



Burnham-on-Sea Infants' School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123682
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281537
Inspection dates 23 May 2006 to 24 May 2006
Reporting inspector Margaret Dickinson AI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Winchester Road
School category	Community		Burnham-on-Sea
Age range of pupils	4 to 7		Somerset TA8 1JD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01278 782342
Number on roll	199	Fax number	01278 794744
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Margaret Scott
Date of previous inspection	14 February 2000	Headteacher	Mrs S Horne

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average-sized school in Burnham-on-Sea, a small town in a rural area. The school serves a wide yet mixed area. A significant number come from homes where there is some financial and social hardship. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. Children's skills and understanding at the start of Reception are below average, particularly in their social and emotional development, use of language and mathematical knowledge. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are wide-ranging and a significant number require extra help with their speech and language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with some outstanding features. This judgement reflects the school's view of itself. The school has a supportive and purposeful atmosphere and a strong sense of teamwork. The youngest children get off to a very good start in the Reception classes. They make very good progress and benefit from outstanding provision. Most reach the expected standards by the end of the year. There have been times over the last two years when pupils in Year 1 have made satisfactory rather than good progress. However, this is no longer the case. Pupils now make good progress in Years 1 and 2 because of consistently good, and sometimes outstanding, teaching and a well-planned curriculum. Teachers are very skilful at matching work to pupils' differing needs. Teaching assistants and volunteers are highly effective and play a key role in helping pupils to learn. This year, the school has been providing extra opportunities for more able pupils. Good strategies are helping these pupils to move ahead more quickly in their writing and mathematics. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides exceptionally clear and energetic direction. The school has a perceptive and accurate view of its own strengths and weaknesses and takes effective action to make things even better. A relative weakness is that new initiatives are not evaluated soon enough to check that they are having an effect on pupils' achievement. The school's emphasis on pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils are well known and well cared for. Those with individual needs or difficulties are given very good support. Pupils enjoy school very much and feel very safe and secure. Their behaviour is outstanding. Teachers assess pupils' standards regularly and methodically record the information obtained. However, this is not collated in an easily accessible format to help the headteacher identify whether some pupils could be making even better progress over time. The school's many strengths means that it gives good value for money. Progress since the last inspection has been good and the school is in a good position to improve even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Rationalise how information from assessments is collated so that individual pupils' progress over time can be monitored more easily.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of new initiatives regularly to check whether they are having a positive effect on standards and achievement and to allow amendments to be made if necessary.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because of the good provision for their learning. In Reception, children make very good progress in all areas of learning. They thrive on the lively and stimulating teaching and outstanding provision. Most reach the expected levels by the start of Year 1 and some exceed them. This good start is built upon successfully in both Years 1 and 2, where all pupils now make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are very well supported and also do well. By Year 2, standards

are average and improving. The school keeps a close eye on standards and analyses test results carefully. Last year, for example, the school rightly identified that more-able pupils were not doing quite as well as other groups of pupils. During this year, the school has been trying out different approaches, through providing extra sessions in small groups and planning more challenging work in lessons. These initiatives are proving successful and are boosting the progress of these pupils in writing and mathematics. There is room for further improvement, however, as small pockets of more-able pupils occasionally make slower progress in writing. The school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils' performance, and these are usually met.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The school's positive ethos and careful attention to care mean that pupils' personal development and sense of well-being are good. Pupils settle quickly in Reception and rapidly gain confidence and independence. All pupils enjoy school very much and respond very positively. This is strongly endorsed by parents. Pupils have a good foundation in developing the qualities and skills needed for their next school and for future life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils reflect on their personal situations and happily share their thoughts. In a religious education lesson, for example, pupils expressed their feelings about forgiveness very openly, using glove puppets. Pupils behave exceptionally well and respond to teachers' very high expectations of behaviour. Attendance is satisfactory and is improving. Pupils have a good awareness of keeping healthy lifestyles, through exercising regularly, for example, and eating foods such as fruit at break times. They have a clear grasp of how to keep safe in and out of school. Pupils make a strong contribution to their school community. They help at the summer fête, for example, or by being a 'Friendly Face' in the playground.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching, with some outstanding features, results in good learning and achievement. In Reception, children get a flying start to their learning because teaching is outstanding. Teachers are imaginative in the range of approaches they use to engage the children's interest and support their learning. This was evident when children were looking closely at a variety of fresh fish, feeling and examining them, and using magnifying glasses. They found out many things about fish which they enjoyed recounting. In Years 1 and 2, lessons are very well planned. Work is often adapted skilfully so that pupils work at the right level for their capabilities and all can succeed. This includes lessons where there is more than one year group. Pupils are clear about what they have to do because teachers are well organised. Just occasionally, the pace of their learning becomes satisfactory rather than good. An outstanding feature is the effective use of teaching assistants and other adults. Their experience

and commitment is an important factor in how well pupils learn. The sight of groups of pupils working industriously with teaching assistants and volunteers is a special feature of school life.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and well matched to pupils' needs. First-hand experiences, such as using the outdoor area, are used well to foster enjoyment in learning. The curriculum in Reception is outstanding. Here, a wide range of imaginative activities inspires children's curiosity and interest. A good example was the outside 'forest' lesson, where children 'made' a campfire in the shelter and used leaves and twigs to make bracelets. The school is rightly keen to ensure these imaginative approaches have an increasing influence on the curriculum in Years 1 and 2. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are given work that is closely related to their needs and targets. More-able pupils also benefit from a wellplanned curriculum. The personal, social and health education programme is very effective in promoting pupils' personal development. A wide range of extra-curricular activities is provided and special events, such as Health Week or celebrating the Queen's Birthday, make learning interesting and fun. The school provides good activities for parents to help them support their children's learning at home.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good arrangements for care lead to good personal development and achievement. There are some particularly good features of the school's care. In some classes, pupils with negative feelings take a coloured leaf that represents a feeling, such as anger, from a 'tree' and give it to an adult. This is a sensitive way of helping pupils to ask for help and they like the idea very much. The school pays very close attention to the personal wellbeing and safety of all pupils, including those who are vulnerable or have disabilities. Child protection procedures are very good. The quality of care in the Reception year is outstanding. Children's progress is carefully tracked to ensure that they make good progress, academically and personally. In Years 1 and 2, teachers assess and record standards regularly to identify pupils who can move further on or who need some extra help. Systems are thorough and consistent. However, this information is not pulled together in a coherent and manageable form. It is difficult, therefore, for the school to monitor individual pupils' progress over time or to identify whether some pupils could be making better progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The good leadership and management are central to the school's success, its popularity with parents and, above all, to pupils' good progress. This school has some special qualities which result from the outstanding leadership of the headteacher and the

very strong sense of teamwork. The school is exceptionally well managed. It runs smoothly and there is a consistency and purpose that underpins its work, with pupils' achievement at the heart. There are good arrangements for monitoring how well the school is doing and identifying what could be improved. Parents, pupils and governors are regularly involved in this process, which provides the school with an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses. This good emphasis on evaluating the school's work is helping to raise standards further. Those teachers and governors responsible for different aspects have a clear grasp of the key issues affecting them. There is no sense of complacency, rather a drive to improve things even further. One relative weakness is that new initiatives, such as the enrichment programme for more-able pupils, are not evaluated regularly to see whether they are having a positive effect on pupils' progress. There has been good progress since the last inspection, and especially good progress in improving ICT. The school's good leadership means it is in a good position to improve even further.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Children, Thank you very much for the way you helped us when we came to visit your school. We enjoyed visiting your classrooms and talking to you about your work and all the good things that you do in school. We found lots of very good things going on and I thought you would like to hear about some of them. In the Reception classes, you get a wonderful start to your learning. The teachers give you lots of interesting and exciting things to do and all the adults really help you to learn new things. In the other classes, we found you work very hard and do well. You behave extremely well. Your teachers plan lots of interesting ways to help you learn and you enjoy school very much. All of you are extremely well looked after in school and it is a really happy and safe place to be. Your headteacher is very good. She and all the other staff who help her are always thinking of ways to make the school even better. We have asked the school to do two things:

- If the school makes any important changes, we would like the headteacher and governors to check that everything is working well and really making a difference to how you learn.
- Your teachers regularly check how well you are doing and the headteacher looks at this information for some children each half term; we would like her now to check this information for all of you so she can make sure you are all learning as well as you can over time.

With best wishes, Margaret Dickinson Lead inspector