

Noak Bridge Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	114894
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	378950
Inspection dates	18–19 January 2012
Lead inspector	Hilary Macdonald HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	203
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Katherine Perry
Headteacher	H Karim
Date of previous school inspection	25 September 2008
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Introduction

Inspection team

Hilary Macdonald

Her Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Gray

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by eight teachers, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also carried out visits to eight parts of lessons and two assemblies. Meetings were held with senior teachers and other staff, groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at the tracking of pupils' progress, attainment data, pupils' work, whole-school curriculum plans and individual lesson plans, a range of policies, incident logs and case studies. Inspectors listened to pupils reading aloud. Completed questionnaires from 54 parents and carers, 101 pupils and 23 staff were received and analysed.

Information about the school

This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is slightly lower than average, although this has increased considerably over the last couple of years. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, and the proportion that speak English as an additional language is very low. There has been a significant rise in numbers of pupils from other White backgrounds since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities is lower than average. The school is above government floor standards for the current year. The school has recently gained an 'International Award' at intermediate level.

The school shares its site with an independent pre-school that is not managed by the governing body. It is therefore not included within this inspection. Since the previous inspection there have been numerous staff changes, particularly at senior teacher level.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- The school provides a satisfactory education within a caring, supportive and engaging environment for pupils. The headteacher and all staff are focused on school improvement.
- Nearly all pupils make at least satisfactory progress, and some make good or rapid progress, especially in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities also progress at least satisfactorily and certain groups at above nationally expected rates. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment is average. Teachers' expectations and highly positive relationships in school enable most pupils to work hard and achieve satisfactorily.
- Teaching is satisfactory. Teaching was good in half of the lessons observed. Inspectors observed lessons where pupils were fully engaged, challenged and enthusiastic. In some lessons teaching does not secure the progress that could be expected. The reasons for this are varied and include too few opportunities for pupils to discuss or be active enough in their learning or the match of task to pupil need is not accurate enough.
- Pupils' behaviour is good at all times. This good behaviour contributes well to their learning and to the orderly, happy school environment. Pupils have a sound understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe and are confident in all school staff. Parent and carer, pupil and staff questionnaires confirm this positive view of behaviour and safety.
- The school's leadership has identified that uncertainty in senior staffing has slowed the drive for further school improvement. The headteacher has covered many areas of responsibility and it has not been possible for leadership to be sufficiently distributed throughout the school. The recent appointment of staff is addressing this situation.
- Whole school improvement, subject, and lesson plans and evaluations make a contribution to development. However, these sometimes lack a sufficiently sharp focus on the impact of actions proposed or taken on outcomes for pupils.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring

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visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reduce the variability in teaching so that pupils make good progress in all subjects and all year groups by:
 - ensuring that identified good features are firmly established in all lessons
 - providing more opportunities for teachers to share the expertise that is already within the school
- Improve the impact of leaders at all levels by:
 - sharpening targets in curriculum development planning so that success can be evaluated more accurately
 - developing the skills of subject leaders so that systems for monitoring quality of teaching and planning lead more clearly to improved practice
 - ensuring that subject leaders accurately interpret performance data and use this to inform evaluations and further improvement plans

Main report**Achievement of pupils**

Pupils make progress that is broadly in line with that made by pupils with similar starting points nationally. School tracking data and observations of lessons demonstrate that pupils in Key Stage 1 are now making better progress than in recent years when standards were well below those expected nationally.

Observations of pupils' learning in lessons and in their workbooks confirm that the school is addressing the legacy of underachievement in Key Stage 1. Children are making good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and levels of development are in line with those expected. The focused teaching of early literacy and targeted individual or small group support have ensured that pupils are making satisfactory and improving progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils at early stages of reading in Year 1 knew their sounds well and were keen to read aloud. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 1 and when they leave school is broadly average. Attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 is also average, with rates of progress that are better and more consistent than in English.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make satisfactory academic progress. Some of these pupils are making better progress than similar groups nationally. Carefully planned programmes of support, including that provided by adults within lessons contribute well to these pupils making good progress, including in their social development. During the inspection girls and boys were observed to participate equally and previous gaps in attainment are closing. All lessons observed contained good features and tasks were generally well matched to pupils' needs.

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However, good features of lessons were inconsistent across year groups and subjects and on occasions pupils were overly or insufficiently challenged. As a result, profiles of pupil progress are uneven. All pupils reported enjoying their lessons, and particularly commented on the opportunities to use information communication technology to support their learning. Many examples were seen of pupils using the class interactive whiteboards to demonstrate their learning. In Year 2 one group of pupils orally recorded their descriptions of their grannies and in Year 4 most able pupils used class computers to devise a summary argument.

Responses from parents and carers were extremely positive regarding the progress their children make. Inspection evidence found progress to be satisfactory overall.

Quality of teaching

Pupils know their targets in English and in mathematics and teachers ensure that pupils know what they are learning and why. Lesson planning is usually thorough and lessons follow a clear sequence so that skills and knowledge build. For example, a lesson in Year 6 on interpreting timetables built on pupils' prior ability to understand and use television guides. Increasingly teachers make positive links between subjects, reinforcing key skills. For example in Year 1 in a piece of descriptive writing about fruit, pupils also used scientific skills of observation and classification. In many lessons pupils are given opportunities to discuss and review their learning with a partner or a group. However, in some lessons teachers talk for long periods or ask questions only of individual pupils, thereby reducing opportunities for all pupils to be active learners.

Teachers understand that they are accountable for pupils' progress and assessment information is used to group pupils according to learning need. However, assessment of pupils' learning during lessons is inconsistent, and opportunities to refine teaching input are sometimes missed. In such lessons, the progress pupils can make is restricted. Guidance and feedback given to pupils both orally and in their workbooks is good. Marking is detailed and clearly tells pupils how well they have done and what steps they should take to improve further. The impact of this advice can often be observed in the following piece of work.

Teaching is frequently used well to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. A wide range of visits, such as the residential trip to Wales, enhance these aspects of the curriculum. Pupils display enthusiasm in many lessons and their good behaviour enables group, practical and oral work to flow without interruption. Pupils say that they are taught well, they appreciate that teachers are there to support them and are not afraid to seek help. Questionnaires from parents and carers indicate that the vast majority believe that their child is well taught in this school.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

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Noak Bridge Primary is an extremely harmonious school. Pupils were eager to let inspectors know that relationships between all members of the community are extremely positive. They like and respect their teachers and all adults equally. Pupils are welcoming and polite to visitors and respond enthusiastically to questions about their school or their learning experiences. The large majority of parents and carers are happy with behaviour in the school and all agree that their children are kept safe. Pupils are punctual to lessons and their responsible and supportive behaviour and engagement contributes well to their satisfactory learning. Strategies for managing and promoting good behaviour are effective. The prefects are particularly proud of their positions of additional responsibility.

Whilst a small minority of parental questionnaires suggested that some lessons can be disrupted by poor behaviour, inspectors saw no instances of disruption to any lessons. Discussions with pupils about this and about bullying indicated that any incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare and are dealt with in a timely and effective manner. Pupils asserted their confidence in all adults in school. The school's own records and incident logs confirm that this is the case. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves, and those younger than them, safe. They are well aware of the physical measures, such as gates and fences, that help ensure their safety and they are equally aware of keeping safe when using apparatus, equipment and resources, including the internet. The school has worked hard to improve rates of attendance which have now risen to above average overall.

Leadership and management

Repeated changes in leadership, other than at headteacher level, have resulted in slower progress towards school improvement targets than anticipated. Despite this, the commitment of all members of staff and the governing body under the rigorous and ambitious direction of the headteacher has resulted in certain improvements. For example, the previous inspection identified the need to increase pupils' use of information communication technology and to develop outdoor learning opportunities. These have been successfully achieved. The curriculum has been reviewed to ensure sufficient cross-curricular links to reinforce basic skills and to ensure breadth in the foundation subjects. Popular extra-curricular activities enrich the curriculum further and contribute to pupils' personal and social development. Spiritual, social, moral and cultural education permeates all aspects of school life and pupils recall with delight watching chickens hatch or taking part in Spanish lessons and a Spanish themed day. These positive changes indicate a satisfactory capacity for continuing improvement.

Challenging targets are set for all pupils and staff and comprehensive monitoring systems exist. Senior teachers collect evidence through a range of activities such as classroom observations and work and planning scrutinies. This provides them with a broadly accurate picture although findings are not always rigorously analysed to identify what action is required to bring about improvements. Development plans and

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evaluations are too descriptive and do not always focus sharply enough on the impact of actions on outcomes for children. Senior teachers and other subject leaders are developing their understanding of the school data as compared with national data and therefore their views on school performance have not previously always been totally accurate. Although monitoring cycles have been interrupted most recent headteacher monitoring has identified teaching as satisfactory overall. The inspection found this to be an accurate view.

Questionnaires revealed very high levels of parental confidence in the school's leadership. The school has increased the range of opportunities for parents and carers to be involved in their children's learning and education including through homework tasks, celebration assemblies and mid-year reports. Commitment to equality is demonstrated through monitoring the achievement gap between different groups of pupils. The previous gap identified between boys and girls is not currently evident. Members of the newly established leadership team are ambitious on behalf of the school and its pupils and, for example, in a very short space of time, the inclusion manager has rightly identified strengths and training needs.

The governing body discharges its statutory responsibilities and possesses a range of skills and expertise relevant to its role. Procedures for the safeguarding of pupils are secure. Under the effective leadership of the recently elected Chair, the governing body is gaining an increasingly accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and as a result is more able to hold the school to account with increasing rigour. Both the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body have a precise view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.



20 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Noak Bridge Primary School, Basildon, SS15 4JS

Firstly, thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us during the recent inspection. We found it very helpful to talk to so many of you, to look at your work and to visit your lessons. We enjoyed hearing about all aspects of school life. You helped us to really understand what it is like to be a pupil at your school. We also found your responses in the questionnaires useful. I would like to share with you some of the most important things that we have learned about your school.

Noak Bridge is a satisfactory school. Your behaviour is very good in lessons and around the school. You are polite and helpful to your teachers, to visitors and to each other. Older pupils look after younger ones without question. You make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in your lessons. You show a positive approach to your work and your attendance is good. You clearly enjoy school, you like and trust the adults and you appreciate the opportunities for trips, visits and clubs.

Your school is effectively led by your headteacher and all school staff and governors want to make sure that the school provides the best it can for all of you. To help your school improve further we have asked the headteacher to:

- make sure that you experience consistently good teaching
- ensure that teachers in charge of different subjects or areas of the school have opportunities to find out how well all of you are learning so that they can make plans that help you to do even better.

You also have a part to play by continuing to behave well and by doing your best at all times. I wish you every success in the future. I am sure you will continue to enjoy your time at Noak Bridge Primary School.

Yours sincerely

Hilary Macdonald
Her Majesty's Inspector

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