Bursted Wood Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101436
Local Authority	Bexley
Inspection number	307684
Inspection date	15 January 2008
Reporting inspector	David Marshall

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	465
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr M Tavender
Headteacher	Mrs E Prynne
Date of previous school inspection	3 November 2003
School address	Swanbridge Road Bexleyheath DA7 5BS
Telephone number	020 8304 9960
Fax number	020 8304 9971

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and the school's curriculum. In addition, evidence was gathered from discussions and school documentation to evaluate the quality of the school's care, guidance and support and leadership and management. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspection found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included in this report.

Description of the school

Bursted Wood is a larger than average primary school. The number of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is broadly average, as is the number with English as an Additional Language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is also around the national average. The number with particular special needs is currently above average.

The school has been awarded 'The National Healthy Schools Award', the Basic Skills 'Quality Mark Award' for the third time, the Active Mark, the International Schools Award, Gold Artsmark Award and also the National Inclusion Award. Bursted Wood is the lead school of the DfES Innovation Unit's project - 'The Bexley Creative Curriculum' and have been awarded the Leading Aspect Award for developing a creative curriculum.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bursted Wood provides an outstanding education for all of its pupils. Over the last three years, they have sought, with colleagues in other local schools, to provide an innovatory and exciting approach to their whole school curriculum, to inspire pupils to learn. This method, known as The Creative Learning Journey, is based on an exceptionally well defined, and detailed, analysis, of what skills pupils need and how best they can be acquired. There are inspiring displays of pupils' work everywhere in the school. They show just how successful the school is being in their aim to raise fully pupils' achievement in all aspects of their learning. As one parent wrote, 'The social and emotional development of the children is seen as important as their academic achievement. The opportunity to develop individual creativity permeates throughout the school. My daughter will leave Bursted Wood in the summer and I am very grateful to them for helping to create the girl she is today'.

Staff are vigilant to pupils' needs, enabling them all to learn and play in a safe and secure learning environment. Through the school's excellent curriculum, including personal, social, health and emotional development (PSHE), the pupils excel in making choices. Their personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They show very caring attitudes to each other and the environment. They learn to respect children from different backgrounds and have an excellent understanding of healthy living and keeping safe. Throughout the school relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and, as a result, the atmosphere for learning created by the whole staff is supportive and caring. The assembly observed during the inspection was remarkable. After the enthusiastic and inspiring school song, with signing, it was amazing to see Year 4 pupils showing the results of their times-table focus in songs ands raps through pod-casts and multimedia presentations. The level of confidence shown, the information and communication technology skills used and their ability to communicate in public were all well above average for their age.

Throughout the school, pupils achieve exceptionally well and are inquisitive learners. They enter the school with skills and understanding that vary but are usually around or below those expected for their age. Very effective organisation and very careful assessments enable pupils to make good progress immediately. Much of the pupils' early success in reading and writing is due to the school's strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills, and the use of these in a huge variety of well-planned opportunities. By the time pupils leave, standards in many subjects, including science, mathematics and English are consistently well above average because the teaching is excellent. Individual improvement targets and outstanding support for pupils of all abilities consistently raise pupils' levels of achievement significantly. National test results in Year 6 in 2007 exceeded the school's carefully formulated and challenging targets. Results in English were particularly high. Very importantly, there is an upward trend in standards across a wide range of subjects and, in particular, there are many opportunities for pupils to develop their artistic and musical talents. For example, the standard of singing witnessed during the inspection was outstanding.

There are some conflicting views amongst parents. An overwhelming majority hold the school in high regard. There were many comments on the exciting learning, and the care shown by all staff. Many parents agreed with the sentiments of one who said, 'Bursted Wood is giving my child the best possible start to her education.' However, some parents have misgivings about the school and where it places its emphasis in learning. They also feel that they are not being

kept fully in the picture about what is happening in the school and, in particular, for their own children. The school agrees they must thoroughly address this issue of communication.

Throughout the school, teaching and learning are outstanding. Lessons are very well planned, making sure that all pupils are challenged and enjoy learning. Assessment information collected about pupils is extremely thorough and used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable pupils make outstanding progress. Although again, a very small number of parents have some misgivings over the provision for pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils who have statements of particular special need make exceptionally good progress. National data shows they progress at well above average rates. Detailed school tracking data shows precisely why, as intervention and support is very carefully focused and monitored. One parent with a child with specific needs wrote to say how grateful she is and how her daughter has begun to spell and read, sing, dance, is now confident, and outgoing - and most importantly 'LOVES being at school!'

The headteacher provides first-rate leadership. She is very ably supported by her deputy and all staff, and teamwork is excellent. The school has an outstanding range of links with their partners in developing the curriculum and outside agencies to provide exciting opportunities for all pupils. The excellent governing body play a very successful part in supporting and challenging the school. Financial decisions are taken in the best interests of all pupils. They are firm in their resolve to provide the very best for every child in their care. They are being successful in this aim and were gratified to hear how positive so many parents are. One parent summed up their praise by writing, 'BW has, and is, providing an excellent primary education for both our children. They have both received a good foundation for learning, which can only benefit them in their further education.' The school's track record of raising standards across all subjects, and meeting pupils' needs through their very effective monitoring and evaluation systems, shows that it has an excellent capacity to continue improving.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Parents' comments mirror the inspection judgements about the excellent provision in the Foundation Stage, where the staff plan enjoyable and challenging activities for the children. One parent wrote, 'They (the staff) worked hard to make classes for 3/4 year olds imaginative, creative and stimulating - the preparation for moving into Reception was excellent and has proved to make the transition a smooth and worry free process for both parents and my daughter'. Careful planning gives the children a real sense of determining their own way forward, and guarantees their full involvement in all activities. Adults have high expectations, provide very clear routines and enable children to build strong, positive relationships. The school's stated aim to improve children's personal and social education through turn-taking games and circle time activities is clearly very successful. The rooms available are stimulating and resources are used well. A very calm and purposeful atmosphere is created where the children make excellent progress. Staff know the children very well. They make a careful note of all responses and feedback. The information collected about children is used particularly well to ensure that the least able and most vulnerable settle well. The excellent outside areas provide the same exciting level of challenge and stimulation, especially for the more capable children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make strenuous efforts to improve aspects of communication and remedy the lack of confidence in the school felt by a minority of parents.

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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**

Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

[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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

28 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bursted Wood Primary School,Bexleyheath,DA7 5BS

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your school and your work. I think the school provides you with an outstanding education, and I agree with what you told me - it is a really exciting place to learn. Mrs Prynne and the staff have created a caring school community where you all really enjoy learning and feel safe. You behave very well in lessons and like to concentrate on your work. You also enjoy and benefit from the huge range of opportunities the school provides in clubs and visits to interesting places.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in lots of different subjects. The headteacher is keen to keep improving the school and, with the staff, knows exactly what to do to make the school even better. You must continue to listen carefully and take note of what they say.

Although the majority of parents are pleased with the school, some have said they are concerned about the information they receive from the school and about how well you are progressing and how they can help you at home. I have asked Mrs Prynne and staff to get in touch with all parents to make sure they are pleased with all the school is doing for you.

Finally, I would like to thank you once again for all your help. I wish you well in the future.

With kind regards,

David Marshall

Lead Inspector