

Burwell Village College (Primary)

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110758
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	378160
Inspection dates	26–27 January 2012
Lead inspector	Vivienne McTiffen

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	421
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lincoln Swann
Headteacher	Nicholas Smith
Date of previous school inspection	29 January 2009
School address	The Causeway Burwell Cambridge CB25 0DU
Telephone number	01638 613103
Fax number	01638 742240
Email address	office@burwellvillage.cambs.sch.uk

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Vivienne McTiffen

Additional inspector

Raymond Biglin

Additional inspector

Mary Hinds

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 22 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 14 teachers, and attended two assemblies. They sampled pupils' work and listened to pupils read. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, governors and staff. Inspectors spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at development plans, information on pupils' attainment and progress, monitoring systems and safeguarding documentation. They analysed responses to questionnaires from 188 parents and carers, 52 staff and 104 pupils.

Information about the school

The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. A very small number are from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The number of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is average.

The school meets the current government floor standards. There have been significant changes to the teaching staff since the last inspection. Over half the classes are taught by more than one teacher. In 2010 two assistant headteacher posts were amalgamated to create the deputy headteacher post.

The school has local authority 'village college' status and shares its site with a range of community services. There is a privately-run pre-school. This is subject to a separate inspection as it is not managed by the governing body.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This satisfactory school provides an acceptable level of education for its pupils. Since the last inspection there have been significant staff changes and a dip in achievement, but recent results show this is on the rise due to a concerted effort by the school's leadership team and staff.
- Pupils do well in reading because of regular reading sessions and extra support for those who need it. They are keen to read and enjoy the wide range of books in school. They like talking about stories and show an interest in plots and characters.
- Recent re-organisation allows Year 6 pupils to work in ability groups to improve attainment in English and mathematics but it is too early to see the effect. In all age groups, pupils do not use writing and mathematical skills enough in other subjects.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Staff work well together, especially those who share the teaching of the same class. They have positive relationships with pupils and manage them well. Marking does not always give pupils sufficient help to improve and sometimes work is not well enough matched to ability.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Pupils say they are happy at school. They are polite and eager to learn. They show tolerance towards those who have difficulties in learning or behaving well. Movement around this large school is well organised and orderly.
- The school staff know pupils and their individual needs well. Systems for checking pupils' progress are methodical. The quality of teaching is monitored in a variety of ways but not all subject leaders have a focus on maintaining consistency and raising pupils' achievement.
- Improvements to outdoor areas since the last inspection provide greater

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opportunities to enhance and extend the curriculum for children in the Reception classes.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2013, raise achievement in writing and mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and for a wider range of purposes in English and other subjects
 - giving pupils more problem solving and investigative work and a wider range of chances to apply their mathematical skills.

- Improve the quality of teaching to be good or better by:
 - ensuring teachers make good use of assessment information so work is consistently well matched to ability, especially for more able pupils
 - creating a consistent approach to marking so pupils know how well they are doing and how to improve.

- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - involving all subject leaders in rigorous monitoring of the quality of teaching that promotes consistency and is clearly linked to pupils' achievement.

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Achievement is satisfactory. Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel their children make good progress in developing communication, reading, writing and mathematics skills. The inspection found that pupils make good progress in reading, but not enough make good progress in writing and mathematics. Although attainment for Year 6 pupils in 2011 reached higher levels than in the previous two years, inspectors found that pupils make satisfactory progress over time and in all year groups across the school.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Additional support, often from teaching assistants, helps them to make small steps towards their learning goals. Those with behavioural difficulties develop positive attitudes towards learning. They build strong relationships with staff and show improvement over time as they conform to the school's expectations. Newcomers

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whose first language is not English settle quickly. The school provides effective extra help which allows them to understand their learning and make steady gains in acquiring English. Those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and the very small number from the Traveller community make satisfactory progress. The school monitors how well they are doing and helps them to improve, often through booster groups. Children in the Reception classes make satisfactory progress so that, by the time they enter Year 1, they reach average levels.

Attainment in English and mathematics is average. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is above average and it is rising in the junior classes. Pupils enjoy reading and confidently use a range of skills to help them read fluently. Regular learning about sounds and letters and guided reading groups contribute to pupils' success. They develop communication and social skills well, often sharing ideas with each other. Pupils write for a range of purposes but they say they would like longer to write, especially imaginatively. In mathematics, they enjoy using their skills. During the inspection, in a buzz of activity, they applied communication, thinking, and mathematical skills effectively, collecting data to represent in pie charts. They confidently collated the information and worked out proportions. Because of activities like this, many pupils say mathematics is their favourite subject but opportunities for problem solving and investigative work are variable between classes.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers who returned questionnaires feel their child is taught well but this is not consistent with inspection findings. Teaching is satisfactory, shown by pupils' satisfactory achievement. While some lessons are good or better, there is not the level of consistency needed to speed up pupils' progress. The best learning happens in classes where teachers use assessment information accurately to match work to their abilities. For example, in a literacy lesson, staff had high expectations of what pupils could achieve, based upon previous learning. More able pupils used punctuation and wrote at length whilst less able pupils worked with a teaching assistant to form sentences together. In this lesson, pupils made good progress because of the right level of challenge. This is not always the case in all lessons, so some pupils, especially the more able, are not doing as well as they can. Many say they find the work too easy and would like more challenge.

Teachers are adept at asking questions to extend thinking. They praise effort and pick up misconceptions during lessons. They give positive feedback and ask pupils to judge how well they are learning for themselves. Marking in books usually tells pupils how well they have done but does not always indicate how to improve. As a result, pupils are not always clear about what they are working towards or how to do better.

Teachers plan lessons together. This ensures continuity between classes and for those which are taught by more than one teacher. Subjects are linked together in topics to help pupils make sense of their learning. For example, whilst learning about

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the Second World War or the rainforest, pupils gather information from books and write descriptively. These links across the curriculum consolidate skills and promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding but there are not enough planned opportunities for pupils to write and use mathematics in other subjects. The teaching of reading is well organised through regular daily sessions. In the Reception classes, exciting activities provide sufficient balance between tasks children choose for themselves and those that are adult led, both indoors and outside. Staff help children to be independent and ensure their safety. There is a clear focus on developing literacy and numeracy skills in preparation for children's move to Year 1.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' good behaviour makes a very positive contribution to the smooth running of this well-ordered and safe school. Attendance is well above average. Very few pupils are persistently absent or arrive late. Pupils are keen to learn and respond very well to their teachers and school staff. They concentrate on their work and often use resources outside classrooms with minimal supervision. They are polite and talk about their work enthusiastically. They accept roles of responsibility, which they say they enjoy, and take part in the school council and whole school events very willingly. Older pupils look after younger ones and all value their friendships. They are very appreciative of each other's efforts and pay full attention during assemblies when others perform. Pupils show good moral understanding. They know the difference between right and wrong and say they understand why good behaviour is important because it is made clear to them by the school. Although parents and carers expressed some concerns over disruptive behaviour in lessons, inspectors agreed with the headteacher, that those pupils with behavioural difficulties respond very well to the school's systems. He and his staff build very positive relationships with these pupils, enabling them to become fully involved in class activities and make improvements over time. As a result, disruptive incidents seldom occur and incidents of bullying of any type are rare. The school takes any incidents very seriously and ensures they are stringently recorded, typified by one parent's comment, 'Bullying and poor behaviour is something the school has taken seriously and will not tolerate.'

Pupils say they feel safe and have confidence in the school's level of care and support. They feel the school's systems for maintaining good behaviour and safety work. The curriculum promotes their understanding of unsafe situations well through science, ICT and personal and social education lessons. As a result, they draw on examples and explain how to keep themselves and others safe. Nearly all parents and carers who returned questionnaires agree their child feels safe at school.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has created a dedicated leadership team whose focus is on maintaining consistency, especially in light of staff changes and fluctuations, and raising achievement. They are keen to sustain the recent upward trend in attainment and produce ambitious development plans. This leads to regular monitoring of the quality of teaching, aiding staff's professional development. However, not all subject

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leaders are involved in rigorous monitoring. This means some lack an overview of pupils' achievement and do not know if teaching is consistently good enough in their particular subjects or aspects. Governors are supportive and aware of strengths and areas for development. They are working on ways to monitor more rigorously and systematically the effectiveness of the school's work. The current focus on improving mathematics has led to staffing and class re-organisation and additional resources. These strategies, together with improvements in reading, indicate the school is in a suitable position to continue improving.

Leaders and managers ensure a broad curriculum which generally meets pupils' needs and prepares them suitably for the next stage of education. It positively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, so they acquire the personal qualities needed to work together successfully and to share an understanding of others. Participation in performances, trips and sports activities, some provided by local facilities on site, enhances the curriculum and makes a positive contribution to pupils' social development. The 'Around the World in 80 Days' whole-school project encourages pupils to write to others but leaders and managers have not focused sufficiently enough on promoting writing and mathematics across the curriculum.

Leaders and managers strongly promote equality and there is little variation in the achievement of various groups, but not all pupils are reaching their full potential. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern. Staff receive the required training in child protection and vetting procedures are in place. The school works well with parents and carers and there are clear channels of communication. Parents and carers feel the school helps them to support their children's learning and those spoken to value the chance to be involved, especially in the reading recovery programme.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



30 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burwell Village College (Primary), Cambridge, CB25 0DU

Thank you for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed listening to your views about the school and seeing you at work in lessons. We were impressed by the way you all get on well together in your large school. You behave well and have positive attitudes towards each other and your learning. Your attendance is very good.

You are making satisfactory progress but we think you could do even better. We have asked the school to make sure teachers give you work that is just right, not too hard and not too easy. We have asked them to make sure you know how well you are doing and what you can do to improve. You do well in reading but some of you told us you would like to write and use your mathematical skills more. So we have asked the school to make sure you have more opportunities to do this in English, mathematics and other subjects. There are lots of teachers in your school so we have asked that all leaders and managers check that everybody is working in the same way to help you all to improve.

We hope the things we have asked the school to do will help you to make the best possible progress. All of you can help by continuing to behave well and paying full attention in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Vivienne McTiffen
Lead inspector

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