



Burnt Tree Junior and Infant School

Inspection Report - Amended

Unique Reference Number 103914
Local Authority Sandwell
Inspection number 286806
Inspection dates 9–10 November 2006
Reporting inspector Bogusia Matusiak-Varley

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hill Road
School category	Community		Tividale
Age range of pupils	3–11		Oldbury B69 2LN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 5572967
Number on roll (school)	174	Fax number	0121 522 4980
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Ray Mace
		Headteacher	Jackie Gazeley
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2001		

Age group 3–11	Inspection dates 9–10 November 2006	Inspection number 286806
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Amended Report Addendum

Report amended due to Ofsted notification

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small school which serves an area of social and economic deprivation. The percentage of pupils who have free school meals is above the national average. The school also has an above average percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is high. Several children in the Nursery are at the early stages of language acquisition. A high percentage of pupils either join or leave the school during the academic year. Attainment on entry is below average. There have been a number of headteachers since the school was last inspected in 2001. The school has faced several barriers to raising standards such as falling rolls, the lack of a full governing body and experienced middle managers, and a threat of closure. The present headteacher was appointed permanently in May 2006 but had been acting headteacher for two terms prior to her appointment. The number of pupils attending the school is rising. The school is involved in the Excellence in Cities Initiative which funds the services of a learning mentor.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. At present the school does not provide value for money. Despite the fact that the school is an orderly environment where, in recent years, much has been done to improve the climate for learning, pupils' behaviour and partnership with parents, it nevertheless has many weaknesses and its effectiveness is inadequate because standards throughout are too low. All groups of pupils are underachieving due to weak teaching and inadequate use of information from assessment to meet their needs. Weaknesses in the leadership and management result in significant omissions in school self-evaluation and so there is not an effective programme for the school to follow to make the necessary improvement.

During the inspection, the leadership recognised that the school's self-evaluation of its performance has been too generous. The school does not have the capacity to improve fast enough. There are too many weaknesses in teaching. Not all staff put into practice the things the headteacher wants them to do and insufficient progress has been made since the last inspection. Governance is unsatisfactory because the governing body is not holding the school accountable for the standards that pupils attain. In the national tests for 2005 and 2006, the pupils attained broadly average standards, but this is because they are coached for these tests to the detriment of their understanding. Work in their books and evidence from teachers' planning and assessments reveal a very different picture, one of consistent underachievement. Inspection findings show that standards in Years 2 and 6 are below average in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT) and that pupils' achievement is inadequate.

Things start going wrong in the Foundation Stage where children are not taught the basic skills of literacy and numeracy sufficiently well to be able to make reasonable progress in their learning. Assessment of their progress is weak and planning is inadequate. As pupils move up the school, generally teachers do not have sufficiently high expectations of them. The pupils follow a satisfactory curriculum but planning does not match work to their needs.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral and social development, are adequate due to satisfactory care, guidance and support. 'You are well cared for here, your opinions are valued', said one pupil. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are satisfactory. Attendance is well below average but is improving.

Pupils are developing healthy lifestyles, know how to stay safe, and contribute to the community by collecting for charities and by keeping the school grounds clean. However, they do not acquire the necessary skills to cope with secondary school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT throughout the school to ensure that all pupils reach their full potential.
- Improve provision in the Foundation Stage so that children can make better progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school so that teachers have higher expectations of all pupils and that assessment information is used regularly to plan tasks to meet pupils' needs.
- Improve leadership, management and governance by ensuring that the school is held accountable for the standards that the pupils attain.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Standards are below national averages and pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. All groups of pupils are significantly underachieving in key areas of English, mathematics, science and ICT. The underachievement occurs in writing, reading, problem-solving in mathematics, mental mathematics, data interpretation, and in experimental and investigative science. In speaking and listening, pupils are making satisfactory progress although standards are below those expected nationally. Pupils do better in national tests because a lot of time is spent in Years 2 and 6 in preparing them to perform in test conditions. This masks the deep-rooted underachievement found throughout the school. The lack of structure and focus on moving pupils on in relation to their prior attainment, due to inadequate planning and use of assessment data, fuels pupils' underachievement.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are inadequately supported in lessons but, when withdrawn from class, they miss valuable learning opportunities. The few pupils who are at the early stages of learning English as an additional language make unsatisfactory progress. Pupils capable of higher attainment throughout the school are not sufficiently challenged in lessons and underachieve in all aspects of learning.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development, as well as their spiritual, moral and social development, is satisfactory. Pupils have a sound grasp of world faiths. In the canteen at lunch time, pupils identify the combination of meals to promote healthy eating and, when undertaking morning aerobics, they understand the effects of exercise on their body. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the 'walking bus' and the vast majority come to school on time. Pupils relish responsibility and those on the school council explain how their views have been taken on board to improve playground provision. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are satisfactory even when lessons do not challenge them because they are keen to learn.

Pupils co-operate well with one another, especially when they discuss their academic work, but low standards and unsatisfactory achievement mean they are not prepared adequately for achieving economic well-being in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

There are common weaknesses in teaching throughout the school which prevent pupils from learning and achieving well enough. Teaching does not expect enough of pupils and they are prevented from achieving their full potential. Teachers' planning and marking of pupils' work are weak and pupils are not given sufficient guidance on how to improve their work, which holds back their progress. Often, teachers' assessments are unreliable because not all teachers are secure in their understanding of National Curriculum levels. Information from test results is not used sufficiently well to identify what pupils need to do to move them on in their learning. Too few opportunities are provided for pupils to use ICT and the teaching of reading, writing, problem solving and experimental and investigative science is particularly weak. However, the recently implemented speaking and listening targets and use of 'talking partners' has had a positive effect.

Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language do not make sufficient progress because their needs are not always met in lessons due to weak teaching. This is because the use of the targets in individual education plans is not an integral part of teaching and learning. Although displays of work around the school are good, all classes are well-resourced, and the staff have created a stimulating environment, these good features have a negligible effect on promoting effective learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum is broad and balanced and is supported by an adequate range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities, especially for sport. Pupils have good opportunities to participate in dance festivals where they represent their school.

The curriculum in the Foundation Stage, whilst covering all the areas of learning, is inadequate. This is because planning is weak and does not take into account the needs of different ability groups. In Years 1 to 6, there is a lack of a whole-school approach to planning rigorous learning opportunities for pupils to develop their skills in literacy and numeracy in other subjects. Provision for personal, social and health education is adequate and pupils have the opportunities to learn about the harmful effects of drugs and poor diet.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The headteacher and governing body have ensured that pupils learn in a safe environment. Regular risk assessments and health and safety checks have been undertaken and satisfactory child protection procedures put in place. The pastoral care of pupils is better than the academic guidance that they receive. The lack of well focused academic guidance prevents pupils from achieving as well as they can. The work of the learning mentor has had a positive effect on pupils' behaviour as pupils have opportunities to discuss strategies that they can use to manage behaviour. This has reduced the high number of exclusions. As a result of satisfactory pastoral care, pupils are gaining confidence and this has a positive effect on their self-esteem and personal development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management are inadequate. Although the headteacher and governing body have done a great deal to improve the school environment and build up relationships with parents, staff and the community, they have not done enough to check that teachers are doing what they have been asked to do in order to raise standards. Evaluation of the school's performance has taken place which has identified several correct areas for development. However, in some areas, over-generous judgements have resulted in weaknesses in school self-evaluation especially in evaluating teaching and learning and provision for the Foundation Stage. The senior leadership team is weak because its members do not know how to raise pupils' standards quickly and effectively. This has placed a heavy burden on the headteacher who has single-handedly brought about many changes in the school. The school has been without a permanent full-time deputy headteacher.

The school works adequately with other schools and outside agencies. Parents are unanimous in their praise of the headteacher and governing body, who have worked relentlessly at improving relationships. Whilst the governing body is very committed to the school, its governance is inadequate. The governors have attempted to hold the school accountable for standards, but because of the optimistic view of the quality of teaching which has reassured them, they could not fulfil their role as critical friend as they have not had the right information from which to work.

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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?	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The attendance of learners	4
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

¹ Grade 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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	4
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us feel so welcome in your school. It's good to know that you like your school and that you have made satisfactory progress in your speaking and listening skills. You certainly enjoy playtimes, and you behave well in lessons and around school. The school council has done a grand job in improving playtimes with all the games and toys that are now used. Well done, all of you, for participating in the Walking Bus project; you look very smart in your yellow jackets. It's good to see that you are coming to school on time and more regularly. It's good to know that you think so highly of your headteacher and staff and that you are rightly proud of displays of your work around the school.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to improve quite a lot of things in your school in order to help you learn at a faster rate. You can help by asking your teachers to tell you what you need to do in order to learn more quickly. For example, you could ask your teachers to help you improve your standards in English, mathematics, science and ICT by sharing with you information about the work you've done.

Those of you who are in the Foundation Stage need to practise writing your letters and numbers correctly and learn your initial sounds. We have asked your teachers to expect more of you, especially those of you who find learning easy. For those of you who find learning a bit more difficult, we have asked your teachers to give you more support in lessons. We have asked your headteacher and governors to check that all teachers are helping you make better progress. Inspectors will be visiting regularly to see how you are getting along. We wish you all the very best for the future.