

Burwash Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114492
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	378866
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	149
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jan McKeever
Headteacher	Debbie Gilbert
Date of previous school inspection	23 January 2007
School address	School Hill Burwash East Sussex TN19 7DZ
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Information about the school

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They observed 10 lessons and eight teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher, other staff with leadership responsibilities, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school's self-evaluation, the school improvement plan, pupils' progress records and the safeguarding policies and procedures. Questionnaires from 66 parents and carers were received and analysed along with those from staff and pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively assessment procedures and the curriculum support pupils' progress.
- The impact of the work of subject leaders on school improvement.

Information about the school

Burwash is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Provision is made for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class. The school has gained a number of national accreditations including the Activemark, Geography Mark Gold, Eco School awards and Healthy Schools status. In April 2011, the headteacher began a year's secondment to a local primary school for two days a week during which time Burwash is led by the assistant headteacher.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Burwash is an outstanding school. Its pupils are great ambassadors for their school of which they, staff, governors, parents and carers are justifiably very proud. There is a great sense of belonging and unity within the school and the local community and pupils clearly live up to their self-chosen motto of 'Caring Children Loving Learning'. At the heart of the school's success is the very strong teamwork and commitment by all staff to meeting the academic and personal needs and aspirations of every single pupil. Pupils are well-rounded individuals who really enjoy learning and are happy, confident and excited by all their experiences at school. This is reflected in their above average attendance. Outstanding teaching and a rich, vibrant and innovative curriculum inspire and motivate pupils to become independent and resourceful learners. By the time pupils leave the school, attainment is high and pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve exceptionally well.

The school works exceptionally well with its parents and carers. Outstanding partnerships with other schools and organisations are well established, enrich the curriculum and contribute significantly to pupils' well-being and learning opportunities. The inclusive and Christian ethos of the school, and the well-established links with the neighbouring church, make a very positive contribution to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral and social development and they have a well-defined understanding of Christian values. Cultural development is good. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures through the curriculum, however, they have limited direct experience of them. The school has links with a school in Malawi and has worked with schools in a different context in this country. However, leaders have correctly identified that its work on the national and global aspects of community cohesion is less well developed than the strengths of its work in the school and local community.

The headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders and governors work closely together, and extremely effectively, to accurately evaluate the strengths and areas for development in the school and drive forward improvement. There is no complacency. The relentless drive and commitment of the highly effective, outstanding, leadership of the headteacher ensures that all pupils have the very best learning experiences. Since the previous inspection, the school's overall effectiveness has improved from good to outstanding. Boys' writing skills have improved and are in line with the high standards in writing achieved by girls, which was the area to improve at the last inspection. High expectations, challenging targets and a

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commitment to teachers' continuing professional development have raised the quality of teaching to outstanding. These consistent improvements demonstrate that there is an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

Many parental views were summed up by one in the comment, 'I am confident and secure that my children attend an academically successful, caring, nurturing, happy school where a love of learning will stay with them into adulthood.'

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Enhance pupils' cultural development and help them understand more fully the diversity of British society by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to experience direct contact with those from other communities and faiths
 - extending the school's work on the global and national aspects of community cohesion.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils appreciate the benefits and advantages of a small school community. One said, 'One of the best things about the school is that we all know each other, we're all friends and it feels like you're at home.' Pupils feel extremely safe and secure and say they can always talk to an adult if there is anything they are worried about. Behaviour is good and pupils have a good understanding of the need for regular exercise and a healthy balanced diet to keep fit and well, which is recognised by the Healthy Schools accreditation and the Activemark award. A very small number of pupils find it difficult to moderate their own behaviour appropriately and pupils could do more to promote healthy eating choices, which is why these aspects are good rather than outstanding. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school and local community. They enjoy their responsibilities and leadership roles around the school and take them seriously. They know they have a strong voice in the school and that their ideas and suggestions are highly valued. They take responsibility for their learning through their involvement in planning topics and setting themselves challenges in their work.

Children start school with attainment that is generally at the expected levels for their age. By the time they leave, attainment is high. Pupils really enjoy learning and this, along with their very positive attitudes, good behaviour and good interaction with each other, makes an important contribution to their outstanding progress and achievement. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 worked extremely well in pairs to learn how to use four figure and six figure grid references in preparation for creating their own maps. Learning was memorable and relevant because it was prompted by a visit to Ashdown Forest the previous week. From photographs taken on the trip they were able to identify a range of different geographical features to use in the creation of their own maps and made excellent progress in their geographical skills.

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This high level of excellence in geography is reflected in the Geography Mark Gold award. Written work of an exceptionally high standard was evident in a lesson where pupils were writing autobiographies and as they shared their writing with the class, demonstrated excellent reading skills, reading aloud with great fluency and expression. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 enjoyed the opportunity to investigate and collect their own data on tally grids to draw bar charts, and their good behaviour and mature attitudes helped them to focus extremely well on the task, make very good progress and develop their excellent mathematical understanding. Resources and tasks are adapted and modified very effectively to ensure that, along with skilled and sensitive support from teaching assistants, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also achieve extremely well from their various starting points. Pupils’ excellent basic skills and personal skills prepare them exceptionally well for the next stage of their education.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The headteacher and staff have been resolute in their work to provide an excellent, themed and creative curriculum which best meets the needs of all the pupils. A parent of a child in Year 5 wrote, ‘Our child still comes home wide eyed with excitement about something she learned at school or the topic for the term.’ Learning is enhanced by many enrichment opportunities which broaden pupils’ interests and experiences very effectively, including an excellent range of clubs, visitors to school and trips.

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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Teaching is skilful, motivating and enthusiastic. All staff have excellent relationships with pupils. As a result, pupils learn exceptionally well because they feel valued and confident to try things out and express their own ideas. Excellent questioning by teachers makes pupils think and inspires and motivates them to develop curious and inquiring minds. Interesting and relevant whole school themes promote the sense of working together as a community and detailed and rigorous planning ensures progression in skills appropriate for all ages and abilities within the mixed-age classes. Comprehensive assessment procedures, including marking and feedback, have an excellent impact on learning because, not only do they give pupils useful information on how to improve, they also encourage them to reflect and evaluate their own progress and learning. Teachers use assessment information very effectively to inform planning and learning and also to evaluate the impact of their teaching.

The school environment is very welcoming, well-kept and cared for and excellent use is made of these grounds and the rural setting. The development and use of a host of different areas, including class gardens, a willow dome, a multi-sensory garden and a bird watching area, equip pupils with an impressive knowledge of trees and birds and the natural environment including issues that affect society as a whole such as sustainability and recycling, reflected in the Eco School award. Parents, carers and pupils agree that the school looks after them exceptionally well. The needs of vulnerable pupils are very well met and greatly enhanced by the excellent links with other agencies to provide well-targeted support and a nurture group run by trained teaching assistants. Transition procedures into school, through the key stages and into their secondary schools, are very effective and ensure excellent levels of support for pupils and their families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

There is a shared vision and outstanding ambition for the school that drive its improvement. There is a very strong sense of shared responsibility, consistency of approach and commitment among staff who work together very successfully as a team which is being sustained by the assistant headteacher. All staff share a goal of excellence and have high expectations for themselves and the pupils. Monitoring, self-evaluation and tracking of pupils' progress are rigorous and lead to a clear identification of what needs to be improved and well-targeted support. Subject leaders are highly effective as they have excellent subject knowledge as well as

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being skilled and influential leaders.

The highly inclusive ethos of the school ensures that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and develop as well-rounded individuals without fear of discrimination. Leaders have developed the school as a very cohesive community in which pupils show tolerance and respect towards others. One parent commented, 'Burwash school is an asset to the village. The headteacher leads the school in a very positive way and pupils benefit from the school's caring nature and community ethos.' Pupils learn about other cultures through the curriculum and through their study of other languages. The school has correctly identified the need for further development of pupils' understanding of the diversity of British society and the need to reach out beyond the school and local community to widen pupils' horizons. The governing body, along with staff, ensures that safeguarding procedures and policies are very well developed, known by all staff and applied across all aspects of the school's work. The school benefits from governors' range of expertise and skills. They clearly know the school very well, are involved in evaluating the effectiveness of the school and have taken a very significant role in helping to shape its direction and strategic planning.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
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	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get off to a flying start to their time in school. From starting points that are at expected levels for their ages, they achieve extremely well and meet or exceed the goals for all areas of their learning by the time they move into Year 1. There are very positive, trusting relationships with staff and as a result, children are happy, behave well, settle contentedly into the routines of the day and are extremely well cared for. Children have an excellent understanding of the need to keep themselves

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safe and healthy. For example, before eating their snacks they knew to wash their hands 'so we don't eat germs that will make us sick'. They play and learn very well together and make a very good contribution to the smooth running of the day. They hang up their own coats, store their book bags, register their names for a school meal or a packed lunch and are responsible for tidying away their activities. These activities very effectively help them to develop responsibility and independence. They enjoy writing because early skills are promoted very well and they are given clear purposes for communicating through writing. For example, they were very excited to respond to letters written by 'Percy the Park Keeper' to help him decide if summer had ended. They demonstrated excellent knowledge of using writing to communicate as well as very good knowledge and understanding of the world by identifying the features to indicate that autumn had arrived.

Outstanding leadership and management ensure that children's well-being and safeguarding procedures are given high priority and there are excellent links with parents and carers to ensure a very smooth transition into school. Regular assessments keep track of where children are and the next steps in their learning. There is an excellent balance of activities directed by adults and those where children can make their own choices, which they are confident and happy to do.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A higher than average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. The overwhelming majority agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps children safe. Most gave positive responses to all the other statements, which reflects the inspection judgement that the school engages outstandingly well with parents and carers. The main concerns from a few parents and carers were whether children are well prepared for the future and how well the school helps them to support children's learning. The inspection found that pupils are outstandingly well prepared for the future and that the school has many successful initiatives to help parents and carers support children's learning. These minor concerns were shared and discussed with the headteacher and governors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Burwash Church of England 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 66 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 149 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	49	74	15	23	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	77	13	20	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	22	33	39	59	3	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	42	29	44	5	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	52	26	39	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	28	42	31	47	4	6	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	30	45	32	48	3	5	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)	37	56	18	27	6	9	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	27	41	29	44	2	3	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	47	26	39	3	5	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	38	31	47	0	0	3	5
The school is led and managed effectively	41	62	19	29	2	3	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	41	62	22	33	2	3	1	2

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 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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and 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.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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 pupils' 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burwash Church of England Primary School, Burwash TN19 7DZ

I am writing to thank you for the lovely warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. What a lovely time we had with you. I am writing to thank you for being so friendly and polite and telling us what you thought about your school. You are right to enjoy coming to Burwash because it is an outstanding school. We agree with you and your parents and carers that your school is an exceptionally caring and safe place to be and this, as well as your excellent attitudes to learning and outstanding teaching, helps you make outstanding progress.

We were very impressed with the way you all get on so well together and the fact that you care for and respect each other in your work and play. Your school has improved since the last inspection because the headteacher, all the adults and the governors do an excellent job to make it better for you, and in return you work very hard. We were particularly impressed with the whole-school topics that teachers plan for you and how much you enjoy your learning. By the time you leave you are doing exceptionally well in English and mathematics.

There is one thing we would like the school to do to make it even better for you. We have asked them to give you more opportunities to meet pupils from different backgrounds to your own to help you understand more fully the diversity of British society and to have more links with schools in other countries.

Thank you again for all your help and being so interesting to talk to.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins
Lead inspector

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