



Burwash CofE School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114492
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 289935
Inspection date 23 January 2007
Reporting inspector Faysal Mikdadi

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Hill
School category	Voluntary controlled		Burwash
Age range of pupils	4-11		TN19 7DZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01435 882440
Number on roll (school)	139	Fax number	01435 883020
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	John Barkshire
		Headteacher	Deborah Gilbert
Date of previous school inspection	18 February 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burwash is a small Church of England school. Almost all pupils are White British and all pupils have English as their first language. Attainment on entry is above average. The number of children with learning difficulties and disabilities is below the national average. There is a privately run pre-school on site.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Burwash Church of England Primary is a good school with many outstanding features. Pupils thrive in a happy, caring, warm, supportive and safe environment. One parent speaks for others in saying that this is a school that 'not only develops educational abilities but shows children how to be confident, caring and how to value other people'. This success starts as soon as children join the Reception year, during which they make very good progress.

There are many reasons for the school's success with its pupils. Amongst these is the excellent leadership of the headteacher. She has succeeded in ensuring outstanding leadership and management by other key persons, which in turn has ensured that pupils receive excellent care and guidance to help them improve. Everyone at the school as well as all governors are agreed on the school's vision for improving standards. The result has been pupils' excellent personal development. The pupils themselves speak highly of their school. Their excellent behaviour is the result of the outstanding relationships formed amongst a strong school community. They are very happy with the enrichment activities available to them and participation rates are so high that occasionally pupils have to go on a waiting list before being able to take part.

Because the school has established very effective assessment strategies, weaknesses are identified early and effectively dealt with. Along with this, the school has put in place an effective monitoring programme which allows it to spot areas for improvement. For example, boys' reading and writing were identified as weaknesses last year. The result has been a significant improvement in reading. Boys' writing is still a relative weakness which the school is working to improve further.

The school is well placed to bring further improvement; its development agenda has paid off, with the 2006 results at the end of Year 6 improving significantly, especially in English. Current data show that the school is set to achieve its ambitious targets for 2007. Consistently good teaching and learning and an outstanding curriculum result in pupils' good achievement and have helped to improve standards, which are now well above what would be expected nationally.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve boys' writing skills so that these are in line with the high standards in writing achieved by girls.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils achieve well because of the consistently good teaching and the excellent support that they get. The children enter the Reception year with skills that are above average. By the end of the year they have made very good progress and have exceeded the early learning goals for children for this age because their teachers give them many opportunities to take part in learning through first-hand experiences. The very good

progress that they make is also helped by the excellent links that the school has with the on-site pre school class. Both the school and the children are ready for each other by the time that pupils enter the Reception year.

The very good progress that the children make in Reception continues to be built on successfully through Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, pupils' skills improve much in reading and mathematics and, to a lesser extent, in writing, although girls do significantly better than boys in this area. Standards are now well above average, with the 2006 results showing a significant improvement on 2005 in all areas, including writing.

The 2006 Year 6 test results improved on 2005, especially in English where the school's strategies to improve writing had paid off, although boys' performance was still lower than that of the girls. Current standards are above average, with boys beginning to catch up with girls. The school's ambitious targets for 2007 look likely to be achieved.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make equally good progress mainly because of the very good support that they receive and because of the effective and rigorous monitoring of their work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The pupils' vision statement hopes that 'there is a safe and warm feeling in the school and everyone is treated equally and a love of learning is encouraged'. The school's success is clear as the pupils say that they would not want to go anywhere else and that they feel safe because any concerns that they have are sorted out quickly and effectively. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of the warm and caring ethos of the school and because children feel valued. The quality of teaching and the stimulating curriculum mean pupils come to school eagerly and are motivated by their lessons. They understand very well how to keep healthy by eating well, exercising regularly and using medicines safely. Pupils have a strong connection with the local community through church events and charity functions. They take their responsibilities in school seriously, particularly the care that they show towards one another. The very good personal, academic and social skills programmes mean pupils are well prepared for the future. Their behaviour is excellent.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school tasks staff with being 'inspirational and fun loving in our approach'. Pupils' achievements are very good because this is done so well. Resources are used well to support learning, such as tasting, smelling and feeling exotic fruits before considering words that describe these sensations. Planning addresses the needs of pupils of the full range of ability, supporting those who find learning difficult and challenging those

who show great talent. Consequently, pupils make very good progress. Pupils are willing to risk trying out new things because relationships are warm and endeavour is rewarded, even if it is not always successful. Within lessons pupils are given good feedback which helps them improve their work. Probing questions prompt pupils to think deeply and they are given good time to organise their thoughts. Teaching assistants make a good contribution to learning but sometimes their skills are not fully exploited in whole-class sessions. In the Reception year, teaching is very good, with children being given many opportunities for first-hand experience.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils very well; as one parent commented, 'exactly the right approach for my child's needs'. Good children's literature provides excellent starting points for much learning, including investigations, counting, writing and role-play. The youngest children, including those in the Reception year, benefit from a rich curriculum, which includes adult-led and explorative learning. They relish the real experiences they have such as testing their packaging to protect eggs.

Whole-school themes and scrupulous planning ensure pupils do not repeat work unnecessarily. Lessons are brought alive by the visits and visitors to school. Excellent multicultural provision supports pupils in respecting the diversity found in art, music, literature and food. This is reflected in the school's success in achieving the Artsmark gold award twice. The study of the local area is particularly strong. Pupils have a very good understanding of safe practices, partly through input from local police, nursing and fire services.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils, parents, teachers and governors speak very highly of the school's strong community ethos, which provides a warm, happy, safe and healthy environment for the children. This is amply exemplified by one comment which is typical of what most parents say: 'The children genuinely care for each other and there is a real sense of community both in school and out of school because of the relationships formed by the children and the parents'.

The excellent care that the school takes of its pupils helps them to make very good progress whilst ensuring that children are happy. Another parent speaks for many when she says that she has been 'amazed by the progress made by my daughter with her reading and writing. She comes home every day happy'. Child protection procedures are well established and all statutory checks are properly in place. Because the school keeps very close links with the on-site pre-school class, children are very well prepared for coming into school and parents speak very highly of the induction programme for new pupils. All pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive effective support which enables them to make as good progress as their peers. Assessment procedures are comprehensive, with pupils being given clear guidance on how to improve their work further. Where weaknesses are diagnosed, such as boys' writing, the school puts

on successful strategies to help make improvements. As a result, pupils themselves know their own strengths and weaknesses and respond well to efforts to improve their performance further.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher's excellent leadership has had a significant impact on improving standards over the last three years. Parents speak highly of the work that she has done, with one parent giving a typical comment when he says that the headteacher's strongest point is that 'she listens to pupils and parents'. Another parent says that she 'has created an organisation that is well governed and led, clear in its mission and places its children at the centre of its strategy'. The headteacher, senior team, teachers, governors and parents work closely together to provide the children with the opportunities that they need to achieve their potential within a happy and safe environment. The result is that they work very effectively as a team. This is one reason why results have improved so much over the last three years, with 2006 being a particularly successful year, especially in English, which had been recognised as an area for improvement.

The school's monitoring and evaluation programme has been effective in identifying where improvement is most needed. The monitoring is a team effort, with senior staff as well as subject leaders and governors heavily involved in carrying it out. Governors take part in a highly successful lesson observation programme, the results of which have a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching even further.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	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 the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school. We agree with your positive views of the school.

The following are some of the things that make your school as good as it is:

- Because of the excellent way that your headteacher leads your school, you study in a safe, caring and happy place.
- You make very good progress and your work has improved a lot over the last year, especially in English.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you have very good relationships with each other and with the adults around the school.
- Your teachers consistently teach well and take excellent care of you.
- You parents are very pleased with the way that the school cares for you and with the way that your teachers help you to do so well.

We asked your school to improve the following:

- Improve boys' writing so that boys write as well as the girls do. We are sure that the school will find ways of doing this because of the way that it worked with you to improve English results so much in 2006.

Once more, thank you very much for such an enjoyable visit. We wish you the very best for the future.