

Burley Gate CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	116788
Local Authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	312404
Inspection dates	8–9 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Jacqueline Wordsworth HMI

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	99
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	16
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Burgis
Headteacher	Cheryl Puttick
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Burley Gate Hereford HR1 3QR
Telephone number	01432 820367
Fax number	01432 820367

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burley Gate CofE Primary School is a small school that serves a large and diverse rural area near Hereford. Around 10% of the pupils are entitled to school meals free of charge, which is below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above the national average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. There is a privately run pre school on the school site. When they begin school in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), attainment for most pupils is below, and for a few well below, that expected for children of this age. The school has gained a number of awards: Eco Schools, Arts Mark gold, Active Mark, and the Quality Mark for SEN provision. The school is a Football Charter School, has completed a Creative Partnership with a professional artist, and is applying for Healthy School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Burley Gate CofE Primary School is a good school. It has many strengths, and its most notable success lies in gelling together pupils and families from wide-ranging backgrounds to create an impressively harmonious community where everybody matters, especially the pupils. There is a real 'can do' culture pervading the school.

Teaching is good and lessons are usually well structured, ensuring that pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Where teaching is satisfactory rather than good, it is generally because teachers have not made enough use of information on pupils' progress to fine-tune activities to their individual needs, and do not make clear enough to the pupils what it is they want them to learn. Although all lessons seen had a learning objective, these varied in their precision and pupils did not always fully understanding what they were aiming for.

Even though pupils do well overall, the teaching of writing has not been as effective as that of reading. The school has analysed the reasons for this and is in the process of implementing a new approach to the teaching of writing, including improving basic skills and increasing the range of writing styles that pupils encounter.

The good curriculum provides a range of very worthwhile experiences across subjects that are rich and interesting, and completely inclusive. Pupils at every stage of learning have access to activities that are meaningful and relevant to their life experiences, and support their personal and academic development well.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a significant strength. They are able to speak with confidence about different religions and the associated celebrations and festivals. The school council gives the pupils good opportunities to be involved in the running of the school, and there are ambitious plans to involve them more fully in school improvement activities. Pupils offer and discuss opinions confidently. Well-conceived theme and activity weeks effectively increase pupils' understanding of the importance of exercise and eating a balanced diet. Due regard is paid to encouraging pupils to adopt safe practices. Pupils say that they feel safe and know who to turn to if they have any worries or troubles, and are confident that they will be sympathetically treated.

The headteacher provides strong leadership and is well supported by the staff. School managers are good at focusing on things that matter and are moving development forward at a good pace. However, although the school improvement plan covers areas for development well, initiatives are not always evaluated sharply enough in terms of their influence on pupils' standards and progress. The team spirit in the school is strong and everyone pulls together effectively. Governors know the school well and are good critical friends.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The provision in the EYFS is good. Children's attainment on entry, particularly that of boys, is below age-related expectations and their communication, language and mathematical skills are the least well developed areas. However, because of effective teaching, they make good progress and reach expected levels of development in all areas of learning except writing by the end of the EYFS. Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of all children and maintain thorough records of their progress. Phonics is taught systematically and children are given good opportunities to write from first-hand experience.

Further key strengths are the good leadership and management of the EYFS and the planning of an activity-based curriculum. Children learn in a stimulating and inclusive environment, which is well matched to their needs and reflects good Early Years practice. Effective use is made of outdoor areas as well as the classroom to promote learning. The outdoor areas are well equipped to enable children to develop their motor and sensory skills using big apparatus. There is a good balance between child-centred and adult-led activities.

Children are keen to learn and they behave well. All staff are skilled practitioners who understand the principles of good early years learning and development. Children feel safe and secure.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing by ensuring a consistently high quality approach to the teaching of writing skills.
- Ensure that planning for what pupils are expected to learn is consistently precise, and that pupils know exactly what they need to do to be successful in lessons.
- Ensure that careful evaluation is made of the influence of initiatives on pupils' standards and progress.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are average overall but most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress from their individual starting points. The school takes positive steps to ensure that pupils in Key Stage 1 build on the secure foundation they receive in the Reception Year. Progress slows in Key Stage 2. It is still good, but here the pupils are not extended as much as in the earlier years, and particularly the more able pupils. High expectations of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities enable them to achieve well in literacy and numeracy.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The pupils themselves are a strength of the school. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, are valued and respected as individuals. Pupils have a finely tuned sense of what is right and what is wrong, and are very aware of the qualities needed to live in a harmonious and ethnically diverse world. The school has provided a range of experiences that enable pupils to learn about different cultures. Pupils are afforded many opportunities for teamwork through lessons and the good range of sporting and musical activities. They relish responsibility and those who have recently been asked to be play leaders or members of the school council regard it as a great privilege. Behaviour is good and pupils are generally polite to each other and staff. The school has worked hard to improve attendance, which is now slightly below the national average. As at the time of the previous inspection, holidays taken during term time account for many of the absences. Nonetheless, the school is doing all it can to ensure that pupils attend regularly.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well because teachers are tuned into the needs of individuals. Most lessons are well structured, and teachers manage pupils well so that positive relationships are developed. Pupils' good attitudes to work contribute well to the quality of learning. They sustain their concentration and interest for lengthy periods. In the most successful lessons, teachers make extensive use of questioning and discussion to check progress and to give pupils the opportunity to hear each other's ideas. Pupils engage with 'talk partners' to compare ideas to enhance their learning. All teachers make appropriate use of information and communication technology (ICT) to inspire the children in lessons. Consequently, children are content to learn and to do their best. The school gathers much information about the pupils' performance in tests and other assessments. However, the way it is recorded is not always easy to follow and teachers do not always use it to plan subsequent lessons. As a result, work is sometimes insufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able pupils. The school has plans to refine how it records pupils' progress to make the information easier for teachers to use to plan for the next steps in learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum includes a wide range of very well attended clubs, regular visits and visitors, with regular opportunities to engage in creative and active learning. As well as the strength of what is taught in English, mathematics and science, pupils have rich learning opportunities in physical education, dance and art. However, curricular planning is not always focused on developing key skills or ensuring that each unit of work places sufficient demands on pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Excellent attention is paid to educational inclusion, with full equality of opportunity. Procedures for child protection and safeguarding are secure and the school takes health and safety issues seriously. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are fully included in all aspects of the school's work, and support for these pupils is available in every year group to ensure that all have equal access to the curriculum. Teachers ensure that these pupils are fully integrated into the work the class is doing and that capable, competent and highly valued teaching assistants ably support them. The support provided is unobtrusive and sensitive. However, at the beginnings of lessons, teaching assistants are sometimes not used as effectively as they could be. There are some examples of well-focused marking that is geared towards helping pupils improve their work, but such guidance is inconsistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The leadership team has a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school has responded well to addressing the issues from the last inspection through focused action planning. However, it is not complacent in recognising that there is

still some way to go to increase the proportion of good teaching and to enable all pupils to fulfil their potential. It is well poised to make full use of the outcomes from the current curricular review to inform long-term planning. Parents are extremely happy with the school; they hold very positive views about the all-round education provided and family values promoted. The school has a clear understanding of its own local community and has effective national and international links; pupils are enabled to gain a good understanding of the issues facing young people and exercise social responsibility.

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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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	2

The quality of provision

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

10 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burley Gate CofE Primary School, Hereford HR1 3QR

Thank you for welcoming me to your school and being so friendly and helpful. I would particularly like to thank the children who gave up their time to talk to me, and the children in Reception who took me to their very own treasure island aboard their pirate ship. I learned a lot about how to use a map to follow simple directions. I thought you would all like to know what I found out about your school.

You go to a good school, and this is what I liked most about it:

- you enjoy school and do well with your work
- you get on well with each other, and your behaviour is good
- you are developing into very responsible young people
- adults take good care of you so that you feel happy and safe in school
- lessons are usually good
- there are lots of excellent after-school clubs which many of you attend
- everyone is really valued and made to feel that they belong to a family where they are all treated with fairness and kindness.

This is what I have asked your school to do now:

- make sure your writing improves
- make sure that teachers tell you exactly what it is they want you to learn in every lesson
- make sure that the headteacher, teachers and governors check carefully that any new ideas put in place to make the school better for you really have made a difference.

You can help by coming to school every day and making sure that the work you do in writing is the very best it can be.

Yours sincerely

Jacqueline Wordsworth Her Majesty's Inspector