



# Burnage High School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105557  
**Local Authority** Manchester  
**Inspection number** 287264  
**Inspection dates** 6–7 November 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Stephen Wall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary	<b>School address</b>	Burnage Lane
<b>School category</b>	Community		Burnage, Manchester
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11–16		Lancashire M19 1ER
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Boys	<b>Telephone number</b>	0161 4321527
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	986	<b>Fax number</b>	0161 4422366
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mr Collinson
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr I Fenn
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 September 2002		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
11–16	6–7 November 2006	287264

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Burnage High is an average sized all male urban comprehensive school. It has a very high proportion of students from minority ethnic groups: over 50% are of Asian heritage. The proportion of students for whom English is not their first language is among the highest for schools nationally with over 30 mother tongues present. Students generally come from urban areas of high social and economic deprivation, reflected in the number of students eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements of special educational need, is above average. Much higher than average numbers of students enter and leave the school at times other than the beginning of the school year. The school operates a 'continental' style day with an early start (08.05) and an early finish (14.00).

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school's own self-evaluation: this is a good school. It offers good value for money because it uses its resources well to support students' good achievement. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in improving standards and achievement, particularly at the end of Key Stage 4, in English, mathematics and science.

The school faces very challenging circumstances; for example, its ethnically diverse intake and a higher than usual proportion of students who enter and leave the school at various times of each year. The school tackles these challenges with determination and optimism. The result is a school community where students learn to work and live together harmoniously, regardless of their background. The new school day, introduced three years ago, has helped behaviour improve by giving students less free time and giving greater focus on lessons and learning. Students are respectful to each other and adults. They develop well during their time at school and grow into mature, confident and tolerant young adults by the time they leave, preparing them well for their future. However, a significant minority of students arrive late for school in the morning and these students are not developing good habits for the world of work. The school provides a very safe environment. Parents reported that despite the difficulties and dangers in the areas served by the school, Burnage is an oasis and haven of safety for its students.

Students join the school with well below average levels of attainment. In Key Stage 3 students make satisfactory progress overall. The school works very hard to compensate for the difficulties faced by many students, particularly the high proportion of students with English as an additional language and those who join the school during the school year, often with very little English. Targeted support, using the services of the local authority specialist language teachers, enables these students to make good progress so that by the end of Key Stage 3, their language skills are sufficiently developed for them to take full advantage of their GCSE studies. As a result, by the end of Key Stage 4, students make good progress to achieve standards that are getting ever closer to the national average.

A major strength of teaching is the ability of most teachers to plan lessons that engage students, even the significant number who are reluctant learners. Most teachers have high expectations of their students, who rise to the challenging work demanded of them and make good progress. In Key Stage 4, teachers mark students' work regularly with comments that are good and helpful. This quality of marking is not matched in Key Stage 3, where assessment procedures do not consistently let students know how well they are doing and how they can make their work better.

The curriculum is especially successful in meeting the needs of the large numbers of vulnerable students such as those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Intensive and targeted support strategies for individuals and small groups enable them to make good progress in relation to their starting points.

Students told inspectors how much they appreciate the range of activities available to them after school, especially in sports, helping significantly in their adoption of healthy lifestyles. They also welcome the revision classes in Year 11 and occasions such as the Activity Weeks in Years 7 and 8, which foster social development and widen the experiences of these urban students.

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and promotes a clear focus on raising standards and achievement. He is ably supported by other senior managers who are good role models. This focus on raising standards and achievement is at the heart of leadership and management and explains the significant rise in standards over the last five years. The school recognises, however, that further improvement is necessary to tackle the inconsistencies in GCSE results between subjects: strategies for improving these subjects are detailed in the school improvement plan. Recognising the school's accurate self-evaluation and the good improvements made since the last inspection the school demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Iron out inconsistencies in standards between subjects at the end of Key Stage 4.
- Ensure that all students in Key Stage 3 know how well they are doing and what they need to do to make their work better.
- Improve students' punctuality at the start of the school day.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

In 2005, results at the end of Year 9 were broadly average with an improvement in 2006 in English and mathematics. Taking account of their starting points, students make satisfactory progress through Key Stage 3. Effective teaching and good personal support help the large number of students who have a poor command of English to make good progress in developing their language skills.

By the time students reach Year 11, good teaching has had time to make a positive impact on standards of attainment. GCSE results have risen consistently every year since 2000 until 2005, when they dipped. However, drawing on external measures to support its own setting and tracking of targets, the school demonstrates that 2006 results exceed expectations and restore the rising trend. While standards in English, mathematics and science are strong, GCSE results in several subjects, notably physical education, religious studies, music and information and communication technology (ICT) are significantly weaker because teaching and subject management are less effective. Students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also achieve well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides a welcoming environment for learning. 'We are much safer in school than where we live,' was a typical student opinion. Spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development is good and students demonstrate awareness and understanding of the needs of others, resulting in the many different races working well together in harmony. The vast majority behave well in lessons and as they move around the school.

Students understand the importance of healthy eating and healthy lifestyles. Large numbers take up after-school sporting activities. Students take an active part in the school community by, for example, joining and contributing to the effective school council, charity work and acting as peer mentors. This helps them grow in maturity and confidence. Students enjoy school because teachers put a lot of effort into making lessons lively and interesting. Attendance is below average because of the number of students taking extended family holidays abroad in term time. The school minimises any impact on standards and achievement this has by setting work and providing extra support for students on their return. The school does all it can to encourage good attendance and check on the reasons for absence. However some students arrive late and this lack of punctuality does not prepare them well for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Relationships between teachers and students are positive. Students told inspectors how supportive their teachers are. 'They encourage us to do our best,' one said. Lessons are planned to engage the interests of the students and because the teachers have high expectations of them they work hard and do well. The needs of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are clearly understood and they are well supported. As a result, these and other vulnerable students also make good progress.

Teachers are generally effective managers of their classrooms. In a minority of lessons, where planning is not as good, tasks tend to be undemanding and the behaviour of a small number of students is disruptive as a result. In these lessons progress slows and is only satisfactory. Assessment in Key Stage 4 is robust and effective: students know how well they are doing and how to improve their work, and this has a positive impact on the progress they make. However, this is not the case in Key Stage 3, where practice is too inconsistent between subjects. Consequently, students do not always know how well they are doing, how well they should be doing and how to improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

As a pilot school for the Department for Education and Skills 'Low Attainers Pilot', the school is able to focus on raising basic skills, giving students a good start. Special provision such as individual tuition and small group work for the lowest attaining students eases their transition from primary school. Students make informed choices from a range of largely academic GCSEs in Key Stage 4 because they receive good guidance and advice. After-school lessons enable students to access GCSEs in a wide range of community languages. Students not familiar with English benefit from

timetabled support lessons. The provision for those for whom a straight GCSE programme is inappropriate is very good and students benefit from collaboration with local providers.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school provides good quality care, guidance and support, and policies and procedures meet current government legislation. Students are confident in approaching teachers with problems and feel certain that any instances of bullying will be dealt with effectively and swiftly. This is central to the feeling of being safe that students value and that helps them to achieve well.

Students' progress is monitored regularly, but is more effective in Key Stage 4 than Key Stage 3 because students have better knowledge and understanding of their targets and this helps them to make good progress and achieve well. Students new to the school are welcomed and quickly given the support they need following their initial assessment.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. His clear vision and the teamwork he promotes are the key factors in making sure the school tackles its challenging circumstances effectively and successfully. The headteacher, ably supported by other senior managers, ensures all staff and governors put the needs of the students at the heart of all they do. Because of this, racial harmony and equality of opportunity are real strengths of the school.

The quality of forward planning is good. It is fed by the views of a wide range of stakeholders, including the students. For example, the reorganisation of the school day to an earlier start and finish was instigated by the school council and adopted by the school management. The desired outcomes of better behaviour and improved numbers taking part in extra-curricular activities have been achieved. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly and accurately. Resources are used effectively to promote good achievement. The buildings and facilities, some of which are old and unsuitable, are managed effectively to minimise adverse effect on teaching and learning. Middle managers, particularly those with subject responsibilities, share the senior managers' focus on improving standards and achievement. There is considerable variation in standards between subjects, however, because of inconsistent subject management across the school.

Governors know the school well. They are very well informed about the strengths of the school and its areas for development. They are supportive and, importantly, not afraid to challenge when the interests of the students are at stake.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

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

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for making me and my fellow inspectors so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed talking to you and your comments helped us greatly in reaching our judgements.

We think you go to a good school. You all get on together very well and we were impressed with how well nearly all of you behaved in lessons and around the school. We were impressed with the respect you showed each other and the adults working with you. Your teachers work very hard to provide you with interesting lessons and everyone in the school has your best interests at heart to care for you and make sure you are safe. We think your headteacher is doing an excellent job in leading the school and making sure everyone concentrates on helping you to do as well as you can. The result is that we think you make good progress and achieve well.

In order to make your school even better, we are asking for the following things to receive attention.

- We think there is too much difference in the quality of results for different subjects at the end of Key Stage 4, so we are asking the school to make them more consistent.
- We are asking the school to make sure that students in Key Stage 3 know more clearly how well they are doing and what they need to do to make their work better.
- Too many of you arrive late for school in the morning, so we are asking the school to make sure that punctuality improves.

If you continue to work hard and make sure you arrive in school on time, we are sure you can help your school become even more effective.