

Burham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118620
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313018
Inspection dates	18–19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	Ann Sydney

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	156
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Smith
Headteacher	Ken Jones
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2003
School address	Bell Lane Burham Rochester ME1 3SY
Telephone number	01634 861691
Fax number	01634 861673

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burham is smaller than the average primary school, with one class in each year, varying in size from 16 to 30 pupils. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just above the national average. The majority of pupils live in Burham village and very few join or leave the school during the year. The school has the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark and the Sport England ActiveMark and is working towards the Healthy School Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Parents praise the welcoming environment of this satisfactory school where their children settle quickly and all the staff know them well. The school's positive ethos contributes to pupils behaving well and making good relationships with adults. In this small village community the school has an important central place and parents are supportive of the school. They feel the headteacher and staff are approachable, communicate well and offer them many opportunities to be involved.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Children make a secure start in Reception and maintain satisfactory progress throughout the school, achieving above-average standards at Year 6. The school is focusing its attention on increasing progress and raising standards in English and mathematics and has been successful in moving pupils on in reading and writing. Those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress because teaching assistants and teachers provide effective support to groups and individuals to enhance their confidence and learning. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, and is sometimes good or outstanding. Where teaching is strongest, lessons move at a good pace and work is marked well, giving pupils useful information about how to improve their work. These qualities are not consistent, however, and pupils make satisfactory, rather than good or better progress, when they do not receive this important feedback.

The headteacher has ensured that there are good procedures for pupils' safety and well-being, and staff are committed to developing pupils' personal qualities. As a result, pupils feel safe and relationships between them are harmonious. Pupils enjoy their lessons, especially when they are involved in practical activities and investigations. The school has started to re-design the curriculum so that links are made between subjects, for example, bringing together work in literacy and science. Opportunities of this kind are increasing pupils' enjoyment and improving their writing. Pupils enjoy the clubs and trips that enrich the curriculum and say the choir is 'brilliant'. Assessment and tracking valuably enable the school to identify where pupils are at risk of falling behind. However, these systems are less well developed in Reception.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is monitored regularly, but does not place enough emphasis on how well pupils learn, nor does it rigorously follow up shortcomings in order to ensure that teaching is consistently good or better.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

A safe and supportive environment helps children to settle into the Reception class quickly and make satisfactory progress. The caring support of adults ensures children work and play happily. Most start Reception class with skills and understanding that are just above the levels expected for their age. They have strong number skills, but their skills in phonics are weaker.

The school is working effectively with the local authority to improve provision further. Work is planned appropriately to meet children's needs, but there are missed opportunities to extend children's skills in all areas of learning because teaching does not always make the most of chances that emerge through play, especially to develop children's imagination. In addition, assessment information is not always accurate enough and results in activities that do not necessarily challenge all the children as much as they should.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the accuracy and use of assessment data in Reception so that work always challenges children to make the best possible progress.
- Improve the monitoring of pupils' learning in lessons and the rigour with which shortcomings are followed up so that all teaching is good or better.
- Ensure pupils consistently receive feedback on the quality of their work so that they know what to do to make it better.

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

The school continues to make literacy and numeracy key priorities, in order to improve pupils' current satisfactory progress and achievement. As a result of its work, the school has seen a dramatic rise in writing levels in Year 6 last year. Improved systems to track and monitor pupils' progress are beginning to have an impact, so that the weaker performance of Year 2 girls in writing last summer has also been ironed out as a result of enthusiastic and skilled teaching in Year 3.

Standards in the current Year 6 are above average. This year's targets at the end of Year 6 will be met, and exceeded for the higher-ability pupils in English and mathematics. Pupils in Year 2 have had a more unsettled time this year because of changes in staff, and this has slowed progress. While their progress has been satisfactory, standards in this year's group are lower than the above-average standards reached in national tests last year, and are close to average levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their lessons and like being at school, and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Their behaviour is good in class, around the school and in the playground. They say that they enjoy trips and they would like more. They feel safe at school and report that there is no bullying, only some 'falling out with friends'.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need for exercise and healthy eating, for example, through bringing a healthy lunchbox. The school council fulfils its role well and the school acts on its recommendations. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good, while cultural development is satisfactory. However, while there are few opportunities to make links with the wider multicultural world, pupils participate well in local events and make a positive contribution to the community. They talk with interest about participating in church services and sporting activities and know how they can enhance the lives of others by supporting charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The tracking of pupils' progress has improved, making it easier for teachers to match work to pupils' needs. Nevertheless, this improvement has not yet had a positive impact on pupils' achievement consistently in every class and consequently some pupils are not always challenged enough to do their very best. Teachers have established good relationships with the pupils and the best lessons combine creative learning with fun. Learners are keen to respond and take an active part in lessons. They particularly enjoy practical and investigative lessons, where their curiosity and imagination are fired. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and provide many opportunities for pupils to support each other in their learning. Teachers are clear about what they expect pupils to learn and lessons proceed with a sense of purpose. Teaching assistants support teachers and pupils well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

While there are good examples of marking, these are not yet commonplace, so that pupils are not consistently receiving clear guidance on how to improve their work. Pupils have group learning targets but they do not always understand what they need to do in order to achieve them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school has made the improvement of the curriculum a priority, not just to develop pupils academically but also to improve their personal development. This focus is proving to be successful. Pupils enjoy a variety of clubs and competitions. The curriculum issues from the last inspection have been addressed and the school is now beginning to move to a more creative curriculum – making links between subjects, for example, so that learning is more relevant and interesting. One such example is the opportunity for pupils to design a musical instrument and then write an evaluation of their work. Pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship lessons help to promote considerate behaviour and prepare them well for their future lives. Parents are happy with the curriculum and feel informed about its content.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's success in its pastoral care is not fully matched by its academic guidance and support, although this aspect is improving. Procedures for child protection are well established and understood by all staff. Health and safety arrangements are rigorous and the school encourages pupils to look out for each other, for example, by being a 'buddy' at playtime. The staff know each pupil well and, because class sizes are often small, pupils benefit from a good deal of individual attention. Parents appreciate these features and trust the school's support for its children.

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Assessment is improving, but its quality is not yet consistent. While pupils' work is sometimes accurately assessed, this is not always the case. In addition, pupils are not aware of their National Curriculum levels, which prevents them from having a full understanding of what they need to do next to reach higher levels.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The school identifies appropriate priorities for improvement. It successfully supports pupils' personal development and its actions have been effective in improving standards in reading and writing. Such achievements demonstrate satisfactory capacity for taking the school forward and securing future improvements. The headteacher involves the staff in making decisions and encourages teamwork. He also listens to and takes account of parents' views, so that parents feel welcome and involved in the school.

Subject leaders and the leadership team regularly monitor teaching, but this has not always had sufficient impact on the quality of lessons and learning because issues and shortcomings are not followed up rigorously. The governors are very supportive of the school's work and are developing the extent to which they challenge the school to do even better.

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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
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
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 the learners' needs?	3
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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burham Church of England Primary School, Rochester ME1 3SY

Thank you all for your help when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your books, watching your lessons and talking with you and your teachers. We think your school gives you a satisfactory education. Your progress is also satisfactory. Here are some other important things about your school:

- Your good behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playground.
- Your good attendance and how much you enjoy school life.
- The way some lessons involve more than one subject so that, for example, you are practising your literacy skills while you are also learning about design and technology and science.
- The good relationships between the school and your parents.

Here are some things we have suggested to help the school become even better:

- Ensure that the school knows accurately how well the children in Reception are learning.
- Make sure that all of you receive feedback on how you can improve your work, so that you can help to make it even better.
- Ensure that when other teachers come into your lessons to watch what is going on, they take particular notice of how well each of you is learning and use this information to help make teaching good or better all the time.

You can help by aiming to be the best you possibly can. Keep up your enthusiasm for learning!

On behalf of the inspection team, please accept our very best wishes for the future.

Ann Sydney Lead Inspector



19 March 2008

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Ann Sydney
Lead Inspector