

Burbage School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131141
Local Authority	Hackney
Inspection number	315731
Inspection dates	1–2 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Mary Summers

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	345
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	57
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms M Fulton
Headteacher	Ms T Okoruwa
Date of previous school inspection	17 May 2004
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Ivy Street Hackney London N1 5JD
Telephone number	020 7739 8591
Fax number	020 7729 3922

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large school serves pupils who come from a wide area. Far more pupils than in most schools are entitled to free school meals. A large proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Many of these pupils have moderate difficulties but quite a few have behavioural, emotional or social difficulties. About a quarter of pupils are from Turkish or Kurdish families and there are significant proportions from White British and Black African backgrounds. Many other ethnicities are represented in smaller numbers. Three quarters of pupils are learning English as an additional language. Mobility is high, with a large number of pupils starting or leaving the school between Years 1 and 6.

There are two Nursery and two Reception classes catering for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). Nursery children attend part-time, mornings or afternoons. There are two intakes a year, in September and January.

The school has won a number of awards including Healthy Schools and the Active Quality Mark.

A new headteacher started in September 2008. Many senior and middle managers are also relatively new.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Burbage School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Through rigorous monitoring procedures, the new headteacher has quickly gained a full picture of the school's performance. She has established a clear vision for the immediate future and has successfully won the support and respect of staff and pupils. There are clear signs that some aspects are starting to improve because of actions taken over the last few months.

Standards in English, mathematics and science are exceptionally low. Nonetheless, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, bearing in mind their very low starting points. Not enough pupils reach nationally expected levels at the end of Year 6 and too few reach the higher levels in the tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6. The work in lessons does not always challenge the more able and help them move on as quickly as they should. Teaching is satisfactory and there are clear signs of improvement because of the effective input of new senior and middle managers. Marking is beginning to improve, for example, and teachers are asking more searching questions to test pupils' understanding. Teachers maintain a calm and supportive atmosphere in classes which helps pupils focus on their work without interruption. They are beginning to set individual learning targets for pupils to help them improve their reading, writing and mathematics. However, pupils are not always sure about what these targets mean and how these will help them to move on in their learning.

The satisfactory curriculum caters well for pupils' personal development. Effective links with, for example, business partners in the City, help pupils understand the importance of a good education. Pupils are pleased to come to school and enjoy all the many activities offered. They are particularly keen on physical education lessons and sport, and they understand clearly how this contributes to a healthy lifestyle. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They behave well and bullying is rare. They know how to keep safe and are confident that school staff will deal with any concerns efficiently. They make a satisfactory contribution to the school community through their roles as class councillors and monitors. Although standards in basic skills are low, the positive personal values that pupils develop, such as confidence, teamwork and respect for others, prepare them appropriately for the future.

Pastoral care is strong. New pupils receive a warm welcome so they settle in quickly and feel comfortable to approach new learning. The breakfast club provides a healthy and positive start to the day and pupils obviously value the care they receive from the adults in charge. Administrative staff go out of their way to support pupils and their parents, explaining about transfer to secondary school, for example, and helping them complete the forms. Parents appreciate how the school looks after them and their children. 'The teachers are really kind and supportive', wrote one, 'They do a great job!'

Some robust systems have been introduced recently to check the performance of teachers and pupils and these are beginning to identify the correct areas for improvement. However, many of the initiatives introduced have not been in place long enough to really impact upon pupils' standards and progress. Staff morale is good and new leaders in key positions are supporting the headteacher well. Overall, the school shows a satisfactory capacity to improve in the future.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress and achieve well. Their achievement has improved considerably over the past two years because of better organisation and planning. Most now meet and some exceed nationally expected levels by the time they transfer to Year 1.

Adults work together well as a team, sharing ideas and keeping a close watch on children's welfare and development. Teaching is good and there is a strong emphasis on developing children's language and communication skills. Adults readily involve the children in discussion, introducing new vocabulary carefully to gradually extend their confidence and fluency. Children thoroughly enjoy acting out stories with puppets and pretending to be vets and doctors, developing their vocabulary successfully within a fun situation. Adults are careful to monitor children's learning and development and use this information effectively when planning subsequent activities to meet their different needs.

Children learn to become independent right from the start, happily using the good indoor and outdoor areas. They learn to help each other and to play safely together. Prompt action is taken to address any health and safety concerns.

The new temporary EYFS manager has done a good job in ensuring that new staff have quickly understood policies and practice and are able to continue to improve the quality of provision.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6.
- Raise teachers' expectations of the more able pupils and ensure that they receive enough challenge in lessons.
- Improve target setting procedures to ensure that pupils are clear about the next steps in their learning.

A small proportion of the schools whose 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

In the last two years, pupils have started in Year 1 at levels that are broadly typical for their age. However, prior to this pupils' starting points were much lower. This is reflected in the end of Key Stage 1 national assessments, which have been below average in recent years. Pupils currently in Years 1 and 2 are working at levels that are generally in line with those expected for their age.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are exceptionally low. This is partly due to high numbers of pupils who start school after the usual point of entry. Many have limited English, and have not attended long enough to reach nationally expected levels. The high turnover of teaching staff in the past has also hindered pupils' progress in Key Stage 2. Nonetheless, school records show that pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall, bearing in mind their previous starting points. The results of the most recent national assessments suggest a sharp rise in mathematics although overall, standards remain much lower than average. Not enough pupils reach nationally expected levels at the end of Year 6. The school has rightly identified that support procedures for pupils with moderate learning difficulties have not been as effective as they might and have begun

to strengthen these to promote faster progress. Few pupils reach the higher levels in the national tests and assessments in Years 2 and 6.

School records show that there is no particular pattern in the achievement of different ethnic groups. Those who are learning English as an additional language make satisfactory progress. Pupils with behavioural and emotional difficulties benefit well from the school's good pastoral systems and make steady progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, joining in lessons and recreational activities enthusiastically. They have good relationships with each other and with staff, and this strongly underpins the positive working ethos in lessons. Behaviour is good and boys and girls from different ethnic heritages play and work together happily. Pupils have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles, and talk knowledgeably about the importance of hygiene and a balanced diet. They have a good understanding of the school's rules and sanctions, and appreciate the way the school recognises their efforts. The school realises there is more to do to improve the opportunities for pupils to contribute to their community. They appreciate the efforts of others, for example, applauding classmates who do well. They showed particular enthusiasm in assembly for two of their teachers who were congratulated on completing a 10 kilometre run. Attendance is satisfactory, although it remains below the national average it is improving steadily. Despite their positive attitudes and good social skills, pupils' preparation for their future lives is only satisfactory, because too many still have weak skills in literacy and numeracy.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers form good relationships with pupils and these ensure a pleasant working atmosphere in classes. They manage behaviour well, ensuring that pupils can focus firmly upon their learning with minimal interruption. Teachers are working hard to respond to leaders' suggestions about how to improve their practice. Although teaching is satisfactory at present, there are clear signs that some aspects are starting to improve. Teachers' marking, for example, is beginning to provide helpful information to pupils about how they can improve their work. However, the activities set by teachers for pupils to do by themselves, do not challenge the more able pupils and they waste time practising things they can already do. Teachers do not always deploy additional support staff well enough in lessons. They are not always clear about how they should support the pupils or what they are expected to achieve with them.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

School leaders have begun to review the curriculum to make it more relevant and interesting for pupils. Currently it is more effective in promoting pupils' personal qualities than their academic development. Nonetheless, the curriculum meets statutory requirements. School leaders have begun to encourage the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in different subjects to support pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. The focus on reading at the beginning of each day encourages pupils to enjoy books and gives a calm start to the day's lessons. There is a high priority on developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and the

'Speak Up Residency,' involving a storyteller, has been introduced recently to improve these further. A good range of after-school clubs offer sports and other activities as well as opportunities for pupils to receive additional help with school work. The curriculum is enriched by many trips, visits and workshops that are linked to pupils' current learning. Year 5 were involved in a project at the Tate Modern, for example, which resulted in an exhibition that was much enjoyed by pupils and their parents.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good pastoral care for pupils and this strongly underpins their enthusiasm for school. There are good systems to help pupils new to the school to settle in and to be fully involved. Those who are new to learning English receive good support so they are included socially and academically. Procedures to identify and support pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are improving and a wide range of intervention strategies have been introduced to help them make progress. The learning mentor plays a significant part in this and also provides a ready ear for pupils to share their troubles. Along with other colleagues, she is effective in helping pupils who find it difficult to conform to accepted behaviour patterns to cope with school life. This helps their learning and that of their classmates.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and is improving. Teachers track pupils' progress carefully. However, pupils are not always aware of their current performance or what they need to do to improve. Individual target setting is not yet firmly established to involve pupils actively in their learning and to secure their commitment to improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Staff report that since the recent appointment of the headteacher, they are becoming much clearer about their roles and responsibilities. The new team of middle managers have begun to work with teachers to help them improve aspects of their teaching. This is showing early signs of success in some classes although has yet to impact on pupils' achievements generally. The headteacher has introduced rigorous procedures to check pupils' progress and these are starting to help staff and governors to form a clear view of school performance. Procedures to identify pupils with learning difficulties have been strengthened, but the support that pupils receive in lessons is still inconsistent.

School leaders analyse assessment information carefully and organise support for groups, for example, Turkish parents so they can help their children. Good links with the local community through Hackney Council actively support pupils' learning in art, music and science. Further links with schools in the United States, Australia and New Zealand help pupils to develop their understanding of different communities.

Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance. They bring a wide range of extremely useful individual skills in for example, finance and personnel, which enables them to support the school well.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

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	2
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	3
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 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

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 eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
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	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**

14 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burbage School, London, N1 5JD

Thank you all very much for welcoming me and the other inspectors to your school recently. We really enjoyed watching you working in lessons and chatting with you in the playground and around the school. You gave us a great deal of information that was extremely useful in helping us to reach our conclusions.

You go to a satisfactory school. Some things are good, such as the way that all the adults look after you and keep you safe in school. You told us how you like sport, because it keeps you fit and healthy. You also told us that you like the new reading sessions in the mornings, which are helping you to improve your literacy skills. We were pleased to see that you welcome new pupils so that they settle in quickly and take a full part in school life. The children in Reception and Nursery also settle in quickly. They really enjoy all the activities and make good progress in all areas of their learning.

We were particularly impressed with the way that you behave well and work hard in lessons. You show good levels of respect for each other and for adults in the school. Well done!

We have asked the teachers to improve a few things to help you do even better at school. More of you should be reaching expected levels for your age by the end of Year 6 and we have asked the adults to make sure you all get the right sort of help in lessons so you can make faster progress. We think that the work could be a bit harder for some of you in English, mathematics and science. We have asked teachers to make sure you know the levels that you are working at and that you understand your individual targets for improvement.

I know you will want to help them with these tasks and the best way you can do that is to keep working hard and behaving well. My best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs M Summers

Lead Inspector