

Burham Church of England Primary School

Bell Lane, Burham, Rochester, ME1 3SY

Inspection dates 2–3 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Pupils of all ages made good gains in skills and knowledge in 2014 as the school has ensured they make more rapid progress.
- Pupils now achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled and have special educational needs make similar good progress to others.
- Teaching is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers make learning fun and relevant, which captures pupils' interests and engages them.
- A good range of activities, including trips, visitors and after school clubs, enrich pupils' learning. These also make a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Marking and feedback give pupils a clear understanding of how to improve their work, which speeds their progress.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the Early Years Foundation Stage. The well-organised and welcoming classroom and outdoor area help children get a good start to their education.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and show respect to each other and adults. They behave well, feel safe and enjoy school.
- The headteacher makes sure that any weaknesses in teaching are addressed. Leaders, including governors, are taking effective action to improve teaching and achievement further.
- Governors are knowledgeable about the school's work and have an accurate understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. They question school decisions and provide support to make sure they hold leaders to account for making continued improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The quality of teaching is not yet outstanding. Sometimes pupils, particularly the most able, do not make as much progress as they should because they do not have enough time to complete more demanding work.
- Pupils do not achieve as well in writing, particularly spelling, as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Communication is not as effective as it could be to secure the confidence and support of all parents.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons, most of which were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector talked to pupils about their work, looked at books and listened to some pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and staff with key leadership responsibilities. Discussions were held with pupils, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector looked at a wide range of documents including: the school's own check on its performance and the quality of teaching; the school improvement plan; information on pupils' progress; and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- There were not enough responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) for the inspector to have access to these. However, the inspector took account of 44 questionnaires returned by parents and their written responses, and spoke to some parents in the playground. The inspector also looked at 17 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are in care) is below average.
- In 2013 the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school makes provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage in a Reception class.
- The school provides a daily breakfast and after-school club.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching in order to raise pupils' achievement by:
 - making sure that the most able pupils have time to complete more demanding work and make faster progress
 - improving pupils' writing, particularly spelling, so that achievement in writing is closer to that in reading and mathematics.
- Ensure that the headteacher and governing body improve communication with parents by ensuring that:
 - the policies and procedures for dealing with any parental concerns, especially those relating to behaviour and safety, are clear, are shared with parents and are manageable
 - the school leadership has the confidence and support of all parents.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and the governing body have taken effective action to improve teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection.
- Expectations of staff and pupils are high and leaders now challenge any instances of weaker teaching. However, there is not yet enough outstanding teaching across the school.
- Procedures to manage staff performance and salary progression are linked closely to the quality of teaching and staff are accountable for the progress their pupils are making. As a result, progress for most pupils has improved.
- Disadvantaged pupils do particularly well compared to their classmates and disadvantaged pupils nationally. This is because additional funding is used effectively to provide additional staff to support pupils.
- Subject leaders feel well supported to further develop their roles and implement changes through good practice. They provide good guidance to colleagues as well as skills and expertise in their own areas of responsibility.
- The school teaches a broad range of subjects and there are well-planned and interesting opportunities to develop literacy and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. Trips and extra activities, including clubs, enrich pupils' learning. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum and particularly through the school's values and ethos as a church school. Assemblies provide time for reflection and the promotion of tolerance and respect, and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.
- The school is making good use of the primary sports funding. Additional resources have enabled the very spacious field to be used for an increased range of sporting activities in all weathers. This makes it possible for more pupils to have greater involvement in physical activity. Staff have had training to develop their skills to benefit pupils and make a further contribution to pupils' well-being.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils has enabled the school to provide extra staff to provide a wide range of support in literacy and numeracy to improve pupils' achievement. For example, an additional teacher has been employed on a part-time basis.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school. One parent wrote, 'This school is fantastic. My child has settled in very well. Very impressed.' A significant minority, however, do not have confidence in the school's leadership and the way their concerns are dealt with.
- The website contains all the required information for parents, including the link to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and the complaints procedure. As a result of parents' perceptions, the headteacher and governors have already identified ways in which they can work with parents to improve communication and secure more confidence and support for the school and its leadership.
- All safeguarding policies and procedures meet statutory requirements and are well known and implemented by all staff.
- The local authority has supported the school very effectively over the past 18 months to ensure improvements in the school. It has now reduced the level of support as there is confidence that the school has moved to good from its 'requiring improvement' judgement in the previous inspection. The inspector agrees with this view.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors have undertaken a review of their work to see how they can increase their effectiveness further. This demonstrates their determination to ensure that the school continues to improve.
 - They know the school well and its strengths and areas for development. They understand the school information and how the school performs compared to other schools nationally.
 - They know about the quality of teaching and hold leaders and staff to account for their performance and pupils' progress through links with teachers' pay and promotion.
 - Governors visit the school and monitor its work and policies.
 - The governing body is aware of how additional funding is spent and the impact of spending for the benefit of the pupils.
 - Governors have supported the headteacher in ensuring that weak teaching is not acceptable.
 - The local authority has supported the governing body in developing its role and reviewing its strategic work and its structure.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They behave well in their lessons and have very positive attitudes to their learning. Sometimes behaviour is exemplary. The few pupils who find it harder to manage their own behaviour respond well to the support they are given. Pupils behave sensibly when moving around the school between lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes, which are sociable, happy occasions.
- The majority of parents who returned the questionnaire agree that behaviour is good. A minority of parents, as well as some of the parents who spoke to the inspector and sent in letters, expressed concerns about behaviour. The inspector spoke to many pupils of different ages and all of them said that they thought children behaved well in school, as did most of the staff. School records show that good behaviour is typical over time.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this is reflected in their above-average attendance. Most parents agree that their children are happy at school. The response from one pupil when asked what could be improved in the school was that 'it should be open on Saturdays, too'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know how to keep safe around the school. For example, they know their boundaries when playing on the large field and in 'the woods'.
- Most parents agree that the school keeps their children safe. However, a minority of parents expressed concerns over the way the school deals with bullying. In discussions, pupils say they are not aware of any bullying but that if there is any 'falling out' teachers help them to sort things out quickly and fairly. They understand that bullying can take different forms, including that related to the internet, and know how to keep themselves safe online.
- The school's values promote pupils' understanding and tolerance of differences in faiths, cultures and backgrounds and, as a result, pupils learn without fear of any type of discrimination, including that of a homophobic or racist nature.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good because it enables pupils to make good progress and achieve well. The very large majority of parents who returned the questionnaire agree that their children are taught well.
- Pupils are interested in their work and are clear about what they are learning. For example, pupils use 'success ladders' to remind them what they must do to be successful and then check their progress against them. This helps pupils to enjoy learning and develop confidence and responsibility.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge and skilled questioning to check pupils' understanding often challenge pupils to think deeply and extend their thoughts and ideas. For example, pupils in Year 6 were exploring the use of descriptive language through studying the class novel. Probing questions prompted pupils to give carefully considered responses, which they justified by referring to the text. This helped them make good progress in developing their comprehension and appreciation skills and ideas for their own writing.
- The quality of marking and feedback is effective and consistent. Pupils have time to read, reflect and respond to teachers' comments on their work and, as a result, have a clear idea of how to improve.
- The attractive and neatly kept classrooms provide good learning spaces. Displays and the use of technology are used well by teachers and pupils to support learning. For example, 'working walls' provide prompts and reminders to pupils in literacy and mathematics.
- Teachers generally have high expectations for pupils' behaviour and learning. However, on occasion, although harder work is planned for the most able pupils, they have to complete the same work as others first before moving on to the extension activities. This means that they sometimes do not have time to complete the more challenging work and therefore do not always make the progress they are capable of.
- Homework is set regularly for literacy and numeracy. Pupils also research topics at home, which they say they enjoy as they can choose what aspect of the topic to research and the way they can present their findings. Some impressive work was seen in Year 6 on the Victorians.
- Teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' learning in the classroom and when working with small groups or individual pupils. They are particularly effective in supporting the learning of disadvantaged pupils and those who are disabled or who have special educational needs. This helps these pupils to achieve well and make good progress.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics have improved since the previous inspection and are now good overall. Writing, however, despite marked improvement, remains the weakest subject, particularly spelling.
- Caution needs to be taken in the interpretation of published information because of the relatively small numbers in each year group. For example, in some years, one pupil represents around 7% of the total class, and this can skew the figures.
- The improvement in 2014 at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 has turned around a downward trend in achievement. This is a result of good teaching and higher expectations, which have enabled pupils to make better progress.
- In 2014, pupils in Year 6 achieved standards in reading and mathematics which were above the latest national averages. This represented good progress in relation to their broadly average starting points at the end of Year 2 in mathematics, and their below-average starting points in reading. However, progress in writing, grammar and spelling was not as good.
- The number of most able pupils achieving the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 improved in all subjects from 2013. However, apart from mathematics in Year 6, the proportion was still below that found nationally, although it was close to national in reading. This is because too few pupils are making more rapid progress.
- In 2014, the proportion of pupils reaching the required level in the Year 1 phonics check (the sounds that letters make) was well below average. Almost one quarter of the pupils arrived in school midway through the year and had little secure phonics knowledge. Despite additional support, they did not have time to catch up. The school took this very seriously and these pupils are currently receiving extra support, particularly to help them blend sounds together to read. As a result, they are now making faster progress.
- Reading for enjoyment is promoted well across the school and by Year 6 most pupils are fluent, expressive readers. They develop good understanding of the texts they read and the skills of reading between the lines to infer meaning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs across the school are successfully meeting challenges set for them and often make similar progress to others. Any barriers to learning that they have to overcome do not lower the school's expectations of what they can achieve.
- In 2013, the attainment by the end of Year 6 of the few disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding was 16 months ahead of their classmates in writing, similar in mathematics and around six months behind in reading. Compared to disadvantaged pupils nationally, they attained equally well in reading and mathematics, and are about 12 months above in writing. School records show that disadvantaged pupils throughout the school currently are making similar good progress. The school uses additional funding well, mainly for additional staff to support these pupils.

The early years provision is good

- Children start in the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are typically below the levels expected for their age. They catch up quickly and most reach a good level of development by the end of the Reception year, which prepares them well to continue their learning in Year 1.
- The proportion who reached a good level of development improved in 2014 from the previous year because of good teaching and exciting and challenging activities indoors and outside. Opportunities for investigation and creative development are promoted very well, as are opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves. They cooperate extremely well and behaviour in one session observed was exemplary.
- At the time of the inspection, children had only been in school for a short while. They settle very quickly and happily and are already familiar with the routines of the classroom, confidently joining in with other children and taking an active part in their learning.
- Staff get to know the children well because there are good links with the children and their parents before they start at school. The very well-resourced and -presented learning areas ensure that children have a good range of activities and resources that help them make good progress in all areas of learning. Their progress is checked carefully by staff to help plan the next steps in learning.

- Achievement in reading and writing, although above that found nationally, has not been as rapid as in other areas of learning. Phonics teaching, in particular, does not always afford children the same exciting ways of learning as in other areas.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. Children are well cared for and all the safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	118620
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	451988

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	135
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Eileen Smith
Headteacher	Michelle Grima
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 June 2013
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