

Burwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	132008
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	333380
Inspection date	9 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Stuart Charlton

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Special
School category	Community special
Age range of pupils	7–16
Gender of pupils	Boys
Number on roll	
School (total)	35
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Stephen Wells
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Key
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2007
School address	Avalon Road Orpington BR6 9BD
Telephone number	01689 821205
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Age group	7–16
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burwood is a special school for boys aged 7 to 16 with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. From September 2009 it will change its designation to provide for boys aged 11 to 16 years. All boys have a statement of special educational need and a number have been excluded from their mainstream school. The vast majority come from the Bromley area, but there are a small number from neighbouring boroughs. Nearly three quarters are eligible for free school meals, which is well above average. The majority of boys are from White British backgrounds and none speak English as an additional language. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy School Status, Sportsmark and Activemark. At the last inspection in September 2007 the school was judged to require special measures.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Burwood School is a rapidly improving school that now provides satisfactory education for all its students. There are strengths in students' personal and social development; in the care, guidance and support they receive; and in the curriculum. In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The most significant factor in the improvement has been the determination and commitment of the headteacher, which has brought much-needed stability to the school. This has been achieved through the establishment of a new senior leadership team and a teaching team, and by developing the sense of purpose and teamwork which is critical to moving the school forward. In this, the headteacher has been well supported by the local authority.

A thorough revision of the school's programme for personal, social and health education, based on strategies from the social and emotional aspects of learning, has ensured that this area is now good overall and is a strong feature of the provision. The school is successful in promoting racial and religious harmony. Students' moral and social awareness is good, and their spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Students say that they feel safe and enjoy their learning. The school makes strenuous efforts to promote good attendance, and this has improved significantly since the last inspection, so that it is now satisfactory. However, there are still a small number of parents who do not send their children regularly to school. Through the school council, students are closely involved in helping to contribute to the school community and all are willing to express their views on a range of issues. Students gain a good appreciation of local issues and develop a sense of responsibility for making sure that Burwood School is a good place to be. A good example of this is the way in which older students act as 'buddies' to the younger ones. Behaviour is good and has radically improved since the last inspection. Staff give students very effective help in managing their own behaviour so that any misbehaviour does not affect the learning of others. Students are quickly coming to terms with the demands this new approach places on them and are much more confident to explore and express their feelings. They develop a good understanding of the need for a healthy lifestyle through the opportunities for physical development in school and through the after-school clubs. This is recognised by the school's achievement of Healthy School Status, and the Sportsmark and Activemark awards. In all their activities, students pay particular regard to the importance of being safety conscious.

The quality of teaching is now satisfactory, with no inadequate lessons. This is a considerable improvement since the last inspection but has, by necessity, taken time to achieve. It is only in the last term that the final changes have been implemented. Consequently, these improvements have not yet had their full impact on students' achievements. Teachers plan their lessons thoroughly and are now beginning to focus on students' needs and how these will be met, rather than on the delivery of content. Their relationships with students are good and they have good subject knowledge. In the best lessons, staff use information about students' targets and their progress very well to drive learning forward. However, because many staff are inexperienced, this practice is not consistent in all lessons. As yet, there are not enough lessons which are good and better to really drive up standards. The greatly increased range of courses and accreditation available have been a significant factor in raising students' motivation and attainment. Standards are rising and are now broadly average. Student achievement is satisfactory overall, with good achievement in mathematics, science, and information and

communication technology (ICT) for many students. The improvements in students' personal development would not have come about without the dedication of staff and the very good efforts they put into the pastoral care of their students. The school's systems for safeguarding and ensuring the safety of students now fully meet requirements. This has enabled many exciting developments, such as the work linked to a Second World War archaeological dig at Shorne Park, to be fully effective as a teaching tool and yet make learning great fun. Very good relationships have been developed with other schools and colleges. Particularly important in this respect are the links with The Priory School, which have been extremely beneficial to Burwood's students.

The school's systems to monitor its performance have been overhauled and, where necessary, effective new ones have been developed. A great deal has been achieved in a very short space of time and the ethos in the school has improved radically since the last inspection. There are rigorous and robust systems to determine students' attainment on entry, to set challenging personal and academic targets and to monitor these on a regular basis. These systems give very good management information, which is used well to target areas in need of further improvement. Consequently, the support for teachers to develop their practice is very good, which has led to the development of a strong sense of commitment among all staff. The governing body has seen a complete change of personnel and a new chair. Through the determination and commitment of the chair, it has quickly come to terms with its roles and responsibilities and now acts effectively as the school's critical friend. The excellent working relationship between the governing body and the school's senior management team is a significant factor in the school's improvement. The school has acted with vigour to promote the status of its students in the local community and to help parents to support their children's learning. It has recognised the need to develop an effective action plan to focus on the national and international aspects of community cohesion and, at this time, this area is satisfactory. The considerable improvements since the last inspection and the continuing drive to raise students' achievement show that the school has good capacity to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the amount of teaching which is good and better to ensure that all students achieve as well as they can.
- Improve attendance.
- Develop an effective action plan for community cohesion.

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

Prior to their entry to Burwood, most students have missed considerable proportions of their education. Consequently, their attainment is below what would be expected. Although the school is still at an early stage of developing its work ethos, there are clear signs that students' academic achievement is now satisfactory and that, for many, it is good. This results from improved teaching, a much more relevant curriculum and more effective learning. More fundamental, however, is the emphasis the school now places on developing students' behaviour management skills, their social skills and their recognition of the impact of their actions on others. Consequently, their achievements in these areas are good.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Students are very clear about how much Burwood has improved. In the words of one, 'This place is cool. Things have really calmed down.' Issues at the previous inspection with regard to bullying and racist acts have been effectively dealt with and this is reflected in the improved standing of the school in its local community and with parents. Particularly good examples of this have been the very successful Summer and Easter Fairs involving students, their parents, and local dignitaries and community groups. The school has put a great deal of effort into strategies to promote good attendance. It has been well supported in this by the local authority through a designated education welfare officer. Attendance has improved significantly and is now satisfactory. However, there is still more to do and further efforts are being made to involve the small number of families who do not fully support the school's efforts, but who contribute significantly to absence. Considerable efforts have been made to encourage students to develop a healthy lifestyle through cookery classes and by encouraging physical and sporting activities and emphasising the dangers of substance abuse. These are paying dividends, so that this area is now good, as has been recognised by a range of awards. The emphasis on developing students' literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, linked to very good opportunities for work experience, ensures that they are well prepared for life after school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

At the previous inspection, there was a considerable proportion of teaching which was unsatisfactory. A radical overhaul of personnel and elimination of the dependence on supply staff have brought much-needed stability to the staffing base and there is now no unsatisfactory teaching. This has taken time to achieve and has been finalised only this summer term. Fundamental to this development has been the introduction of a very rigorous system to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning. This has enabled senior leaders to identify areas of weakness and to implement strategies and support to help staff develop their practice. Teachers' planning is now rigorously monitored, which has a positive influence on helping to identify areas in which the school can support staff to develop their practice. Relationships are very good and teachers have good subject knowledge. The school is now in a strong position to improve students' learning further by increasing the amount of teaching which is good or better.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

All aspects of the curriculum have improved significantly and it is now good. There is now a very strong focus on students' personal development and on their basic literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. The development of work-related and vocational programmes has given students' learning much greater relevance. Further exciting developments are being implemented, for example the building of a skills centre to provide on-site delivery of construction and related skills which will be completed this summer. In addition, the new 'induction classroom' for incoming students provides much-improved facilities for reintroducing students to school life and allows for more effective initial assessment of their needs. The curriculum is now well

supported by a wide range of out-of-school activities, and visitors into school, which have been developed since the last inspection.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support students receive are good. Since the last inspection, thorough safeguarding and safety procedures have been implemented and risk assessment procedures developed which enable a much wide range of out-of-school activities to be pursued. Staff ensure that all students, including those who arrive at different times, settle quickly and happily into school life and that they feel confident about moving on to the next stage of their education. There is very good tracking of students' personal and academic progress. This information is used well to set challenging targets for each student that motivate them in their learning. This is particularly so for those with additional difficulties. The school works very well with a wide range of outside agencies to support students' development.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very clear vision and direction about how the provision needs to develop. She has brought together an effective senior leadership group and together they form a powerful team that drives school improvement. They work very well with staff and have established effective teamwork, which enables good communications across the school. Support for teachers new to school is very good, so that all staff quickly develop their practice and give of their best in identifying and addressing the needs of the students. Rigorous and robust internal systems have been established to monitor and evaluate the school's provision and these give a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses. The governing body ensures coherence and consistency in placing students at the school. With good support from the local authority, it has been instrumental in changing the designation of the school from 7-16-year-olds to 11-16-year-olds to ensure more focused provision. It acts effectively in challenging the school and the local authority to improve provision further. The school is at an early stage of developing its programmes to promote community cohesion. However, an extremely good start has been made by engaging parents and promoting the welfare and profile of its students in the local community, which was a key issue at the last inspection.

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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	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	3
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	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 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?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
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	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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**

20 July 2009

Dear Students

Inspection of Burwood School, Orpington, BR6 9BD

Thank you for all the help you gave us when we visited your school. We greatly valued our discussions with some of you and, in particular, the clear and thoughtful way in which you presented your views. You were all very clear that Burwood is 'wicked', as one of you put it. You also added that staff are always ready to help and support you, not just with your lessons, but in your lives outside school. We agree with you that Burwood is a rapidly improving school which now gives you a satisfactory education. It has many strengths, particularly in the help and support staff give you to develop your personal and social skills and to help you to manage your behaviour. The curriculum is good and provides good vocational and work-related opportunities which prepare you well for life after school. The Skills Centre and the new 'induction classroom' are exciting developments.

You are particularly supportive of the centre's rewards system and you told us how it was a real incentive in helping you to improve your work, behaviour and attendance. You were keen to tell us that teachers made lessons fun and that the smaller groups made it much easier for you to concentrate and 'understand stuff', as one of you said. Several of you also helped us to appreciate the challenges which you face in putting the skills you learn in school into practice in your outside lives. I have asked that your new teachers get the support they need to become even better so that they can help you to achieve all you can in lessons. It is very clear that those of you who attend regularly will gain qualifications that will be of great benefit when you leave school, so I want all of you, and your parents, to make sure that you make even greater efforts to come to school every day. The very successful Summer and Easter Fairs have helped to improve relations with the school's immediate neighbours. I now want the school to extend these initiatives to a wider audience. You all have a part to play in making Burwood an even better school than it is now.

Yours faithfully

Stuart Charlton

Lead Inspector