

Burwell Village College (Primary)

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110758
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325212
Inspection dates	29–30 January 2009
Reporting inspector	John Francis

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	422
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Quentin Cook
Headteacher	Mr Nicholas Smith
Date of previous school inspection	2 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	The Causeway Burwell Cambridge Cambridgeshire CB25 0DX
Telephone number	01638 613103
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school and the only primary school with 'village college' status in the local authority. The school is in a rural area northeast of Cambridge and serves the village of Burwell and the surrounding district. The site also includes a range of additional community services. Almost all pupils are of White British background, although a small number of children are from Traveller families. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. Pupils' attainment on entry is broadly in line with that expected for their age. The school has achieved several awards in recent years, including The Basic Skills Quality Mark, the ACTIVEMARK Gold Award and FA Charter Mark for physical education, and the NAACEMark, the Healthy Schools Award and ICT Award for information and communication technology.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils achieve well. It has progressed well since its last inspection and has a good capacity to continue to develop. The effective leadership and clear direction provided by the headteacher and the leadership team, supported well by the governors, are key factors in driving this progress. While pupils achieve well academically, they also develop outstanding personal and social skills because of the excellent support and guidance in place. As a result, the school has an exceptionally high level of parental support and confidence. As one commented, 'Burwell Village College is a happy, safe place for my son to learn. He is treated as an individual and nurtured to a high standard'.

Test results over recent years have been above or well above average at both Year 2 and Year 6. Reasons for an unexpected fall in Year 6 results in 2008 were carefully analysed and the changes subsequently put in place have reversed this. As a result, pupils currently in Year 6 are already working at above or well above national expectations, particularly in reading and writing. Well-targeted support for those pupils who have specific learning difficulties, particularly in language skills, ensures they make good progress. Traveller children also achieve well because the good support they receive carefully matches the work to their needs. However, the school is not just about academic standards. There is a strong focus on all members of the school community, including pupils and staff, becoming life-long learners. The good curriculum benefits from specialist teaching in some subjects, adding further strengths to what the school provides. For example, outstanding music teaching has led to very high standards of singing. Pupils enjoy, and benefit from undertaking, practical and investigative activities in subjects such as science. The school is at the early stage of implementing a more creative curriculum approach intended to spread the positive impact of these types of activities to more subjects.

All staff share a strong commitment to emphasising the development of the whole pupil. This is the main reason why pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school's many awards for sporting achievement and health-related work acknowledge this commitment. Pupils are well behaved, polite and friendly and have exceptionally positive attitudes to school and each other. They show excellent social and moral development and have an increasingly good knowledge and understanding of wider cultural issues. Pupils and parents are very positive about the contribution made to this by events such as the 'International Week'. Through its excellent links, both locally and further afield, and as the hub of its own community, the school makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion in its widest sense.

Procedures to safeguard the pupils are securely in place and there are outstanding systems to ensure their health, welfare and safety. Excellent systems for tracking and recording pupils' progress are increasingly effective in involving all teachers. Teachers make good use of the information in these records to shape their planning and set pupils challenging targets for improvement. Consistently good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching involves pupils well in assessing their own progress and achievements. Informative marking encourages pupils and guides their progress.

The headteacher has engendered a strong culture of teamwork and high expectations. Parents recognise and appreciate his very visible presence around school and his personal approach to the pupils. The senior leaders have a good understanding of what is happening in school, giving them an accurate picture of strengths and weaknesses. Through their monitoring, governors

are well informed and knowledgeable and are able to provide rigorous challenge to the school's leaders.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children in the Early Years Foundation stage achieve well. They reach the levels expected by the time they move into Year 1 and, in areas such as language and communication and linking sounds and letters, they exceed these levels. Arrangements for children starting school are effective, with good liaison between parents and the staff. These are maintained so that they then enable a smooth transition from Reception into Year 1. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Excellent welfare provision, care and guidance lead to outstanding personal development. Children understand the expectations on them and, as a result, they are well behaved and confident. Relationships at all levels are good. The good curriculum has an effective balance between play-based activities that children select for themselves and adult-directed work. Good use is made of information and communication technology to enhance children's learning. Teaching is good. Classrooms are lively and bright, with a wide range of interesting activities, but the outdoor provision is much more limited. The outdoor area is too small to replicate many of the indoor activities that would enable children to flow freely between the two areas, thus limiting the range of learning activities available.

What the school should do to improve further

- Enhance the achievement of all pupils through a reorganised curriculum aimed at motivating all learners and creating opportunities for further challenge.
- Develop a suitable outdoor learning area to enhance the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress as they move through school. At the end of Year 2, they achieve above average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Test results at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above average for many years in English, mathematics and science. However, results in 2008 were lower and out of line with the school's own tracking and assessments. Careful analysis of these results showed that fewer than expected of the more able pupils had achieved the higher levels. Changes in approaches to teaching and learning have reversed this fall and pupils are once again achieving as well as they did in the past. With good support through detailed planning and well-targeted work by teaching assistants, Traveller children and those pupils who have specific, identified learning needs achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The high levels of respect seen among pupils reflect their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This contributes well to a strong school ethos and sense of community: something parents comment on very positively. Pupils are clear that, in this school, 'it is OK to be different'. The good behaviour and strong relationships found throughout the school, together with above average attendance, reflect pupils' outstanding enjoyment of school. Pupils work and play together exceptionally well, both in class and in the playground. Pupils feel very safe, free from any bullying or harassment and are confident that if they are

experiencing any problems there is always someone to whom they can turn. They have an excellent understanding of what they need to do to stay fit and healthy. This is reflected in their 'Healthy School' award and the take up of the many sporting activities available to them. Healthy choices at lunchtime and snacks at break time reflect their understanding of the healthy eating message. Pupils make an excellent contribution to the school community through, for example, their work as playground helpers or the school council, the latter of which enables them to have an active and influential voice in school. Pupils also have very strong links with other schools and the wider village community. With their excellent social skills, linked to their good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills, pupils are prepared well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good, and occasionally outstanding, teaching enables pupils to learn well. Where there are outstanding features, this is often in lessons where teachers use their very good subject knowledge and understanding to present activities in interesting, challenging and engaging ways. An example of this was an outstanding music lesson that produced high quality singing and great enthusiasm from the pupils. Many parents also commented on the high quality of music. Collaboration between teachers is a prominent feature, leading to detailed lesson planning within year groups. This planning is becoming more practically based and creative as the teachers develop a more thematic approach to learning. Teachers share the learning outcomes for the lesson with the pupils and then revisit these at the end of the lessons. This helps them to check on the progress made and involves pupils in assessing their own work and that of others. The effective use of technology, such as computers and interactive whiteboards, creates a high level of interest and helps pupils' learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Modifications to the curriculum are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Improved provision for information and communication technology has helped embed this subject into much of the work of the school. Personal, social and health education and the work in enhancing the social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) have given pupils very positive attitudes and helped them to form strong, supportive, relationships. Revised strategies for literacy and mathematics have been put in place. The adoption of a more thematic approach to learning is still being developed and hence is not yet fully embedded across the school. The provision for art and music is particularly strong, both in the curriculum and as part of the good extra-curricular programme. The choir, where there is great competition for places, illustrates this well. A good range of visits and visitors, along with the many extra-curricular clubs and sporting activities, enhances pupils' learning and makes a strong contribution to their social development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school has maintained the high quality of provision seen at the time of the last inspection. Robust procedures are in place to ensure pupils' health and safety, and child protection and

safeguarding policies all meet current requirements. All groups of pupils, including the most vulnerable, are cared for and supported very well. In the words of one parent, 'the school goes the extra mile' in supporting the emotional needs of the children and their families. Both pupils and parents value the headteacher's policy of regular, informal, meetings with groups of pupils, which help to build strong and confident relationships. As one pupil said, 'teachers help you not to be scared of school'. Academic guidance is equally strong. Pupils have a very clear view on how well they are doing, through detailed marking of their work and the setting of clear individual targets. Challenging whole-school targets promote good achievement at all levels. Pupils know what they need to do to reach them and are consistently involved in assessing their own progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong but sympathetic leadership and sets a clear direction to the work of the school. Parents comment extremely positively on the changes they see taking place. A knowledgeable and effective leadership team and a well-motivated governing body support this work well. The governing body has a good knowledge of its own community, is well informed about the school and is challenging in its pursuit of continuing improvement. Accurate and detailed evaluation provides leaders with a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and hence enables them to identify pertinent priorities for further improvement. Middle managers and subject leaders are enthusiastic and knowledgeable. They are developing their leadership skills well. The management of the special needs provision, and the support provided for those pupils with particular individual needs, is good. Through its many excellent and expanding outside links, and its understanding of the varied needs of its pupils and their families, the school makes an outstanding contribution to community cohesion.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

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/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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	2
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

2 February 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Burwell Village College Primary School, Burwell, CB5 0DX

Many of you will remember that Mrs Robinson, Mr Speakman and I visited your school a little while ago. It was lovely meeting you all and we felt so welcome in the way that all of you were keen to share your work and ideas. We have tried to reflect some of this in the report but this letter is just for you to tell you what we found out about your school.

Like you, we feel this is a good school and we can see that you do well in your work. We also liked all of the music in school, especially the singing in assembly. It was so good it sent shivers down our spines! All of the adults take excellent care of you and work hard to make your school an interesting place to come to. All of you make a good contribution to your school and work very hard to help others. You also told us that everyone in school gets on well and we could see this in the way you worked and played together. We were very impressed by how well all the children looked after one another. You carry out your jobs around school extremely well. You told us how much you enjoy school, work hard and try your best. We can see this in the work in your books and the displays around school. We agree with you that your teachers make your lessons interesting, and the way they use the interactive whiteboards really helps you to learn well. Mr Smith is a good headteacher who has made many changes that are helping the school to become even better.

To help you do even better we have asked the teachers to look at how they can plan to link subjects more through themes as they did during your International Week. This way, those of you who are good at learning can find new ways of challenging yourselves even more. We have also asked the school to look at ways of improving the outdoor area for the children in the Reception classes so they also have more opportunities to learn using different approaches.

We wish you well for the future and hope you continue to work hard and get even better.

John Francis

Lead inspector