

Burtonwood Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111178
Local Authority	Warrington
Inspection number	325305
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Andree Kettle

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	188
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Joyce
Headteacher	Mr Andrew Redman
Date of previous school inspection	28 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Green Lane Burtonwood Warrington Cheshire WA5 4AQ

Age group	5–11
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a small primary school in the village of Burtonwood on the outskirts of Warrington. There have been a number of staff changes within the last year, including the appointment of a new headteacher who joined the school last September. The school population is almost exclusively White British. The percentage of pupils who take free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average, but the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is below that found nationally.

Children enter the school's Reception class from a variety of early years' settings within the local area. There is a Children's Centre on site. The school has earned several awards including, the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the International School, Activemark, Artsmark Gold, Healthy Schools and bronze 'Eco' School status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Some aspects of the school are good, including the curriculum, the effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils' personal development and well-being. There is a strong sense of community within the school. Most questionnaires completed by parents show that they support the work of the school and the headteacher and give praise to the staff.

Pupils report that they enjoy school and feel safe. They are willing to talk to staff about any worries or concerns and they have confidence in the headteacher that 'he will sort out any problems.' Pupils speak enthusiastically about their lessons, the visits out of school and the residential experiences in which they take part. They participate well in a wide variety of extra-curricular activities, such as choir, information and communication technology (ICT) club, football, circus skills and cheerleading. Pupils understand the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and talk about how the school helps them to be healthy. They behave well and cooperate with one another, both in lessons and at playtimes. The range of extended services within the children's centre contributes satisfactorily to the development of pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

Throughout Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards attained by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, in English, mathematics and science, are broadly average. Therefore, overall achievement is satisfactory. Standards attained by pupils at both Key Stage 1 and 2 have remained broadly in line with the national average since the last inspection. Pupils reach higher standards in reading than in writing, though standards in writing are showing signs of improvement. The satisfactory achievement of pupils reflects that teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Some groups of pupils make uneven progress, especially the higher attaining pupils, particularly in writing. This is the result of variable practice in teaching, learning and assessment. Marking in books praises good work, but does not give the pupils sufficient guidance as to how to improve their work.

The curriculum is good because it is varied, exciting and motivates children. Pupils go on residential visits from Year 2 onwards and these are linked very effectively to their work back in school, particularly in subjects such as history, geography and art. For example, one class was observed studying the basic needs of early settlers and were able to relate this to the area in the Lake District they had visited the previous week. Their first-hand experience contributed very well to their learning and motivation.

The school's leadership team correctly prioritises identified areas for improvement, such as raising standards in writing. There are new action plans to bring about improvement and several new strategies have been put into place recently focused on raising standards, particularly in writing. The impact of these strategies on pupils' achievement is not yet evident as they have not been in place long enough. However, the school's information about the progress pupils make is insufficiently used to identify underachievement promptly. Consequently, the school's ability to intervene soon enough and provide effective support for pupils is restricted.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The school's own data from the last two years show that children enter the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are below those expected for children of a similar age. They

make good progress and leave the Early Years Foundation Stage with a level of skills and knowledge that is broadly average for their age. Access to a wide range of child led and adult-initiated experiences results in the children enjoying school, showing positive attitudes to learning and being keen to succeed. The outdoor learning environment is used effectively and presents a particularly exciting range of activities to enhance the children's learning.

Children respond well to established routines, such as the short sessions singing rhymes to calm them and to get them ready to learn. Daily, structured phonic sessions prepare them well for reading and there is regular assessment of the children's skills by the adults present. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are identified early and help is sought from external agencies where appropriate.

Children are well cared for by suitably qualified and caring adults who use praise and encouragement effectively. As a result, the children's personal development and well-being are good and they behave well for most of the time. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good. Adults work well together and welfare requirements are met. There is a clear action plan in place which accurately identifies the areas for further improvement. Assessment information is analysed well to check that the children are making progress in the six areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in English, mathematics and science and improve the progress made by all groups of pupils, especially the more able and particularly in writing.
- Improve the guidance given to pupils through teachers' marking, so that pupils understand clearly the next steps in their learning.
- Use data effectively to analyse the performance of different groups of pupils to identify underachievement and provide appropriate intervention and support.

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

Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with similar skills to those expected nationally of children of this age. Standards reached by pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly in line with the national average and have been generally so since the last inspection. In 2008, boys achieved higher standards than girls, especially in mathematics and reading. In both 2007 and 2008, the proportion of pupils gaining the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than the national figures.

In Key Stage 2, standards reached by pupils by the end of Year 6 have fluctuated, but have remained broadly in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. The school's own data showing the performance of pupils in Year 6 in 2008 shows that this trend was sustained. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 in Year 6 varies from year-to-year and dipped below the national average in 2008 in English, mathematics and science. Standards attained by boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 2 are broadly similar.

The published data show that over time most pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and 2 and this is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to all other pupils and achieve standards in line with similar

pupils nationally. The more able pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils and they did not meet the targets set by the school in 2008.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils say that they enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school and pupils act in a safe and responsible manner. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In an assembly pupils were able to contribute thoughtful comments about how the people in the parable of the 'Good Samaritan' might have been feeling.

Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and the importance of regular exercise. They drink water during the school day and talk enthusiastically about taking part in physical education (PE) and extra-curricular sports. There is good take up of the healthy snacks on offer at break-time.

Pupils make an excellent contribution to the community as a result of the school's high commitment to giving them a sense of community and an understanding of citizenship. Pupils demonstrate a good appreciation of the needs and values of others, both locally and internationally. Within school, the school council represents the pupils well and has been responsible for the purchase of a gazebo for the playground. At a local level, the pupils celebrate religious festivals in a range of churches and take part in village activities, for example, switching on the Christmas lights and planting bluebells in local woodland. The school has strong links with a school in Soweto. Regular communication through emails from pupils in that school gives them an insight into a very different culture. They also have a link with France which gives them an understanding of another international community.

Pupils have very well developed ICT skills and use the internet safely and effectively. They have good interpersonal skills and are able to cooperate well, as a result of carefully planned practical activities which foster these attributes well. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the world of work and to their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory in line with the satisfactory progress made by pupils. However, this is improving, as shown by the several good lessons observed during the inspection. In the best lessons, there is a fast pace and interesting activities which keep pupils on task and motivated. There is good management of minor behaviour issues and inattention, so that it does not impact on the learning of other pupils. Lessons are carefully planned and clear learning objectives are shared with the pupils. Activities are well structured to ensure that the pupils make good progress and objectives are met. Good relationships exist between staff and pupils and between pupils, and levels of both cooperation and independence are high.

In satisfactory lessons, the pace of learning is slower and sometimes behaviour is not well managed. At times, some pupils are not fully engaged and motivated as the tasks they are set are not matched well enough to their learning needs. In these lessons, there is a higher noise

level which affects the learning of others, pupils do not cooperate well and teachers' expectations are not high enough.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and meets statutory requirements. It provides rich and varied experiences for pupils. Cross-curricular links are made very effectively through well planned topics which make learning more relevant and interesting for pupils. As a result, they develop a deep understanding of a variety of topics including ethical issues, such as the support of Fairtrade. Pupils are able to explain the ethical reasons behind this organisation.

The wide variety of experiences provided by the curriculum contributes very well to the development of pupils' thinking skills. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were observed discussing and prioritising the basic needs of early settlers and putting forward articulate reasons for their choices. In Key Stage 1, young children were able to discuss the attributes of different animals and talk about how to classify them in different ways. The use of ICT is well established throughout the curriculum; pupils have high skill levels and use them well to enrich their topic work.

International links with other schools are effective and well established. They enable pupils to develop a good understanding of the wider world and learn about other countries, cultures and faiths. They are proud that they learn to speak French and German. Pupils benefit from working with specialists, such as the high school technology teacher, who is working with a class on designing and creating working models of Ferris wheels. Pupils report that they enjoy meeting other visitors such as a poet and an author.

The Children's Centre provides a range of extended services for children and their families and there are many well attended extra-curricular activities for pupils. Personal, health and social education is well established, and as a result, pupils have a good understanding of their own needs and those of others. The school has been awarded the Artsmark Gold Award and proudly displays many of the pupils' high quality artistic creations throughout the school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The overall quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory with good features, such as the pastoral care for pupils. Adults in school are very dedicated and caring and pupils' emotional and social needs are met very effectively. As an extended school, there are good systems in place to refer pupils and families to other appropriate services as necessary. This enables all pupils, including vulnerable children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, to receive the help they need to make satisfactory progress. Child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and the school meets all current government requirements for safeguarding pupils. The school works well with parents and offers family learning courses in the Children's Centre which are attended by parents and pupils from the Reception class.

Academic guidance is satisfactory and pupils make satisfactory progress as a result. Although a new, well-designed marking policy has been put into place recently by the headteacher, it has not yet had sufficient time to impact on pupils' learning and progress. Similarly, changes have been made to teachers' planning to help them structure lessons more effectively to ensure that children are guided towards the next steps in their learning. This is not sufficiently well developed yet to show a measurable impact on pupils' attainment.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The new headteacher has set a clear direction for improving the quality of the education offered by the school and has put into place some well thought out strategies. He has quickly gained the support of the staff, governors and parents. Teachers have responded well to the recent changes made by the headteacher. However, these are not sufficiently embedded to judge the impact on pupils' achievement.

The school's self-evaluation has correctly identified the areas for improvement and clear action plans have been created to address the issues. Data analysis is undertaken by the school to check on pupils' progress over time, but it is underdeveloped and not used well enough to analyse the progress of individuals and groups against their targets, to intervene at an early stage.

The school places a high priority on its role within the community and its contribution to community cohesion is good. The school has a good understanding of local context and needs and pupils take part in many community activities. Developing and maintaining the well-being of all pupils is a high priority and the pupils and their families benefit from the range of extended services on offer and good links with other professionals. Equality of opportunity is promoted satisfactorily. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive high quality support and care, including working in small groups with skilled teaching assistants. The headteacher and senior leaders are supported by committed and caring governors. Although governors are well informed, they provide insufficient challenge to the school's leadership. The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity to improve and provides satisfactory value for money.

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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	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	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

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 eliminated	3
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	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

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

Thank you very much for the warm welcome we received when my colleague and I visited your school recently. Thank you for talking to us freely; your views were very helpful. You told us that you enjoy school and this is demonstrated by your good attendance. Please thank your parents for sending in the questionnaires and let them know that we have taken their views into account. We were impressed with your enthusiasm for lessons and for the wide range of extra-curricular activities that you take part in regularly. You understand the importance of living a healthy life and you behave well in school.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education overall, with good teaching and learning in the Reception class. Your new headteacher has considered carefully what the school needs to do to further improve and has started to make some well-planned changes. We have asked your school to look at three things to make it even better.

- Improve the progress that you make so that you can reach higher standards in mathematics, science and English, especially in writing.
- Improve the guidance teachers give you, especially through their marking, so that you know exactly how to improve your work.
- Check your assessment results to make sure your progress towards your targets is as good as it should be.

You can help by continuing to have good attitudes to learning and by supporting your headteacher and the staff by working hard. Please accept my best wishes for the future and do continue to listen well and try your best, so that you can make more progress and achieve higher standards in your work.