

Burstow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125292
Local Authority	Surrey
Inspection number	340759
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil Peterson
Headteacher	Mrs Elaine Hampson
Date of previous school inspection	7 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at policies, planning, assessment data and pupils' work. They analysed the questionnaires returned by 86 parents, 99 pupils and 25 members of staff.

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

- the achievement of pupils through Years 3 to 6
- pupils' personal development, including their behaviour and attitudes to learning
- the impact of recent initiatives on pupils' progress and attainment.

Information about the school

Burstow is a large primary school in a semi-rural setting. Pupils represent a wide range of family backgrounds, including around 10% from Traveller communities. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most of these pupils have speech, language and communication difficulties, and a few have behavioural or emotional problems. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class. The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school outside the usual times is above average. The school is part of the Horley Learning Partnership, which includes ten neighbouring schools. The school has achieved the Investors in People standard and the foundation level of the International Schools Award.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, a concerted effort by staff and governors has led to significant improvements over recent years. Almost all aspects of the provision are better than they were at the time of the last inspection. Parents hold the school in high regard. One parent, reflecting the views of the overwhelming majority, wrote, 'My three children have become confident, successful learners at Burstow School. All the staff give 100%.'

Improvements in the quality of teaching have accelerated pupils' progress so they are now achieving well. In recent years, standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 have been broadly average. Pupils in the current Years 5 and 6 are making better progress. Standards in reading are much higher than in writing. Girls tend to outperform boys. Careful recording of individual pupils' progress enables teachers to provide challenging work for different ability groups, and the division of pupils into different sets across year groups helps them do this. Pupils enjoy learning and increasingly reflect on their own progress using the success criteria that teachers make clear at the start of lessons. These criteria are too broad at times, however. The school, rightly, has plans in hand to split them into smaller steps to help teachers refine their oral feedback and marking, to provide pupils with a clearer idea of how to improve. The well-qualified teaching assistants are extremely effective in providing intensive support programmes, which help pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, to make good progress. The school's analysis shows a clear link between pupils' attendance and their rate of progress and the school works ceaselessly to encourage full attendance, especially by children from Traveller communities.

Pupils behave well. In class and in the playground pupils treat each other with respect and fairness. Pupils say they feel safe and secure in school and free from bullying or harassment.

The curriculum is imaginatively designed and good links across subjects sustain pupils' enthusiasm and provide ample opportunities for them to practise and consolidate their literacy, numeracy and computer skills. Wide-ranging additional activities support their learning and personal development. Safeguarding and care procedures are outstanding.

The headway made on many fronts over recent years indicates a good capacity for further improvement. Key staff and governors have a firm grasp of priorities through well-established self-evaluation procedures. Almost all staff, including teaching assistants, have specific management responsibilities and carry these out effectively. There is a strong team spirit across the school and staff feel valued.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Help pupils, particularly boys, in Key Stage 2 to make faster progress and reach higher standards in writing by:
 - sustaining the current emphasis on helping pupils understand the elements of good-quality writing
 - capitalising on pupils' good skills in reading by encouraging them to note how authors engage their audience, and to use similar techniques in their own written work.
- Increase the proportion of outstanding lessons, building on the good classroom practice that has already been developed by:
 - refining the way success criteria are devised and explained to pupils, so they have a more secure basis on which to evaluate their own work
 - improving the consistency of written feedback to pupils by including more specific points for improvement.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

As children start in the Reception class, their language, number and social skills are broadly typical of most four-year-olds. They make good headway in these key areas and, as they enter Year 1, pupils' attainment is securely within the levels expected. A successful drive to accelerate achievement has led to better progress through Key Stage 1 and above-average standards by Year 2. Increased progress through Key Stage 2 has been harder won, due to the above-average turnover of pupils and previous levels of absenteeism. A relentless drive to improve attendance levels has been successful and the school's meticulous tracking of achievement across these year groups shows that the large majority are now making good progress. In recent years Year 6 pupils reached broadly average standards, but pupils in the current Year 5 and Year 6 are on course to exceed average levels. Their attainment in reading is already high with almost 70% exceeding the expected levels. Pupils, particularly boys, do much better in reading than in writing, although efforts to narrow this gap are beginning to bear fruit. The progress of pupils from Traveller communities is directly related to their levels of attendance. Indeed, a few of these pupils who attend regularly are making exceptionally good progress.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and keep healthy. Pupils understand the difference between bullying and the occasional squabble. They say that bullying is very rare and is dealt with well when it does happen. Pupils take part eagerly in a wide range of sporting activities. Through membership of the school council, acting as peer mediators and taking other responsibilities, pupils make a strong contribution to school life. For example, a recent survey by Year 6 pupils resulted in a whole-school review of after-school clubs. Pupils' spiritual development is evident in their expressive artwork and in some older pupils' writing. Following their study of different cultural

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beliefs and myths about creation, for example, pupils wrote their own psalms. On boy in Year 5 wrote:

Lord you are the one who created us

You filled us with your love and protected us from evil

I will not last forever, some day I will perish

But I know your love will always be with me

Learning French, links with a school in the Gambia and environmental projects heighten pupils' global awareness. The school acknowledges that pupils' insights into cultural diversity within the UK are more limited. Through visits and entrepreneurial activities, pupils gain awareness of the world of work. Their ability to work independently and cooperatively, together with secure and improving basic skills, provide a good foundation for secondary education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers establish very positive relationships with pupils and most lessons move at a brisk pace. Classroom displays are attractive, stimulating and supportive. They abound

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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with prompts for learning, for example how to structure a story. Pupils are keen to do well and are developing good learning strategies. They sensibly discuss ideas with partners and in groups and routinely use computers for research and to record and present their work. Teachers encourage pupils to evaluate one another's work. For example, after listening to a pupil read out her attempt at a complex sentence, 'Suddenly, out of the dark, watery depth, a tip of a beautiful flower appeared', her classmates made sensible and sensitive comments.

The curriculum provides a good range of stimulating experiences which engage pupils, both in lessons and during extra activities. Art and design, and information and communication technology (ICT) feature strongly. Teachers introduce new topics by asking pupils to recall what they know, what they would like to find out and to suggest ways forward. The consistent use of the sequence 'entry point, knowledge harvest, big picture, research ideas, what we found out' promotes pupils' independence and pride in their work. This was evident in Year 3, for example, as pupils learnt about rain forests and in the older pupils' work centred on air transport. Class work is modified to meet the needs of different groups, such as those who need additional support in reading and presenting their work.

A strong commitment to ensuring equal opportunities is reflected in an extensive range of additional support for individuals and small groups. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is very well organised. Teaching assistants play a major part in providing finely tuned support in helping pupils to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. The family liaison team provides a daily contact point for the most vulnerable pupils and parents value this greatly. The well-used nurture room provides excellent support for pupils with emotional and behavioural problems, increasing their personal skills and self-esteem. One parent commented, 'Burstow School has gone above and beyond to help my son and could not have done more'; another said, 'My son's attitude has turned around 100%.' The expertise of outside agencies is also drawn on effectively, for example to support pupils from Traveller communities. The breakfast club and after-school 'learning zone' provide safe havens and enjoyable activities for those attending.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has a caring ethos where all pupils are valued and included. Senior leaders

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have a clear focus and raising standards and use tracking data to identify strengths and priorities for improvement. They work highly effectively with external partners, such as the local authority, to monitor the quality of teaching, share effective methods and address weaknesses. This has led to greater consistency in teaching, more effective learning and better progress. As a result, standards are rising. Governors are increasingly involved in reviewing the school's provision and pupils' performance, visiting the school regularly to gain first-hand information. This enables them ask pertinent questions and hold the school to account. Every effort is made to engage parents. High-quality guidance and newsletters, together with an informative and user-friendly website, contribute to this. Despite these endeavours, the school acknowledges that parents could play a more active role in decision-making. Community cohesion is promoted successfully and the school does much to encourage harmony in the locality and promote pupils' understanding of global issues. However, there is scope for a more systematic approach to developing broader opportunities to engage with different communities within the UK. Safeguarding procedures are outstanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress as a result of confident teaching. Work is well matched to the stage of children's development. Children are happy and actively engaged because staff have established a welcoming and stimulating learning environment. A good balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities means that children are developing good levels of independence and confidence in expressing personal

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preferences. Behaviour is excellent because expectations are high and because children find activities absorbing. Staff take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and to extend their vocabulary and to develop their confidence in speaking. The systematic teaching of letters and sounds provides a good basis for subsequent skills in reading and writing. Ongoing activities, such as sorting games and the use of construction apparatus, extend children's counting skills and support their understanding of shape and space. Imaginative use of the role play area, for example to replicate a pirate ship, promotes children's social, language and creative development. The outdoor area is currently not used to its full potential to further enhance children's interest and engagement and to promote their independence and physical development.

There is a shared vision of the aims and roles within the Reception class which means adults work effectively as a team and relationships are very good. Recent initiatives have been successful in enhancing parents' understanding of their children's learning and how they can support their progress out of school. Assessment records enable staff to keep a sharp eye on how individual children are doing and compare their attainment to national trends.

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 large majority of questionnaires were positive in their views of the school. All but one parent felt their children enjoyed school. A very small minority of written comments expressed concerns about how behaviour is managed. The inspection found no evidence to support this. Indeed, relationships across the school are very good. A strength of the teaching is in the skilful management of behaviour, which enables all pupils to sustain their attention without disruption. A few parents raised concerns about communication between parents and senior managers. These were followed up by the inspectors, who came to the view that the engagement with parents was good overall.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burstow 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 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 245 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	51	59	31	36	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	61	28	33	4	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	51	40	47	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	51	37	43	5	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	43	50	38	44	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	45	44	51	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	46	53	35	41	4	4	1	1
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)	36	42	42	49	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	44	44	51	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	41	36	42	9	10	4	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	43	43	50	1	1	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	44	51	37	43	3	2	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	48	56	36	42	1	1	1	1

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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.



26th November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burstow Primary School, Horley, RH6 9PT

Thank you for making my colleagues and me welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you that it is a good school and saw for ourselves how much you enjoy life at Burstow. Teachers are making great efforts to help you improve your writing skills. We saw, from your work in lessons and in your books, that this is working. Most of you read very well and we have suggested that teachers ask you to spot the way writers engage their readers and try the same strategies in your own writing. Teachers often ask you to comment on your own and one another's work. This is great because it helps you to see how much you have achieved and exactly what you need to do to get even better. We think that teachers could break down the success criteria into smaller steps and use them more often when they mark your work.

We were impressed by the range of extra activities the school provides. Many of you benefit from the extra support you receive in class and from working outside lessons with the teaching assistants. They do a great job. We loved your artwork and it was good to see how you use computers for research and to present your work. You clearly enjoy sport and you understand how exercise can contribute to health and fitness.

It was interesting to find out what the school council had achieved last year and we know the adults appreciate the many other ways that pupils help the school run smoothly. For example, the peer mediators do a great job during breaktimes. You help one another out in other ways too. For example, during an ICT lesson one girl described the boy next to her as 'my little helper'! All the adults work hard to help you and we are sure you will continue to do your best and get the most out of all the school has to offer.

We wish to all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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