

Burntwood School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101059
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	307578
Inspection dates	5–6 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Meena Wood HMI

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

Type of school	Comprehensive
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	11–18
Gender of pupils	Girls
Number on roll	
School	1715
6th form	340
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Helen Dennis-Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Dorfman
Date of previous school inspection	11 November 2002
School address	Burntwood Lane London SW17 0AQ
Telephone number	020 8946 6201
Fax number	020 8944 6592

Age group	11-18
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Burntwood School is a large school specialising in science. The school is a Partnership Promotion School and has achieved Healthy School Status. A higher proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals than in most schools. A significant proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups and the largest groups are Pakistani, Black Caribbean and Black African. About half of the pupils have a home language or languages other than English and the most common home languages spoken are Tamil, Urdu, and Polish. A low proportion of students have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Burntwood School is a satisfactory school. The senior management team, governors and the staff have worked hard to overcome the financial constraints and other challenges faced by the school during the past five years and to create an increasingly inclusive community where pupils of different backgrounds learn well together. The school is beginning to see the impact of some successful initiatives in relation to improving behaviour, attendance and pupils' progress. One parent said 'I feel Burntwood is improving greatly and my children are achieving well academically. All staff we have encountered are committed and very supportive.' However, a number of parents are unhappy with their lack of involvement with the school and their children's learning and inspectors agreed with this.

Most pupils arriving in school with average and above average attainment in Year 7, make the progress expected of them and achieve above average results by Year 11. Whilst progress is satisfactory overall, the rate of progress slows in Years 10 and 11. In the sixth form, pupils make good progress from their starting points in year 12 and attain GCE A-level results that are broadly within national averages. The majority of pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning. Attendance has improved and behaviour is mostly satisfactory. Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with pupils enthusiastically contributing to local communities through successful fund raising initiatives. Across the school, enjoyable extra curricular activities help pupils develop skills in the performing arts, music as well as physical sports and those girls who take advantage of these opportunities, leave school as well rounded individuals.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and they are good in the sixth form as most pupils are well motivated and keen to learn. In lessons where teachers plan structured activities in line with pupils' abilities, learning outcomes are good and pupils make good progress. Where there is insufficient planning and work is not well matched to pupils' needs, most pupils only make progress expected of them, while a minority of pupils misbehave and disrupt others' learning, while making little or no progress. The monitoring of outcomes by managers and governors is not sufficiently rigorous across the school and therefore not leading to consistent improvements in teaching, learning and behaviour.

Care guidance and support are satisfactory in the main school and good in the sixth form. Learning support across the school is not sufficiently well planned to enable pupils with learning disabilities and difficulties, and those of lower ability to fulfil their potential. Academic guidance is good in the sixth form with good careers advice. In the main school, teachers help pupils understand their levels but do not give pupils sufficiently focused information on where to improve and the monitoring of pupils' progress and learning towards their targets in lessons is inconsistent.

The leadership and management of the sixth form are good and satisfactory in the main school. All managers are committed to implementing the school priorities and work positively as a team to enable changes to take place. The school's capacity to improve is satisfactory and leadership capacity in the sixth form is good.

Effectiveness of the sixth form

Grade: 2

The school has an established and popular sixth form. Parents speak highly of the support education and guidance. One parent reported, 'My daughter has been encouraged to fulfil her

potential across a range of areas with teachers always prepared to go that extra mile.' Standards are broadly average and indicate that most pupils by Year 13 make good progress in relation to their GCSE results. Pupils are well supported in all areas of school life, and receive regular feedback on their progress. The curriculum is good. A wide range of GCE A-level courses are offered and this together with additional studies, including work experience, prepares pupils well for adult life. Teaching and learning are good and pupils' personal development is good. Pupils speak highly of the good advice and guidance they receive when considering opportunities for employment and for further and higher education. They are excellent role models for younger pupils and many spend time mentoring younger pupils, helping to raise their confidence and self-esteem. Pupils enjoy the sixth form and links with community and other schools is good. Most pupils stay on to complete their courses in Year 13 and progress to degree courses and higher education. The leadership of the sixth form encourages a sense of responsibility within the student body and pupils make a good contribution to the whole school and wider community, through assemblies and presentations and facilitating after school activities. For instance, by using the website as a tool to promote their work, sixth form pupils have recently won an award.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that governors, senior managers and staff monitor teaching, learning and behaviour more rigorously and consistently across the school.
- Improve progress and learning in Years 10 and 11.
- Ensure better communication channels for parents and pupils with the school.
- Develop more effective learning support for all pupils.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but with areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are above average. Pupils arrive in the school with prior attainment at national average and above and leave in Year 11 making the progress expected of them. In 2007, the school's unvalidated data shows an improving picture with pupils' progress on target as satisfactory. Pupils make outstanding progress between Years 7 and 9 in science and good progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' overall progress, especially in English, slows down significantly between Years 9 and 11 to well below national averages.

The school's monitoring has revealed that differences exist in the progress made by certain groups of pupils, with higher performing girls achieving better than those of lower ability and pupils of Pakistani heritage achieving less well than similar pupils in Year 11 nationally. The school is working towards raising the achievement and results for these groups of pupils. Results in Year 11 for pupils with five GCSEs are good and above national averages, however the trend over the last three years is not an improving one.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Personal development and well being are satisfactory, but with some good features. The majority of pupils enjoy attending school.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory and well developed through tutorials and citizenship lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to lead healthier lifestyles through their participation in sporting and other physical activities and most take advantage of the healthier menus available in school. Pupils make good contributions to the local community and the school and are active in raising money for a wide range of charitable causes. The school council has been successful in a bid to develop a wildlife garden linked to a local community hospital. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop skills that will help their future employment. For instance, Year 10 and 11 pupils act successfully as peer-mentors for younger pupils.

Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils interviewed said they felt safe. A number of parents however, expressed concerns about the behaviour of pupils, bullying and other incidents. One reported, 'I feel the school should be made safer and should demonstrate zero tolerance to bullying and racist behaviour.' There are examples of good behaviour in lessons where pupils demonstrate responsibility for their own and each other's learning. In a minority of lessons, pupils do not behave as well and disrupt the learning of others. Following a recent review there are now clearer guidelines for good behaviour which helps all pupils to know exactly what is expected of them in lessons, at change of lessons in corridors and around school. However, it is still too early to judge the full impact of this initiative. Year Coordinators are working hard at ensuring more effective monitoring of pupils' behaviour, including a more rigorous response to bullying and other serious incidents, as this is a major priority for the school. Exclusions, although still disproportionately higher for Black Caribbean girls, have reduced significantly this year.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Classes with mostly higher ability pupils are often well taught and pupils make good progress. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in these classes are usually good. The pupils tend to work hard and respond to high expectations with interest and drive. Teachers' expert knowledge of their subjects provides a strong base for answering pupils' queries with confidence and depth. However, there is too much inconsistency in the quality of learning across the school. Teaching of mixed ability and lower ability sets are not as well planned and where pupils' behaviour is not effectively managed, groups of disaffected girls disrupt their peers' learning.

In most lessons, teachers establish good relations with pupils and pupils respond well to the activities set. However, in some instances, a small minority of individuals showed rudeness and an unwillingness to focus on the task set. In those lessons where pupils make satisfactory or insufficient progress, tasks are not matched to the needs and abilities of pupils and there is

insufficient consolidation of knowledge and skills. Teachers do not often plan group and pair work effectively enough to encourage independent learning and reflective thought. Where available, interactive white boards are used well for interesting explanations to be shared with the pupils. Marking is often helpful with constructive comments for pupils on how to improve but this is inconsistent across all subjects.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

The curriculum is satisfactory. In Years 10 and 11, whilst pupils have a good range of academic courses, at present, few vocational courses are available which means the curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. Additional lessons after the end of the school day give pupils opportunities to increase the number of GCSE courses they can take. Video conferencing lessons enable Latin to be taken at GCSE. 'Themed days' take place each year where pupils study an aspect of a subject, such as a business studies challenge. No time has been allocated for movement between lessons across the very large school site. This has had an impact on the quality of learning outcomes, as too often, lessons start late giving teachers little opportunity at the end of sessions to review learning with pupils. The Information Communications Technology (ICT) curriculum has improved and a work related curriculum is developing in Years 10 and 11 in mathematics. Timetabling has resulted in pupils finishing school earlier than usual once a week. The school's extra-curricular courses and visits are very popular with the pupils, covering an exciting and diverse range of activities such as scuba diving, underwater photography, cheerleading and five-a-side football. The school and the pupils are rightly very proud of the successful chamber choirs and orchestra.

The school has made good use of its science specialist status in creating productive curriculum links with local schools and a university teaching hospital and in raising attainment in science for pupils in Year 9.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The pastoral system is well organised and effective in supporting pupils' personal development. Pupils with more complex social, emotional and behavioural needs are well supported. The school has had a greater focus this year on monitoring of unauthorised absence. Pupils' attendance is improving and is now satisfactory. Safeguarding procedures are of good quality and early identification of pupils requiring skilled support provided swiftly by external agencies. Health and safety and risk assessment procedures are in place.

The academic guidance given to pupils is satisfactory. Advice and guidance in Year 11 to pupils on next stages is good. Most pupils interviewed during the inspection could explain their targets, but were less clear as to what they needed to do in order to progress to the next level.

Monitoring of individual pupils' progress by teachers and managers is underdeveloped and information on pupils not used consistently to target support for individual pupils in lessons and help them to improve still further. Underachieving pupils can benefit from additional subject support outside of lessons in lunch times and after school. However, the timetabling of this support is not always well enough co-ordinated to enable girls to attend sessions in more than

one subject. Good assessment procedures and practice observed in ICT, geography, mathematics and science are not as yet used consistently across the school.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress, and are given additional help to improve literacy skills. There are a small number of learning support staff in this large school, but their role and function is not well enough defined to assist with teaching in lessons for pupils with a broader range of needs and abilities.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Grade for sixth form: 2

Leadership and management are satisfactory. At the last inspection the school was judged to be good. The current head has been in post since 2002 and has had to work with the challenges of a significant budget deficit and this has slowed down the progress made by the school in relation to the quality of its provision. In the last year, the school eradicated its budget deficit of five years with support from the local authority and this has resulted in improved financial management, budget setting and reduced on site maintenance costs. Governors have worked hard to put in place an appropriate action plan as financial delegation has not yet been restored to the school. In some aspects of school life, monitoring and evaluation by the governors have been less than rigorous, such as, for instance, assessing the impact of the school's equality scheme and the setting of some priorities in relation to recent financial surplus this year.

The senior leadership team have now rightly identified the areas for improvement for the coming year such as the implementation of the school's new behaviour policy, refurbishment and rebuilding of the school facilities, and greater emphasis on learning and consultation with pupils. The recently reorganised senior leadership team have very ably taken new initiatives forward and there are beginning to be positive signs of improvement resulting from their commitment.

Support systems for middle managers are well established through regular meetings with senior staff. However, managerial support for teachers in the classroom and around the school on the new behaviour strategies is too inconsistent.

Parents reported they would like to have better channels of communication with managers and governors and a greater involvement in decision making in the school.

Departmental self evaluations use pupil performance data effectively to report on underachieving groups, but managers do not analyse the impact of teaching on these pupils' progress and learning and do not consistently ensure teachers use data effectively in planning lessons that match all pupils' abilities. The school's self evaluation has not been sufficiently analytical in relation to its strengths and weaknesses, in particular, in relation to teaching and learning and personal development and well being. The school has been over generous in judging its teaching and pupils' behaviour to be good. Senior managers have yet to implement a rigorous and robust monitoring cycle to ensure consistency across the curriculum. The school has set challenging targets but has not reached the targets set in 2007 for GCSE and at the current rate of trajectory with the previous three year decline, appears unlikely to meet its target for 08. Participation targets for specialist subjects are good in science in Year 11 and post 16.

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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	16-19
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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?	3	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The attendance of learners	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
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?	3	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	2

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes	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

16 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Burntwood School, London, SW17 0AQ

Following our recent visit to inspect your school, I am now writing to let you know about our findings. We would like to thank you for your contributions to the inspection. Thank you in particular to those who gave up time to talk to us. We enjoyed sitting in your lessons, talking with you and looking at the good standards of your work. We observed that most of you are hard working and enjoy coming to school.

Your school is satisfactory and is an improving school. Most of you informed us that you feel safe in the school, enjoy coming to school and benefit from the good range of extra curricular activities the school has to offer. The progress that most of you have made this year is satisfactory and the standards you reach in examinations and course work in Years 9 and 11 have continued to be good. We were impressed by the sixth form where pupils contribute very well to the school community through mentoring younger pupils. The teaching we saw was satisfactory overall but we did see some good teaching where we observed the sound planning of lessons by your teachers, your motivation and keen attitudes to learning. Your behaviour around the school is satisfactory, but in some lessons we observed that students lacked concentration or did not understand what they were doing and disrupted the learning of others. A very tiny minority of pupils were seen to behave badly towards their teacher and others in lessons and around the school.

The school agrees with us that they need to improve:

- the quality of the lessons, your learning and behaviour through closer involvement of managers
- the progress you make in Years 10 and 11
- communication for parents and pupils with the school's managers and staff
- learning support for all pupils in lessons.

You can help by attending punctually and regularly, behaving with greater consideration towards others and concentrating better during lessons.

We hope that you will all do well in the future and, with the help of the school, realise your ambitions.

Yours sincerely,

Meena Wood Her Majesty's Inspector