not consistently provide guidance on how they can improve.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1996. Since then, standards have improved, the school has fully addressed the key issues identified and has continued to flourish. Policies have been written for equal opportunities, sex education and multi-cultural aspects and schemes of work have been completed for design and technology, geography and religious education. The procedures for planning and assessing the work of the most able pupils have been improved and targets are now suitably shared with parents. The governors have improved their procedures for monitoring the work of the school and are fully involved in setting targets for development

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by seven-year-olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			Similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
Reading	B	B	A	A
Writing	A	A	A*	A*
Mathematics	B	A*	A*	A*

Key

well above average A
 above average B
 average C
 below average D
 well below average E

Trends show that over the last three years, pupils have consistently attained well above average standards in the National Curriculum tests for writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2, when compared to the national results and those of similar schools. Standards in reading have risen from above average in 1997 to well above average in 1999. The results of the 1999 tests are particularly high, overall, and are among the highest five per cent in the country. The inspection findings support these results and show that currently, pupils make very good progress and achieve high standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design and technology.¹ The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for the future, which it is on line to achieve and is maintaining the high standards reported at the last inspection. Children under five in the reception classes achieve good standards in most areas of learning, although their personal and social skills are not well developed on entry.²

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are keen to do well and show great interest in their work. They have sensible, mature attitudes to learning and take great pride in their finished work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils are well behaved in lessons and at play.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils relate well to each other and to adults.
Attendance	Good. Pupils are keen to attend school and arrive punctually.

Pupils' attitudes to their work are a strength of the school.

¹ ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

² ON DESIRABLE LEARNING OUTCOMES

In 1996, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority), formerly SCAA (School Curriculum and Assessment Authority), produced a set of 'Desirable Learning Outcomes for children's learning on entering compulsory education'. These outcomes are a set of skills, knowledge and understanding that children might be expected to achieve by the age of five in six areas of learning: language and literacy; mathematics; knowledge and understanding of the world; creative development; physical development and personal and social development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

The quality of teaching is very good. In the lessons observed, 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory, or better; 52 per cent was good, 16 per cent was very good and eight per cent was excellent. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is notably strong, because literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught. This enables all pupils to make rapid progress in their learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum for the under-fives and for pupils at Key Stage 1 is broad and balanced. It includes all of the areas of learning, the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are identified early and given specific targets relating to their needs.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	There are currently no pupils who learn English as an additional language, although the school has clear procedures for helping pupils with language needs, when appropriate.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes very good provision for pupils' moral and cultural development. Their spiritual and social development are promoted well.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school values its pupils and adults highly and provides a very warm, welcoming environment in which the pastoral care of pupils is very good indeed.

The school's partnership with parents and the way in which it cares for pupils are very good indeed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the acting headteacher and other key staff	The acting headteacher provides good leadership to her colleagues and is well supported by the governing body, senior management team and subject co-ordinators.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their roles well. They are keen to be actively involved in the life of the school and have a firm understanding of future developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The school evaluates its work systematically and uses the information well to identify further developments.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The teaching and support staff are deployed very effectively and the school makes very good use of its resources.

The school is staffed by a very good team of teachers and learning support assistants who are conscientious and dedicated to the education of the pupils. They make very good use of the accommodation and learning resources. The good leadership by the acting headteacher, governors and key staff enables the school to fully apply the principles of best value.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The quality of teaching is perceived to be good.• Children achieve high standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A few parents would like the school to provide more extra-curricular activities.

The inspectors agree with the above positive comments made by parents. The number of extra-curricular activities is similar to that of other infant schools and is judged to be appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The oldest pupils attain very high standards in reading, writing, mathematics, science, art and design and technology.

1. Overall, the school has maintained the standards achieved by pupils since the previous inspection in 1996. Pupils currently achieve very good standards in English, mathematics, science, art and design and technology.³
2. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 1 were well above the national average and that of similar schools. The majority of pupils attained the national expectation of Level 2 in reading, writing, mathematics and science with a well above average number attaining the higher Level 3. The highest standards were achieved in writing and mathematics where levels were within the highest five per cent in the country. Over the last three years, the school has consistently achieved standards above the national average. The inspection findings agree that the standards of pupils approaching the end of Key Stage 1 are well above average. The school has set sufficiently challenging targets for the future, which it is on line to achieve and is maintaining the high standards reported at the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy skills are well developed across the curriculum.
3. Standards in art and design and technology are notably very high. The subjects are used well to link other subjects in cross-curricular themes. For example, the three-dimensional work produced on the theme of an 'Iron Man' links very well to literacy studies and shows a very high standard of artistic skill. Progress is good, overall. From the time children enter the school, they are taught to build well on their skills. Pupils' academic progress is maintained as they move through Key Stage 1. It is good in English, mathematics, science, art and design and technology. There is no significant variation in the progress of pupils of different abilities, gender or background.

The pupils are eager to learn and have very good attitudes to their work.

4. Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to learning. They are eager to come to school and are well behaved. Parents confirm that their children are happy to come to school: they enjoy the school and their confidence improves quickly after joining. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils were particularly interested, animated and willing to contribute their own opinions in literacy hour activities. Pupils pay very good attention to their teachers and follow instructions exceedingly well. This helps them to achieve very good standards in lessons. Pupils are keen to show their work to the class and to visitors and listen well to the views of others.
5. A significant proportion of children under five have limited personal and social skills on entry. They are secure in their environment and they work and play alongside one another effectively, although they sometimes find it difficult to take turns using equipment and do not always listen carefully to their teachers. Children usually behave appropriately, but a few occasionally squabble over toys. Nevertheless, they try hard to please their teachers and other adults. All teaching staff provide strong role models and children try to follow the teachers' examples.
6. There is a consistent approach to discipline across the school and pupils respond well. Behaviour is generally good; it is excellent in some literacy lessons. Pupils co-operate with their teachers in establishing conditions in which they and others can work productively without fear of interruption or distraction. For example, one pupil in Year 1 was very proud to show his sticker for good work and was clearly motivated by the reward. Pupils are particularly well behaved in the dining hall; the lunchtime assistants are kind, but firm and pupils respond well.

³ ON LEVELS

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are expected to attain Level 2 in all National Curriculum subjects. Those who achieve Level 3 are therefore attaining above nationally expected levels.

7. Relationships within the school are good. Teachers and pupils relate well to one another and the friendly, relaxed and caring ethos is built on a basis of mutual respect that children pick up very quickly after joining the school. Parental comments on this recognise the beneficial effect it has on their children's feelings and values. Pupils are very supportive of one another and in all lessons are prepared to listen to others' views, but this is especially well developed by Year 2. All pupils have small tasks and responsibilities to develop their independence and to learn to value and care for others; all are undertaken with great enthusiasm and real commitment. Pupils show strong respect for other traditions and cultures.

The quality of teaching is good, overall; it is often very good in English, mathematics and science and, occasionally, excellent in Year 2.

8. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the quality of teaching. Teaching is now good, overall. In the lessons observed, 100 per cent of teaching was satisfactory or better, 52 per cent was good, 16 per cent was very good and eight per cent was excellent. The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is notably strong, because literacy and numeracy skills are particularly well taught. The teaching of art and design and technology is also very good. This enables all pupils to make rapid progress in their learning; they are keen to do well, show very good attitudes to their work and are eager to take responsibility during lessons.
9. All teachers plan in detail and identify clearly what they expect pupils to learn. The planning is thorough and includes realistic strategies to help pupils. Members of staff plan together very well in year groups to ensure a common experience and to share expertise. In the best lessons, teachers use the opportunities that arise extremely well to teach and emphasise new ideas. They have very high expectations and challenge the pupils to think and to extend their knowledge. Very good use is made of questioning to check that pupils both understand what they have been taught and to make them use their knowledge to solve problems.
10. Teachers have a very secure knowledge and understanding of the curriculum. Specific subject vocabulary is used well and activities motivate pupils very effectively. Lessons are structured very well, with regular checks made on pupils' understanding and progress. Teachers are very good at directly teaching new information, facts and ideas. This has a significant impact upon the good progress that pupils make in their learning. For example, they respond well and are keen to use their initiative in extension activities that provide challenging work and extend their knowledge. Lessons are completed at a brisk pace and pupils' work is used well to demonstrate and clarify points for others during lessons.
11. Lessons are well organised and managed skilfully. Good classroom control techniques are used consistently and pupils are given good praise to acknowledge success with their work. This has a very positive effect on standards of behaviour and attainment, as pupils try hard to gain their teacher's approval. In all classes, relationships between teachers and their pupils are friendly, positive and focused on learning. Many teachers use humour effectively to engage and interest their pupils. Learning support assistants are very well briefed and deployed carefully to make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning. Homework, in the form of spellings, reading and an occasional piece of topic work, is set for pupils to enable them to extend their learning. The accommodation is used well; classrooms are tidy, very well-organised environments with resources clearly accessible. Of particular note is the excellent standard of display throughout the school; children's work is used very effectively to create a highly stimulating and colourful learning environment.

The school is led and managed well by the acting headteacher, governors, senior management team and subject co-ordinators.

12. The acting headteacher provides good leadership and management of the school. Her direction for the school clearly takes account of its aims, which are to promote a caring environment in which pupils are offered a broad and relevant curriculum. High standards of learning are achieved and where any areas for development have been identified, these form the basis of a very comprehensive school improvement plan. Leadership and management are delegated positively through the senior management team and joint subject co-ordinators. The senior management team meets regularly to discuss any issues that have arisen, or decisions that

need to be made. Subject co-ordinators have been increasingly empowered to lead and manage their subject areas and to take responsibility for monitoring teaching and learning. Their good subject reviews and input to the school improvement plan demonstrate their high level of effectiveness. The introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has been carefully planned and very effectively led.

13. The governors contribute substantially to the effectiveness of the school. They share with the acting headteacher a clear vision of the direction for its work; they are well informed, often helping out in school, and often act as support assistants in the classrooms. Reports given by the acting headteacher and staff at governors' meetings keep them well informed about curriculum development and the standards achieved and the quality of education the school provides. School developments are discussed carefully and prioritised very well after very careful analysis of the school's provision.
14. The school is very effective in its evaluation and development of teaching. The acting headteacher has observed lessons to monitor the quality of teaching and discussed performance with individual teachers. Any overall strengths and weaknesses are shared with staff at training sessions and any individual areas for development become part of a teacher's personal development through appraisal. Subject leaders give support to teachers through the help and advice they are able to offer. The school very effectively promotes and monitors the effectiveness of specialist teaching arrangements for pupils with special educational needs.
15. The school has an extremely comprehensive improvement plan which reflects shared concerns arising from the monitoring of teaching and learning. It contains a curriculum review, prioritises areas for development in all aspects of the school and sets clear targets for action. The plan outlines development for three years, giving details for the year ahead. It is carefully costed, sets time for the completion of targets and action taken is monitored and evaluated. The plan sets out a realistic and relevant way for the school to develop and improve and is acted upon effectively.
16. Careful budgeting and the efficient use of grants, such as those received for the introduction of the national literacy and numeracy strategies, have enabled the school to achieve its priorities and provide very good value for money. The principles of best value are applied to all spending decisions. For example, the funding received by the school for special educational needs is used well to provide useful resources for teaching and a pleasant environment in which individual and small group learning activities take place. Further grants have been allocated to develop the more effective use of information technology. Systems for financial administration are very efficient. A recent audit made some minor recommendations which have all been acted upon. The finance committee of the governing body meets regularly and receives a full update on the budget; co-ordinators have an agreed budget to spend within their areas which has to be carefully accounted.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Links with parents and the local playgroups are not extended sufficiently to help the school identify targets for children's learning in their personal and social skills when they first enter the school.

17. The school is a very effective learning environment in which pupils, parents and staff are highly valued. The acting headteacher and senior management team regularly monitor the standards pupils achieve and this enables them to check the school's levels of performance in relation to the national picture and that of similar schools. For example, the school recognises that, on entry, children under five have limited skills in personal and social development, as identified in the results of the entry assessments. However, the school's links with parents and the local playgroups are not sufficiently extended to help the school identify areas on which to focus when children first enter the school. The staff have been involved in the Effective Early Learning Project and this has had a beneficial effect on the school's provision. For example, teachers are currently putting together additional information booklets for parents to provide guidance on how to prepare their children for school, but the parents are not involved in helping to assess their children's skills prior to entry. There are positive relations between the school and the local

playgroups. However, information is not shared effectively to target children's learning in personal and social development and so prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

The marking of pupils' work does not consistently provide guidance on how they can improve.

18. Whilst staff make sure that pupils' work is regularly checked and teachers provide helpful comments during lessons, marking is not sufficiently detailed to give enough guidance on how pupils can improve their completed work. Even though standards are high and the quality of teaching is good overall, this is an important omission that could be improved to enable pupils to make even better progress than at present.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

19. A very small number of areas were identified for development during the inspection. In order to maintain the high standards achieved, the acting headteacher, staff and governors should;
 - (1) extend the links with parents and the local playgroups to help the school identify targets for learning of children under five in personal and social development (para 17);
 - (2) develop the use of teachers' marking to help pupils improve their work (para 18).

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	14

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
8	16	52	24	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	274
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	9

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	47

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.5
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.01
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	48	51	99

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	42	45	47
	Girls	50	51	51
	Total	92	96	98
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93	97	99
	National	82	83	87

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	43	45	46
	Girls	51	51	51
	Total	94	96	97
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	95	97	98
	National	82	86	87

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	2
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	1
White	
Any other minority ethnic group	2

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	27
Average class size	27

Education support staff: YR – Y2

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	111

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
	£
Total income	420,104
Total expenditure	402,745
Expenditure per pupil	1,429
Balance brought forward from previous year	9,427
Balance carried forward to next year	26,786

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	285
Number of questionnaires returned	98

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	76	20	4	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	55	43	1	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	52	1	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	36	51	8	1	4
The teaching is good.	69	30	0	1	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	48	45	5	1	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	54	41	2	2	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	31	0	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	45	4	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	43	45	4	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	56	40	2	0	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	47	13	1	10

NB: Totals may not add up to 100, due to rounding.

Other issues raised by parents

The majority of parents are pleased with the quality of education the school provides. In particular, they feel that the good quality teaching helps their children to attain high standards. A few parents would like the school to provide more extra-curricular activities.