

Burnt Tree Junior and Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103914
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	316466
Inspection dates	30–31 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Susan Morris-King HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	170
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ray Mace
Headteacher	Jackie Gazeley
Date of previous school inspection	9 November 2006
School address	Hill Road Tividale Oldbury B69 2LN
Telephone number	0121 5572967
Fax number	0121 522 4980

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) and one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

When Burnt Tree Primary School was inspected in November 2006 it was judged to be providing an inadequate standard of education and therefore to require special measures. The school was subsequently visited on one occasion by HMI prior to this inspection to monitor its progress.

Burnt Tree is a smaller than average primary school serving an area of economic disadvantage. Around half the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is much higher than the national average. Approximately three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. Almost all of these pupils are advanced bilingual learners. A higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties. Children generally enter the school with more limited skills than expected for their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

Burnt Tree Primary School's overall effectiveness has improved and is now satisfactory, as is its capacity to improve further. The school is a calm and orderly community where pupils enjoy their learning. The headteacher, assisted by the deputy headteacher, has set a clear and appropriate direction for the school and has worked effectively with staff to overcome the most deep seated weaknesses which existed at the time of the previous inspection. The leadership team are aware of the areas which need further improvement and are suitably ambitious for the school.

Staff have responded well to the increased level of challenge from the leadership team and have worked hard together to improve the school. Teachers now understand the extent to which they are accountable for ensuring that the pupils in their class make appropriate progress and support staff understand the key role that they have in supporting learning. Teaching is satisfactory overall, and lessons increasingly have good elements. A well planned focus on speaking and listening in all lessons has begun to improve pupils' learning skills, particularly for those who speak English as an additional language, and this remains an important priority for the school. A small proportion of lessons remain inadequate, with too great an emphasis on the teacher talking at the expense of the children learning actively. The leadership team has taken a number of appropriate actions to improve this situation but knows that further work is needed because sometimes teaching is still insufficiently challenging.

Because teaching and the curriculum are more focused on the pupils' needs, and pupils are being helped to improve their learning skills, they are making satisfactory progress overall. As a result, standards are beginning to rise. Standards vary from class to class but are below average overall. In Years 5 and 6 in particular there are still significant gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding but this is less evident among the younger pupils. There are particular gaps in pupils' mathematical skills in several classes. A thorough assessment and tracking system, combined with improved marking, helps to ensure that if any pupils fall behind this is quickly noticed and action is taken.

Pupils thoroughly appreciate the positive changes which have been made to their school. They feel safe and appreciate the increased challenge which they are given in their lessons and the new resources they have to help them to learn. Behaviour is good. Attendance remains unsatisfactory. The school has taken some effective steps to improve it, but levels are still well below the national average. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Procedures to keep pupils safe are a particular strength. Pupils are receiving increasingly clear guidance to help them to know how to improve their work.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

The Foundation Stage is satisfactory and children are making sound progress. The school has correctly identified that some of the previous assessment of children's progress in the Foundation Stage was inaccurate. Good quality support from the local authority (LA) has helped to remedy this. Tracking systems are thorough. As a consequence, staff now have an accurate understanding of what the children can do and what they need to learn next. Appropriate teaching programmes

and resources have been introduced to improve children's communication, language and literacy skills. The Foundation Stage staff have responded well to the support which they have received and have formed a cohesive and enthusiastic team. They have worked hard to improve the learning environment, particularly outdoors, which is enabling children to have a broader and more enjoyable learning experience. Clear routines have been established which enable children to settle quickly and be ready to learn.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching and increase the proportion of lessons which are good or better.
- Ensure that any unsatisfactory teaching is promptly challenged and that support is provided as necessary.
- Analyse the weaknesses in pupils' mathematical skills and put in place actions to remedy them.
- Improve the opportunities for pupils to learn actively to fill the gaps in their knowledge and understanding, particularly in Years 5 and 6.
- Work closely with the LA to improve pupils' attendance.

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

Standards are below average overall. Pupils' skills are uneven and there are gaps in pupils' knowledge. However, improved planning and teaching has led to pupils making satisfactory progress, and standards are rising accordingly. In several year groups pupils' work is now close to the standard expected for their age.

At Key Stage 1 results attained in the end of key stage assessments have improved steadily since 2005 and in 2007 were broadly in line with provisional national averages. Key Stage 2 results in 2007 were more variable, with pupils attaining standards close to the national average in English, below in science, and much lower than average in mathematics. This reflects gaps in their knowledge and understanding due to their past experiences. In the Foundation Stage, children's progress has been limited in the past, but the positive changes which have been made to provision have begun to have a favourable impact on their learning and children are now making satisfactory progress.

The school's thorough analysis shows that pupils from different minority ethnic groups make satisfactory progress, and pupils with learning difficulties also make satisfactory progress overall. The school has accurately identified a small number of pupils with different needs who did not make enough progress last year and is providing appropriate further support or alternative strategies.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes towards learning are good. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are good. In classrooms there is now a positive emphasis on teamwork and cooperation which is helping pupils to develop their skills of working together. The much

improved learning environment and atmosphere and better quality lessons contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of school. The pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Attendance remains too low, although fewer pupils now take holidays in term time. Pupils are aware of the need to eat healthily and to take exercise and are given encouragement to do so, although they do not always make the right choices. Pupils are clear that the improvements that have been made to their school, including to the school site, have made them feel safe. One pupil emphasised, 'If you get bullied the teachers will always sort it out.' As teaching improves and standards rise pupils are gaining better skills for the future. In addition, some pupils have opportunities to learn about managing money, including a recent exercise involving planning how to spend £10,000 on the school environment.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The leadership team has focused on helping staff to improve the quality of their planning and the structure of lessons. As a result, staff are now much better at creating and teaching interesting and appropriate lessons. Lessons are generally characterised by clearly structured planning, enthusiastic teaching, and sound subject knowledge. Lessons have learning objectives, although these vary in their precision, and success criteria are being increasingly well used to help pupils to know what they need to achieve. The best lessons have a good pace, questioning is well focused, and pupils rise to the challenge. Progress is quickest when the task is well matched to pupils' current level of attainment, they are given the opportunity to think for themselves, and are asked challenging questions to help them rather than being told the answer.

The accuracy of the school's assessment of pupils' attainment has improved. This has enabled teachers to be better informed about the next steps in pupils' learning and teachers have started to use this information appropriately to plan lessons. The match of work to pupils' current levels of attainment is sound for most pupils in all classes, although some variability remains. The growing use of discussing with a friend possible answers to a question is helping pupils to practise their speaking and listening and is improving their confidence in articulating their thoughts.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has sensibly focused on improving the curriculum for English and mathematics, and this has enhanced the content and the lesson structures. Science has been a more recent focus. The school has accurately identified the need to extend the practical elements of science and to develop pupils' scientific vocabulary. New resources, such as electronic whiteboards, are enabling teachers to plan more exciting lessons. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is at the early stage of development but has begun to improve and pupils benefit from being able to use laptop computers in some lessons. Twice weekly physical education lessons help pupils to stay healthy and to develop their skills. The school has adopted the national strategy's social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) programme to develop pupils' personal and social skills and a team teaching approach to this is proving effective. The school has sensible plans to develop the curriculum to become more active and creative.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, with some emerging strengths. The school has robust procedures for ensuring the safeguarding and welfare of pupils. Risk assessments, both in school and for when pupils are out on school trips, are thorough. The school has worked hard to improve pupils' attendance and punctuality through initiatives such as the 'walking bus' scheme and regular rewards and reminders. Pupils and families increasingly understand the importance of regular and prompt attendance and fewer take holidays in school time. However, attendance remains too low and increasing it is still a priority for the school. Guidance to pupils to help them to improve their academic work is developing well. Marking has begun to focus on what the pupils need to do next in order to address the next steps they need to make. The best examples are very informative, although this is not yet consistent throughout the school. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own learning with the help of a member of staff. Learning support practitioners are deployed and trained well to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher has worked hard and effectively to bring about positive change. Together with the deputy headteacher, and with good support from the LA, she has taken a range of suitable actions which have secured significant improvement. Monitoring and evaluation activities are more sharply focused. As a result, the leadership team is better able to hold staff to account and has developed an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and the priorities for further improvement. For example, the members have rightly identified that many pupils need further help to develop their vocabulary and have begun to address this, to good effect.

Scrutinies of pupils' work are thorough, and the resulting feedback to staff is clear. Lesson observations are accurate, although not always frequent enough which means that, occasionally, not enough challenge is given to teachers whose performance is inconsistent. Staff are clear about their targets for improvement and feel well supported in meeting them. Good attention is paid to staff training and development. In particular, several teachers have benefited significantly from team teaching with the deputy headteacher. The leaders of science and ICT have taken on a higher profile in leading improvements in these subjects and have clear plans for future development.

Assessment systems have been developed well and a thorough tracking system assists appropriate analysis. The leadership team's aspirations are suitably high and these have been communicated to staff. Targets for pupils are suitably challenging.

Governance is now satisfactory. The chair of governors provides good leadership and is dedicated to his role. He has made some robust changes to the way in which the governing body operates which now enables it to hold the school to account as well as to support it. The governing body has remained loyal to the school and meetings are well attended. Governors have worked particularly hard to develop and maintain relationships with the community.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

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?	3
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	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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	4
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 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	2
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

31 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burnt Tree Primary School, Oldbury B69 2LN

As you know, I have visited your school twice now with other inspectors. This was because your school has had a few problems in the past and I needed to see whether it was improving. What I found this time was that your school has really improved because of all the hard work from your headteacher, the staff and the pupils, and is now satisfactory. Congratulations!

Thank you for all the help you gave us to find out about Burnt Tree – in particular I learnt a great deal about your school from the group of Year 5 and 6 pupils who came to talk to me. You told me that your school has really improved and that you are having interesting lessons and being challenged to do harder work, which is helping you to learn. I agree. Your learning is much better than it was and, because of this, you are improving your skills in English, science and maths. You told me that you feel really safe in school and that the improvements to the school site, for example the fences, have helped. Bullying is not a problem and if there is any it quickly sorted out by the staff. Your behaviour is good. You work well together with your talk partners and listen carefully to your teachers. Your school has done well to improve so much and we have now asked them to work on a few more things.

- Make your lessons even better.
- Give your teachers help to get even better if they need it.
- Look at how well you are doing in maths and think about anything else which might help you with this subject.
- Give you more opportunities to learn in an active way, such as through experiments and investigations, especially in Years 5 and 6.

More of you are now coming to school every day, and on time, but we have also asked the school to try to make sure that even more of you attend every day. This is really important because if you are away you miss your learning. Try to be there! Well done for all your hard work. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Morris-King Her Majesty's Inspector

Annex B

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Yours sincerely

Mrs S Morris-King
Her Majesty's Inspector