

# Burnt Oak Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	131527
<b>Local Authority</b>	Medway
<b>Inspection number</b>	315822
<b>Inspection dates</b>	9–10 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jo Mayes
<b>Headteacher</b>	Gill Perry
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Cornwall Road Gillingham ME7 1LP
<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 852991
<b>Fax number</b>	01634 571283

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Burnt Oak Primary was established in September 2006 following the amalgamation of previously separate infant and junior schools. The school is larger than average, although the number of pupils on roll has been declining. An above average proportion of pupils have mostly moderate learning difficulties, and there are a number of pupils also with behavioural difficulties, for whom the school includes a behaviour support unit. An average number of pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. The school has been enrolled on the government's Intensifying Support Programme (ISP) aimed at raising standards in English and mathematics. Staff turnover has been high. The school is currently undergoing major building works aimed at replacing the old former infant and junior school buildings with wholly new buildings that will incorporate a children's centre.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the quality of teaching and learning, and the standards and achievement of the pupils. This is a school where the quality of education is inadequate because standards are too low and learners are not making the progress they should. The headteacher and governors have a sharply accurate picture of the areas that need improvement. They have introduced a series of initiatives to improve the quality of teaching and to raise standards. The impact of these measures has been hampered by the high staff turnover, but they are beginning to increase the rate of pupils' progress in some year groups, particularly in literacy. This, and the recent strengthening of the senior leadership team, shows the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. Parents have been critical of the school, and some have moved their children elsewhere, but they recognise the signs of improvement. As one explained, 'I do feel that the school is starting to turn a very bumpy corner; my child does enjoy school and she does seem to be learning.' Much attention has been given to tackling incidences of ill discipline. The behaviour support unit has had some success with pupils whose poor behaviour has disrupted their own and others' learning. Behaviour is satisfactory, although there are still some lessons where a minority of pupils misbehave. Because a few pupils sometimes play up in lessons, in those lessons where behaviour is satisfactory, teachers too readily settle for levels of quiet inattention. This means that pupils are not always listening and too many are not learning enough. This is particularly the case in lessons where the activities are unvaried and do not engage and hold pupils' interests. Teachers' expectations are too low, both in terms of the quality and quantity of pupils' work. Lessons often lack pace, with too long allowed for mundane tasks and with work set that is not closely enough matched to pupils' abilities, so that for some it is insufficiently challenging. This is true in both the main school and the Foundation Stage. Leadership and management are satisfactory. School leaders have monitored lessons, and these observations have resulted in some improvements in teaching. Monitoring, however, has not been focused sufficiently on pupils' learning and on ensuring that all pupils make progress in lessons. School leaders have introduced systems for carefully tracking pupils' progress each term, but the usefulness of this information is only as good as the reliability of the teacher assessments. The school has itself identified that these vary in accuracy. Pupils are looked after well. Pupils like school, even if they are not always enthusiastic in lessons, and their personal development is satisfactory. They develop a good appreciation of the need for a healthy lifestyle. They speak positively about the different subjects on offer in their satisfactory curriculum. As part of the Intensifying Support Programme to raise standards, pupils this year have been given personal targets to help them focus on what they need to do to improve their work. However, not all pupils know their targets and marking does not always give pupils clear guidance on what they need to do to move on the quality of their work.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children start the Foundation Stage with skills and capabilities that are below those expected for their ages. They make satisfactory progress, although standards remain below average by the start of Year 1. Despite the temporary limitations of space while the new school is being

built, children enjoy their learning environment. Self-registration and access to a wide range of resources promote children's confidence and independent learning skills. They increasingly work together and respond well to instructions. Children enjoy a variety of fruits and milk, which help them to adopt a healthy lifestyle. Adults are sensitive to the children's needs and support well their personal, social and emotional skills. Staff work closely as a team and make the best use of the limited space available to provide various learning opportunities indoors and out. They take observations to help plan future work but sometimes more able children are set tasks that are too easy for them.

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

- Raise teachers' expectations of the amount of work that pupils should be able to complete in lessons and ensure that work is more closely matched to pupils' different abilities so that it offers appropriate challenge for all.
- Provide short, more varied tasks and activities in lessons so that all pupils are fully interested and more motivated to learn.
- Keep more careful track of the progress pupils are making by ensuring that teachers' assessments of pupils' work are accurate and by focusing on pupils' learning when observing lessons.
- Ensure that all pupils have a clear understanding of what they need to do to improve their work.

### **Achievement and standards**

#### **Grade: 4**

Standards are exceptionally low and represent inadequate progress over pupils' time at the school. In 2007, the school did not meet the already low targets for Year 6 national test results that were inherited from the previous junior school. Although rates of progress are improving now in some year groups, for example in Year 2, pupils make less progress than they should because not enough is expected of them in lessons. Pupils with behavioural difficulties make satisfactory progress because of the support they are given in the unit. Their behaviour, and in turn their learning, is improving as a result. Pupils with moderate learning difficulties and those pupils who are at an early stage of learning English make satisfactory progress because they benefit from support that is tailored to their learning needs.

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

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils like coming to school and their attendance is satisfactory. It is improving because the school has good systems in place to promote good attendance and punctuality. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory, and has been improving as a result of the impact of the support unit. However, a small minority of pupils with challenging behaviour still sometimes disturb their own learning and that of others. Pupils have a growing understanding of the importance of healthy eating and engage well in physical activities and games. Some older pupils have developed good understanding of the dangers associated with smoking and substance use. Pupils feel safe and secure in school. They feel that they can approach members of staff for help when they need it. Pupils contribute appropriately towards the life of the school and this is shown in their taking responsibilities as councillors, play leaders and helpers. They take part willingly in fund raising to support a variety of charities. However, their progress in literacy and numeracy does not prepare them sufficiently well for their future education and working life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 4

The quality of teaching and learning is slowly improving but remains uneven across the school. There are some lessons where pupils make good progress because teachers succeed in motivating them and ensure that every child is listening and joining in. However, there are too many lessons where pupils do not learn enough. Teachers implement the school's behaviour policy consistently. This is helping to reduce the number of disruptions in lessons but teachers do not always choose activities for pupils which hold their attention and promote their full engagement in learning. There are too few opportunities for pupils to learn through active participation in practical tasks. In many lessons, tasks are not matched closely enough to pupils' needs and abilities. This is because teachers do not make sufficiently rigorous use of assessment information to determine the next steps in learning for each pupil. The school has identified that not all assessments are as accurate as they should be. Teachers are also too accepting of pupils' slow pace in completing tasks; for example, pupils are allowed to spend an inordinate amount of time simply copying out the learning objective but with little else to show for their time in the lesson. By contrast, teachers do not always explain these learning objectives clearly enough at the start of lessons so pupils do not always have a thorough understanding of the purpose of the lesson.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is still being developed and adapted to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests more closely. Teachers are beginning to create links between subjects that increase pupils' enjoyment. This work is less well developed in Years 3 to 6 than in the younger classes. The use of displays to stimulate, support and celebrate learning is also more effective in Years 1 and 2. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) as a tool to support and enrich learning across the curriculum is inconsistent. More consistent approaches to developing pupils' reading skills and, in particular, their understanding of letters and sounds are helping to improve pupils' progress in these areas. Plans to introduce new initiatives to improve pupils' mathematical knowledge and skills in line with recent national guidance are in hand but are not currently in place. The school offers a suitable range of clubs and additional activities, including sport, music and art, which help extend the pupils' horizons. Teachers make effective use of visits to enliven pupils' learning. For example, Year 1 pupils wrote about their visit to local woods where they collected materials which they later used to create pictures.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The school provides a caring environment for its pupils. Specialist staff provide good and effective support to those with challenging behaviour and moderate learning difficulties. They help these pupils to make often better progress than others. For example, the behaviour support team provides support for pupils to manage their feelings in a positive way and this has reduced the number of outbursts in class. Bilingual learners are well supported and integrated into the life of the school. Carefully planned procedures are in place for pupils' move to secondary school.

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are robust. Health and safety procedures are in place and regularly reviewed. The school tries very hard to involve parents and carers and has developed positive links with outside agencies to ensure the appropriate support for its pupils. Target setting to help guide pupils' efforts is in its early stages. Some older pupils are beginning to know what they need to do to improve their work but this is not the case throughout the school. The quality of marking varies widely between classes. Much gives insufficient guidance to pupils on how they can do better.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

School leaders have a realistic view of how well the school is doing and where improvement is needed. They continue to work closely with the local authority as part of the ISP but are becoming increasingly self-reliant in driving improvements. The recently strengthened leadership team provides clear direction for the school. The school has embarked upon a comprehensive programme of professional development for all staff in order to eliminate the weaknesses in teaching. This is designed to ensure that all staff have the opportunity to share the expertise and good practice that exists within the school. The monitoring of lessons, though regular, does not focus enough on the extent to which all pupils are learning. Subject leadership is relatively underdeveloped, except in English and mathematics, where experienced senior teachers have been newly appointed to the posts. Governors, many of whom are new to the role, are gradually honing their skills in evaluating the school's performance. The chair, in particular, has conducted very probing visits of the school and has furnished colleagues with extremely perceptive analyses of where improvements are needed.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	4
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

<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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	4
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	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
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?	Yes

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

11 June 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burnt Oak Primary School, Gillingham ME7 1LP

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school.

Burnt Oak Primary is already beginning to change for the better but it is not yet doing enough to make sure that you all do as well as you should in lessons. We are asking the staff and governors to make some more improvements and we are recommending that the school gets some extra help over the next year.

It was good to see that behaviour at the school is improving and that you enjoy school and the many different subjects you learn. You certainly know a lot about how to keep healthy through eating the right foods and taking plenty of exercise. We noticed, though, that sometimes, in class, not everyone is listening as well as they should be. We have asked teachers to give you more varied tasks and practical activities in lessons so that you are all more actively involved in your learning. You can help too by concentrating hard and doing your very best. We have also asked teachers to make sure that they set you work that is not too easy for some of you and we want them to press you to get through more work in lessons. Sometimes, some of you only get as far as writing out the learning objective. You need to be getting much more done than that if you are to do as well as you should.

We have asked the headteacher and other school leaders to look carefully at how well you are learning whenever they drop in to visit your lessons. We have also asked them to do more to check that all the teachers are accurately measuring how well each of you is doing.

We were pleased to see that some of you know the new targets you have in English and mathematics, but many of you do not. We have asked the school to check that, through the targets and teachers' marking, you all have a clear understanding of exactly what you need to do to improve your work.

Best wishes, Selwyn Ward Lead Inspector