

Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114821
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338455
Inspection dates	22–23 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Graham Preston

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pam Langmead
Headteacher	Mrs Nicola Tothill
Date of previous school inspection	7 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 13 teachers in 21 lessons. Meetings were held with governors, groups of pupils and staff. Different aspects of the school's work were observed and documentation scrutinised, including that relating to safeguarding practices, the school's self-evaluation and development planning, as well as 108 returned questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the consistency of teaching in ensuring that pupils learn well in their lessons and improve their basic skills, particularly in writing
- the effectiveness of its inclusion practice in ensuring less-able pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress
- the extent to which the school's care and support arrangements promote pupils' personal and social development
- how well governors and school leaders have coped with recent challenges and worked together in promoting school improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger-than-average primary school that mostly draws its pupils from a mixed catchment area in Burnham-on-Crouch. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few are learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is increasing and is above average. The proportion of those known to be eligible for free school meals is average. As part of extended provision the school runs breakfast and after-school clubs. The school has gained National Healthy Schools status, Activemark and is an active participant in the Local Sports Partnership.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Burnham is a satisfactory school with many good features. It has successfully overcome a difficult period and now ensures that the great majority of pupils achieve appropriately and develop well in terms of their personal and social growth.

The governors have been exceptional in terms of their effectiveness and commitment to improvement and the headteacher and her immediate senior colleagues have been successful in driving those improvements and gaining the confidence and support of the school staff.

Following the last inspection, the school faced a very difficult staffing issue which was dealt with decisively by the governing body. Those problems adversely affected the school's results for two years but through the considerable efforts of all concerned, outcomes in 2009 were much improved. Pupils in Year 6 achieved standards close to the national average and these were in line with expectations for English, mathematics and science. The one area of particular weakness was pupils' writing where few reached higher levels in the external test. Very effective learning support helped less able boys and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do better than their expected targets. In 2010 the school has consolidated these improvements and its own data indicate that again, pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach average standards in line with their expected targets. Pupils in earlier years are progressing sufficiently well to do even better when they are in Year 6. Other outcomes are particularly strong. The excellent safeguarding procedures and good practice around the school ensure pupils feel exceptionally safe. Although the school has its share of more challenging pupils, behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and pupils take advantage of the various opportunities to be actively engaged in their learning.

Teaching has numerous strengths that contribute to the positive outcomes. Teachers are well organised, have clear expectations about behaviour and maintain good relationships with pupils. There are numerous activities to keep pupils involved and a key strength is the well planned learning support for the less able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. However, lesson planning does not always focus sufficiently well on identifying a range of activities that provide different levels of challenge for the different abilities in the class. Some lesson planning misses opportunities to make effective use of the progressive, skills-based school curriculum to develop cross curricular skills such as literacy and numeracy. Other aspects of the curriculum are good such as the wide range of sports and other activities. Teachers' marking is positive and provides constructive advice but does not clearly show pupils how they can improve work and so make progress in terms of their National Curriculum levels. A key strength of the school is its outstanding care, guidance and support. This is

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reflected in the very thorough way it targets support for those with particular needs and works closely with its partners and agencies to help vulnerable pupils and to ease transition in and out of school.

The governors and senior staff have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have successfully moved the school from a low point to one where the school is enabling pupils to achieve appropriately. During this difficult period the governors were very involved in the running of the school and continue to play a very active part in strategic development and maintaining links with parents and agencies. The governors also carried out a thorough audit of community cohesion and recognise the need to develop provision especially in relation to developing links with different schools and communities across the United Kingdom. The relatively new headteacher has grown into her role and demonstrated a positive drive and good capacity to lead further school improvement. Members of the new senior leadership team are being supported to develop their roles, especially in relation to developing a consistently sharp evaluation of teaching and learning. The school has successfully addressed recent problems as well as clearly improving some outcomes and provision since the last inspection, most notably in the areas of safeguarding, inclusion and care. For these reasons the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure consistently good teaching and increase the proportion of outstanding practice by:
 - a much sharper focus on pupils' learning and providing challenging learning opportunities to help all pupils make better progress
 - make sure that lesson planning takes full and consistent account of the school's skills based curriculum particularly to help improve pupils' writing skills
 - establish a much closer link between the school's progress tracking and teachers' marking practice that helps pupils and parents know how pupils can improve against National Curriculum standards.
- Improve leadership and management by developing the relatively new leadership team and middle managers in their work on monitoring and evaluating provision.
- Improve community cohesion by providing more learning opportunities and experiences that help pupils better appreciate the wider diversity within British society.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

In most years pupils enter Reception with standards a little below those expected for their age and make good progress to reach those expected by the end of the year.

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Progress in Years 1 and 2 has been satisfactory with pupils reaching the national average in reading and mathematics but below average in writing. This pattern is broadly repeated in Years 3 to 6 though pupils did significantly less well in 2007 and 2008. The school successfully retrieved the situation in 2009 with pupils making up lost ground to reach the national average. Work seen in lessons and pupils' books was broadly average in most years though writing continues to be weaker than reading. Observations and the school's data indicate a continuing improvement in pupils' progress in future though progress in Year 4 is less strong because there is less challenge in some lessons. Lesson observations confirm the 2009 results that less able boys and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from skilled learning support and make good progress.

The great majority of pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in the above average attendance rates. They behave well and participate actively in the varied lesson activities that enable them to work and discuss ideas together. These contribute significantly to those personal and social skills that relate well to their economic well being. Pupils appreciate opportunities to take responsibility and this is reflected in the wide range of different responsibilities they have around school. The school council is active and given decision making responsibility, for example, in deciding schools meals. Most pupils are involved in regular physical activities. All swim in the school pool in summer and regularly throughout the year. A large number also participated in area athletics and football events during the inspection. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and this is reflected in pupils' positive and responsible behaviour and readiness to respond to the many opportunities for reflection. Cultural development is not as strong though there were good examples of developing a global awareness seen in the use of Caribbean literature in Year 5 and discussions of issues in less economically developed countries in assemblies. Awareness of, and contact with, the wider British society is less evident.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Many lessons are well managed with clear expectations about behaviour, and a good balance of teacher-led activity and other activities that interest pupils and get them to work together. Learning support assistants are well used to support the groups of lower ability pupils through practical learning activities that develop their understanding. Information and communication technology is used well, especially in Year 5 where every child has access to their own computer notebook. The very best teaching is well planned with varied challenge to meet different abilities and needs in the class. A Year 6 English lesson captured the interest of pupils in the work of William Morris which resulted in biographical writing that the more able used to help develop their writing style while others used similar material to improve their punctuation. Unfortunately this varied challenge and clarity of learning purpose is absent in some lessons particularly in focusing on improving literacy. In part this is a result of lesson planning not closely following the school's skills-based curriculum for literacy and numeracy. These curriculum weaknesses are balanced by some very good extra curriculum enrichment and well planned lessons in the non-core subject areas.

Care, guidance and support is exceptionally strong and is reflected in pupils' good attendance and behaviour, their involvement and concern for others and in the positive progress of vulnerable pupils and others with particular needs. A case study of a vulnerable child, for example, demonstrated very good progress because of carefully prepared learning plans, close liaison with outside social agencies and well directed learning support. Pupils are very well looked after and cared for in the breakfast and after school clubs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

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How effective are leadership and management?

The drive and enthusiasm of the headteacher and key senior colleagues have been effective in moving the school forward. Establishing outstanding care provision as well as extending the school day through a wide range of activities including the breakfast and after-school clubs, reflect very much the strengths of the school. Supporting the needs of all children, and in particular enabling pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities to be valued and integrated well, reflects the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities. Safeguarding is outstanding not just for meeting requirements but for the way in which policies are fully implemented for all the different aspects of safeguarding, including internet safety. Safeguarding practices are closely monitored by governors and staff on a regular basis. Much too has been done to raise standards and the school strives to improve these further by developing leadership and management across the school and focusing on the quality of pupils' learning. Middle and senior managers are involved in monitoring lessons but their observations are not always sharply enough focused on pupils' learning. The governors have been exceptionally good in terms of their informed and rigorous support through their regular links with key staff, parents and the school council, though they recognise that community cohesion is work in progress and have sound plans to develop this area.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good overall progress, particularly in their personal, social and emotional,

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creative and physical development. Collaborative play in different groups enables children to develop their speaking and listening. Children behave well and relationships with adults and each other are positive, evident in the way they play together harmoniously.

All areas of learning are covered well though there are missed opportunities to develop children's writing. There is a free flow between indoor classrooms and the excellent outside facilities and this flexibility allows for a good range of child-initiated activities such as working together to construct 'junk robots'. Adult-led activities are well planned and promote good learning. Careful monitoring of activities along with formal and informal assessments are used well to both track children's progress and plan for their learning needs.

The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are effective, as reflected in good outcomes. The teachers are also members of the developing senior leadership team and so ensure that provision is an integral part of the whole school. There is a strong focus on professional development and all staff are well trained in assessment. The school is developing children's 'learning journals' as part of assessment though it is still in its early stages. There are future plans to bring on site the local pre-school provision as part of the school drive to establish a good foundation for children's learning and progress. All resources are well deployed, and child protection and safeguarding requirements are fully addressed and reflect the strengths of the whole school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents are positive about the school and almost all think that it ensures their children are safe and well supported. Inspectors agree that these aspects are areas of considerable strength. Some parents feel that their children's progress could be better and that they could be better informed about how well their children are doing. Inspection findings confirm that these are aspects that need further development though inspectors recognise the considerable improvement the school has made so far.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burnham-On-Crouch Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 108 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 358 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	56	40	37	7	6	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	66	35	32	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	37	60	56	8	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	44	50	46	8	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	50	49	45	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	33	58	54	14	13	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	42	58	54	3	3	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	40	57	53	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	42	39	57	53	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	34	54	50	9	8	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	26	62	57	7	6	4	4
The school is led and managed effectively	39	36	50	46	8	7	5	5
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	45	51	47	4	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



24 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burnham-on-Crouch Primary School, Essex, CM0 8LG

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. Your school gives you a satisfactory and improving education, and ensures that most of you achieve as well as you should by the time you leave. The good learning support in lessons enables many of you with particular learning needs to make good progress.

The school seems like a very safe place to be and in the questionnaires both you and your parents strongly agreed. We were pleased to see how well behaved you were and how you worked well together in lessons. We noted that many of you have responsibilities around the school and like to participate through the school council. It was good to see that many are committed to healthy eating and are actively involved in different sports and clubs. Many were involved in the area sports day during the inspection. Congratulations on winning!

Very many of your parents told us how much you like school, and this is reflected in your good attendance. You get on with your teachers and like the opportunities to be actively involved in discussion and group work. We could see that your teachers plan different activities that make your learning interesting. However, we think you could do even better if teachers tailored classwork more closely to your individual needs to make sure you are all fully challenged. Your teachers mark your work regularly and often tell you how you can improve it. This is very important and we have asked them to do more of this to explain more carefully how you can improve on your National Curriculum levels. From lessons and assemblies it was clear that the school is keen for you to know more about the wider world. To help in this we have asked them to develop links with other schools in Britain and possibly abroad.

The headteacher, the school governors and all the staff are working hard to further improve the school. You can all help by maintaining your good attendance and continuing to take an active part in school affairs. Thank you again for being so friendly and helpful on our visit.

Yours sincerely

Graham Preston

Lead inspector

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