

Burford CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123464
Local Authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	292676
Inspection date	21 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Peter Clifton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Foster
Headteacher	Jill Grant
Date of previous school inspection	18 November 2002
School address	Forresters Road Burford Tenbury Wells WR15 8AT
Telephone number	01584 810244
Fax number	01584 819537

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school with five classes. Situated in a small village, most pupils attend locally but a few travel from the wider area. Pupils come into the school with a wide range of skills and abilities, which vary from year to year but are at least at the level expected. Nearly all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average. Nearly all children start school having attended the on-site playgroup.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Burford Primary is a satisfactory school with some good features. The pupils make satisfactory progress as a result of satisfactory teaching and a satisfactory curriculum. However, the school takes good care of its pupils and they are well behaved, polite and confident. Their personal development and well-being are good. Across the school teachers promote good relationships and manage pupils well. Pupils have a good understanding about keeping fit and healthy and they take up extra sporting opportunities enthusiastically. There are strengths in the school which are promoting good enjoyment well such as the 'forest' school curriculum which enables pupils to explore the environment through the use of the school's grounds and the local forest. Pupils say they enjoy school because they 'go on loads of trips' and enjoy football during playtimes.

Provision in Reception is satisfactory and enables children to reach at least the standards expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1. In some areas of learning, standards are above those expected. Pupils make a secure start because of the good links with the on-site playgroup and they are cared for well. However, the curriculum for these children provides too few opportunities to make choices for themselves and teaching is sometimes over directive.

Standards in the rest of the school are average and achievement is satisfactory. There are some pockets of good progress in the school such as in reading in some year groups. Leaders in the school have rightly identified writing as a weakness and have put initiatives in place which are beginning to make a difference. Pupils have targets for their writing which are readily to hand and have guidance to help them know what to include in their work. However a few do not have a clear enough understanding of what their targets mean and as a result these are not as useful as they should be in helping pupils make progress. Overall, care, guidance and support are satisfactory. What pupils are learning about on a day-to-day basis is made clear at the start of lessons. However teachers' expectations about what different groups should achieve in lessons is not always sufficiently sharp. Writing is not sufficiently well celebrated through the school's displays. There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write for different purposes.

Leadership and management and the capacity for further improvement are satisfactory. The headteacher has evaluated overall strengths and weaknesses carefully and is providing a strong lead in developing the leadership skills of others in the school, including several who are recently appointed. This work is progressing securely. However, more could be done to enable leaders to increase their confidence and improve how they evaluate the success of changes that are introduced. Links with parents are good. Parents support the school well and find the staff approachable. One commented that 'any concerns are dealt with quickly and sensitively'. This reflects the school's caring atmosphere and the strong lead provided by the headteacher in this area.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve provision in Reception to ensure that pupils have sufficient opportunities to make choices for themselves.
- Develop the role of subject leaders to improve their monitoring and evaluation of subject development.
- Improve pupils' progress in writing in Years 3 to 6 by sharpening teachers' expectations about what different groups of pupils can do and extending opportunities for writing.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils make satisfactory progress to reach average standards. Consequently, they have satisfactory skills to prepare them for the future. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress similar to other pupils. Children make satisfactory progress overall in the Reception Year, reaching or exceeding expected levels across the areas of learning. In 2006, the children reached the expected levels in communication language and literacy but their social, emotional and mathematical development was better.

In the 2006 Year 2 national tests, overall standards were above average. Writing was the strongest area with standards being exceptionally high, with reading above average and mathematics average. A dip in the 2007 results indicates that standards are average at present.

Year 6 overall test results show a downward trend from an above average position in 2003. In 2006 results were broadly average, although there were marked differences between subjects. English was average, with science and mathematics above average. Current standards show an average picture and satisfactory progress, with progress in reading being stronger than in writing.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' good understanding of keeping fit and being healthy is evident in the large amount of energy they use up during playtimes. Both boys and girls play football together happily. The weekly healthy tuck shop is popular with the pupils who know why it is important to eat healthy foods. They use the outside play equipment to the full.

Most pupils say they enjoy school and show this in the way they respond to questions in class. The school is harmonious and pupils respect each other. Attendance is above average. However there is a small minority who say they do not like school because they are not inspired by their lessons.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Older pupils look after the younger ones showing concern for their well-being. Pupils of different ages mix well together and move about the school safely and calmly. They are confident that adults will deal with any potential bullying and appreciate the opportunities provided for them to express any concerns such as the 'worry box'. Pupils are active in raising money for charities. The school council, which the pupils run, enables them to have a clear say in the school's development.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

In group work, most pupils work together well and help each other because teachers promote good relationships and a secure learning environment. Teachers encourage the use of technical language, which is used effectively in poetry, to develop pupils' understanding of the use of

rhyme. Teaching in Reception ensures that routines are quickly established but does not provide sufficient opportunities for the children to say what they think.

Most pupils are keen to explain what they think and offer answers to questions posed by teachers. They discuss their ideas with each other confidently. However, questioning does not always extend their thinking sufficiently because too many questions require only a simple yes or no answer. Lessons have clear objectives but the expectations for pupils of different abilities are not always made sufficiently clear, such as in writing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

There are strengths in the school's personal and social curriculum and in developing pupils' understanding about the importance of being active and healthy. The curriculum in Reception does not provide a sufficient balance between teacher directed activities and those where they can choose what they would like to do.

Pupils talk enthusiastically about the 'forest school' as there is a well used outdoor area in which the pupils can develop their building skills through making dens. Trips further afield to the local forest are also greatly enjoyed. There is a good range of clubs and activities after school which are attended well. They provide additional opportunities to improve skills in key areas such as mathematics, sport, art and music.

Leaders have identified the need to improve the range of writing opportunities such as through different subjects. Currently, for example, writing in science is limited because worksheets are overused.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school looks after the pupils well and pupils know they can go to the teachers in confidence. The school's anti-bullying weeks successfully promote positive messages about the need to look after each other. Child protection procedures meet requirements and risks are carefully assessed before trips take place.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Leaders have introduced improved procedures to ensure that pupils have targets and refer to these regularly. Pupils say these are helping them with their work. Marking frequently acknowledges the learning that has taken place but is much less effective in setting goals for improvement. As a result, pupils' knowledge about what they need to do to improve is not sharp enough.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Under the guidance of the headteacher, recently appointed subject leaders have made a secure start in developing their work in the school. Improvements are now coming though in writing as a result of recent initiatives. However there are weaknesses in the rigour with which the success of initiatives to raise standards are evaluated. Whilst considerable information is gathered about pupils' attainment and progress, it is not yet being used effectively to link this to the effectiveness of teaching. The school's own evaluation accurately identifies the key steps that need to be taken to improve provision.

There are several governors who have been recently appointed. They have quickly got to grips with the school's main strengths and weaknesses and provide valuable support. They are suitably involved in the school's evaluation process and provide a satisfactory challenge to the leadership to improve standards and achievement.

Annex A

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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

22 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Burford Primary School, Burford WR15 8AT

Thank you for our very warm welcome to your school. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and during your playtimes. We liked your 'forest school' and were pleased about how much you also enjoyed this. The way the school is helping you develop good attitudes and behaviour is a real strength. You gave us a lot of valuable information and this was a great help to us. You attend a satisfactory school where most aspects are helping you reach average standards and make satisfactory progress.

What we most liked about your school.

- You are kept safe at school and look after each other well.
- Your positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour.
- Your good understanding about how to stay healthy.
- The work you do to understand about the environment.
- Your attendance is good.
- Your parents support the school well.

We found some things that would make your school even better and have asked your headteacher and others to:

- ensure that children in Reception have better chances to make a choice about some of their activities for themselves
- help teachers extend their work in subject development so that you can do even better
- help you improve your writing by making it clearer in lessons what you should be able to achieve and using your writing skills more regularly.

We hope your school continues to improve.

Yours faithfully

Peter Clifton Lead inspector