

# Vange Primary School and Nursery

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114811
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	357622
<b>Inspection dates</b>	7–8 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Selwyn Ward

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Morgan-Jones
<b>Headteacher</b>	James Rogers
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	London Road Vange, Basildon SS16 4QA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01268 552160
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<b>Email address</b>	admin@vange.essex.sch.uk

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 12 lessons and observed six teachers. They spoke with staff, representatives of the governing body, groups of pupils, parents and an adviser from the local authority. Inspectors looked at samples of pupils' work, the analysis of the tracking of pupils' progress, school policies and procedures, school leaders' monitoring records, local authority review reports, school improvement planning and risk assessments. They also analysed the questionnaires received from pupils, staff and 17 parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The school's evidence of current pupils' attainment and the extent to which pupils are being helped to catch up on past underachievement.
- The impact of actions taken by school leaders and the governing body to drive improvement.

## Information about the school

In this small school, the great majority of pupils are White British, with very small numbers coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds or who are at an early stage of learning English. An above average proportion of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. Of these, most have moderate learning difficulties. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is around twice the national average. There have been several changes of teaching staff since the last inspection. Vange Primary runs a breakfast club and has Healthy Schools status. It has been part of the Improving Schools Programme (ISP), which is a government initiative aimed at raising standards.

**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: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

Vange Primary provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The headteacher and leadership team have drawn well on local authority support to identify weaknesses and, increasingly, to remedy them. Although attainment remains low, pupils are now making satisfactory progress and are narrowing the gap caused by the underachievement of previous years, when teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 failed to capitalise fully on the good start that children get off to in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teaching and learning are satisfactory, and there is a growing proportion of good teaching resulting in more rapid pupil progress. The introduction to the curriculum of a range of initiatives to boost pupils' writing has also contributed to narrowing the attainment gap. Teachers know the pupils well and their good relationships with them help to motivate the pupils to work hard and try their best. When teachers ask questions in lessons, many hands go up to answer, but that still means there are some pupils who are slow to volunteer, and teachers do not always direct questions at them to ensure that they are fully involved. Teachers often make use of 'talk partners', with pupils sharing ideas with each other, but this does not sufficiently promote speaking and listening skills when pupils are simply asked to report back their own, rather than their partner's ideas. Pupils are regularly asked to signal during and at the end of lessons whether they have fully understood, but staff do not routinely make a note of these responses in order to ensure that they are followed up in subsequent lessons.

The support given to pupils who need extra help with their learning, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enables them to make similar progress to their peers. The progress for some is good. Because they also have other needs, many of the pupils eligible for free school meals benefit from additional support. This is the reason why this group do especially well at Vange Primary, often outperforming children in similar circumstances in other schools. It is more able pupils who do not all do as well as they should. This is reflected in the low proportion attaining higher levels in the Year 2 and Year 6 national assessments. Too often, in lessons, opportunities are missed to further challenge and extend more able pupils.

Parents and carers appreciate the good care, guidance and support that promotes their children's personal development, as well as the way they are kept well informed. As one explained, 'My child's confidence has grown this year, and I had a very positive parents' evening.' Behaviour is good, and pupils treat each other, and the adults in the school, with kindness and respect. As a result, they feel very safe at school. They take an interest in the wider world, not least through their support for national and international charities. They take a particular pride in the many opportunities that they have to take on responsibilities, including as prefects, house captains, peer mediators, play leaders, 'Eco-warriors' and school councillors. Pupils are also proud of their collective achievement in winning and collecting, just the day before the inspection, their Healthy Schools award,

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acknowledging their positive approach to and knowledge of the importance of a healthy diet and exercise.

The headteacher and leadership team have an accurate picture of the school and of where further improvements are needed. This, together with some key successes in moving the school forward, show the school's sound capacity for further improvement. Action taken to tackle the previously high absence rates have shown impressive results, with attendance already much higher this term. Monitoring of lessons and action taken to tackle weak teaching has contributed to the faster progress that pupils now make. However, the points for development identified by leaders in their monitoring are not systematically followed up to ensure that staff have acted on the constructive feedback they have been given. Improved systems for assessment have given pupils a much clearer picture of the level they are working at and what they need to do to improve, but curriculum time is not made available to ensure that pupils all have the opportunity to reflect and respond to questions posed by teachers' marking. The governing body is supportive but its members have correctly identified that they have not done enough to challenge the school on achievement. With several new members, they are still in the process of developing their role. They have not provided a strategic lead, for example, by checking regularly on the school's performance as measured against the targets agreed in the school improvement plan.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Ensure that, by the start of the summer term 2011, pupils' learning and progress in lessons is further accelerated through:
  - always setting work that challenges and extends more able pupils
  - routinely directing questions at those who are reluctant to volunteer
  - making more effective use of 'talk partners' to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills
  - noting those pupils who signal that they do not fully understand what they are being taught so that staff are able to assure themselves that any misconceptions are appropriately tackled in the next lesson.
- By January 2011, increase the effectiveness of management arrangements by:
  - following up in subsequent observations the points for development identified by school leaders when they visit lessons and examine pupils' books
  - tightening systems for ensuring that pupils know how to improve their work by checking that staff give time to pupils to consider and respond to questions that are posed to them by teachers' marking
  - ensuring that the governing body directly monitor the school's performance and development by regularly checking on its progress against priorities in the school improvement plan.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

With small numbers in each year group, there is inevitably some variation in children's attainment on entry to the school. In the main, however, it is low. Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage but, in most years, attainment is still below average by the start of Year 1. In the past, pupils have made insufficient progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. Standards remain low at Vange Primary because pupils still carry this legacy of past underachievement. As teaching has improved, however, so has the rate of pupils' progress. Pupils are now making progress in lessons and over their time in school that is consistently at least satisfactory. In a growing proportion of lessons, progress is good. This is enabling pupils to catch up on previously lost ground. In a successful English lesson in Key Stage 1, for example, pupils of all abilities made rapid progress because the teacher made clear her expectations of what the pupils should be learning, and because the pupils were given different success criteria matched to their different capabilities.

A key factor in the accelerated progress that pupils are now making is their positive attitude to learning. Even some of the younger pupils recognise the link between effort now and their future success. As a Year 3 pupil explained, 'If you work hard, it will help you get a better job.' Pupils look out for each other, with, for example, older pupils helping younger ones. The weekly 'Golden Time' facilitates this because, in choosing different activities as their reward for good behaviour over the week, pupils mix with those from other age groups.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils' progress has accelerated as previously identified shortcomings in teaching have been eliminated. Teachers routinely set out learning objectives at the start of each lesson, so that pupils know what they are expected to learn. These are used to best effect when pupils also have clear success criteria against which to measure their own work. Increasingly, teachers are involving pupils in assessing their own and each other's work, although this is not a consistent feature of teaching across the school. There is variation, too, in the extent to which teachers make use of assessment information to match work to pupils' different needs and capabilities. Even though there is a wide range of age and ability in each class, pupils are too often given similar work to do. Less able pupils can mostly keep up with this because they benefit from well-tailored support from their teachers and the teaching assistants, but the work can be too easy for more able pupils.

The school has embarked upon but not completed its plans to reorganise the curriculum. Modern foreign languages have been introduced, but the plan to develop thematic links between different subjects is still progressing. The school has adopted a number of initiatives aimed at raising attainment, and these have had a positive impact. More systematic teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) and the school's participation in the Improving Schools Programme (ISP) have particularly helped pupils to catch up where they had previously fallen behind.

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Arrangements for pupils' welfare are a strength of the school. New, more rigorous systems have had a dramatic impact on attendance. There are well-developed partnerships with outside agencies to ensure well-focused support for vulnerable pupils and those with additional learning needs. As a result, these pupils progress at least as well as their peers and several do better, including many of those eligible for free school meals. The school provides good support to families, and the breakfast club also helps to meet the needs of pupils and their families. Parents find the headteacher and staff 'approachable' and this is much appreciated.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

Drawing well on the support of the local authority, the headteacher and leadership team have helped ensure that Vange Primary has turned the corner so that pupils now make satisfactory progress. Targets are ambitious and are helping to drive up attainment as leaders and staff rightly expect more of the pupils. In the past, boys have often done notably less well than girls, but initiatives, for example to make writing activities more interesting for boys, have had a positive impact. Because they are not always challenged enough in lessons, the more able pupils are not catered for as well as, for example, those who need additional help with their learning.

The governing body now has a greater awareness of what it should be doing, but it is still overly dependant on information presented by the headteacher and staff; it has not done enough to challenge the school over pupils' attainment and progress. The improvement plan includes a section outlining action to extend work in promoting community cohesion, but this is not based on a comprehensive audit of what the school does. Nevertheless, there are well-established local community links and school leaders have taken the opportunity to build ties, including pupil visits, with a school in different circumstances. Although it is only the headteacher who has full child protection training, there are appropriate deputising arrangements in place and the school's systems for safeguarding fully meet regulatory requirements.



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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children get a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In most year groups, children join the Nursery with skills and capabilities that are low in relation to their ages. This is especially the case in respect of their social, communication and language skills. They settle quickly, however, as a result of provision that offers varied opportunities to learn through play. Progress accelerates in the Reception Year, as the children learn increasingly to play and learn collaboratively. In 2010, the able year group left the Reception Year with attainment that was above that expected for their ages; in most years, attainment remains below average at the end of the Reception Year. Recent staff changes mean that the Early Years Foundation Stage leader is new to the role and is only just getting to grips with the data summarising children's performance. However, a good lead is provided by the headteacher. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff work well together as a team and they have clear systems for keeping track of each child's progress. They make good use of the information to plan activities to help the children to reinforce and build on what they have learnt.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	2

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Stage

## Views of parents and carers

Relatively few parents and carers returned questionnaires, but those that did were overwhelmingly positive about the school. One return expressed the view that the school did not take sufficient account of suggestions or concerns. Inspectors looked at the school's systems for consulting and involving families and endorse the view of the very large majority of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Vange Primary School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 17 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 108 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	14	93	1	7	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	13	87	1	7	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	5	33	10	67	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	6	40	9	60	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	2	13	13	87	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	11	73	4	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	100	0	0	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	9	60	5	33	1	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	12	80	3	20	0	0	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



11 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Vange Primary School and Nursery, Basildon, SS16 4QA**

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful when I came to visit your school. You have not always done as well as you should at Vange, but things are improving and you are now making satisfactory progress. Attainment is rising from the low levels of recent years, although there is still further to go. The children in the Nursery and Reception get off to a good start, and you are now making at least satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. I have agreed with your headteacher on some practical suggestions to help your teachers ensure that you make even faster progress in lessons. Your good behaviour, improved attendance and positive attitudes to learning are all making a contribution to making the school such a happy, friendly place to be, and you can also help by, for example, telling your teachers when you find your work too easy.

The staff take good care of you, and that is something which both you and your parents and carers appreciate. Your headteacher and other staff have an accurate picture of how well the school is doing and where improvements are needed, but I have made some suggestions for further strengthening management arrangements in the school. I have particularly asked the governing body to take more of a lead in driving and keeping track of improvements. I was pleased to see that, when they mark your work, teachers give you helpful advice on how to improve it, but I have asked them to make sure that you are given time to look carefully at their comments and respond to them. That will also help you to think more about your work so that you all achieve your very best.

My best wishes to you all for the future.

Yours sincerely

Selwyn Ward

Lead inspector

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