

Bentfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114978
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	354780
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Abbott HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robert Coop
Headteacher	Catherine Bonich
Date of previous school inspection	5 October 2009
School address	Rainsford Road Stansted CM24 8DX
Telephone number	01279 813626
Fax number	01279 816696
Email address	head@bentfield.essex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 13 lessons, including two sessions with individual pupils. All nine teachers were observed at least once. They also visited lessons involving each of the pupils in the school's enhanced provision for children with complex needs. They observed the school's work and looked at the school improvement plan, records of the school's own monitoring of lessons, minutes of governing body meetings and the school's surveys of staff and parents. As the inspection was planned as a monitoring inspection, it did not include a parental questionnaire. However, inspectors met with a group of parents as well as groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, staff and representatives of Essex Local Authority.

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

- The school's work to improve achievement, especially in Key Stage 1.
- The use of assessment data to support planning to meet pupils' different needs.
- The effectiveness of monitoring, evaluation and planning by leaders and managers at all levels, including the work of the governing body.
- How well the provision in mathematics promotes pupils' learning and progress.
- The school's enhanced provision for pupils with complex needs and the support for other pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Information about the school

Bentfield Primary School is an average-sized primary school with a nursery class and enhanced provision for 14 children with complex health, physical, developmental and learning needs. For this reason, it caters for a higher than usual proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few pupils at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Currently, there are twice as many boys as girls in Key Stage 2, but the gender balance is even in the rest of the school. The proportion of pupils known to be entitled to free school meals is below average.

The school is part of the Saffron Walden - Stansted Mountfitchet Federation, an educational partnership committed to enriching the education of young people from 3 to 19. It holds the Sportsmark and is part of the local school sports partnership. It has recently taken a lead in establishing a cluster group of primary schools in the Stansted Mountfitchet area.

When Bentfield Primary School was inspected in October 2009, it was judged to require special measures. Subsequently, the school was inspected on two occasions. At the last monitoring inspection, the school was judged to be making good progress.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. Bentfield Primary School provides a good standard of education overall and has some outstanding aspects. These are the excellent provision for pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the inspirational enhanced provision for pupils with complex health, physical, developmental and learning needs. Learning and support are very well integrated within lessons for pupils in the enhanced provision and others with special educational needs and/or disabilities. As a result, their progress is outstanding. The school is a highly inclusive community and its promotion of equal opportunities is exemplary. The school provides outstanding care, guidance and support, and works exceptionally well in partnership with other agencies to ensure that pupils' health, developmental and educational needs are considered as a whole.

The school has blossomed under the leadership of its new headteacher. Staff morale has much improved and the senior leaders have clearer roles. Self-evaluation is rigorous and accurate. Together, leaders and managers at all levels have tackled decisively the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved markedly in the last year, following intensive work which has been well supported by the local authority. The school now assesses pupils' progress systematically to identify and tackle any under-achievement. Pupils throughout the school now make good progress in lessons because teachers use assessment information well to plan work that meets their different needs. Their moral and social development is very strong. These improvements demonstrate the school's good capacity for further improvement.

While the school was in special measures, its leaders naturally focused strongly on addressing the identified weaknesses. They recognise the need to review the present improvement plans. For example, the rapid improvement in the school's effectiveness means that the targets for pupils' attainment no longer appear challenging enough. In addition, the governing body and senior leaders realise that they now need to develop a longer term strategy, with more specific and measurable success criteria. For example, having worked to improve teaching and learning generally, leaders are beginning to look at ways of improving pupils' progress in mathematics. Some strategies to raise achievement in mathematics are already in place. These include a greater focus on teaching pupils to use and apply mathematics; involvement in the 'Every Child a Counter' project, which provides one-to-one support for Key Stage 1 pupils who need help to develop their number sense; and guidance for teachers to ensure a consistent approach to calculation across the school. However, there is limited guidance for teachers on the most effective ways of using visualisations and learning resources to promote pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.

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While most aspects of leadership and management are good or better, the school has not prioritised its promotion of community cohesion. Although links with the local community are strong, pupils have a limited appreciation of the diversity of cultures that are found elsewhere in this country. Links have been established with an ethnically diverse school on the edge of London and a school serving a mainly Bangladeshi community in the East End, but the planning is at an embryonic stage.

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say they feel very safe. Parents are highly supportive of the school and appreciate the way that class teachers make themselves available at the beginning and end of the school day.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Within a term, review the school's improvement planning to reflect the higher aspirations it now has, for example by setting more ambitious progress targets and by developing more specific and measurable success criteria.
- During the next year, improve the school's promotion of community cohesion, by further developing its links with two schools in London, so that pupils can gain experience of the diversity of cultures in other parts of the country.
- Enhance the mathematics curriculum by involving all teachers in developing guidance on the most effective ways of using visualisation and a variety of learning resources to promote pupils' understanding of mathematical concepts.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

In recent years, pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 has been broadly average. Their progress has been uneven from year to year, but satisfactory overall. In the last year, the school has worked hard to improve the consistency of learning and progress across the school, with considerable success. This was very evident to inspectors, who judged learning and progress to be good in seven observed lessons and outstanding in three. Learning was very good in the one-to-one sessions observed. The achievement of boys and girls is equally good. Inspectors also conducted an in-depth scrutiny of the progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who attend the school's enhanced provision. Achievement is outstanding for this group of pupils.

Pupils feel safe because circle time gives them the confidence to raise any issues. They learn about e-safety and 'stranger danger'. Older pupils' awareness of road safety is enhanced through the cycling proficiency scheme. Pupils get along well with each other and their spiritual development is enhanced by the school's excellent disability equality scheme. Their good contribution to the community is exemplified by their work for older people; their involvement in local events such as fun runs, Stansted in Bloom and Remembrance Day; and national events such as Children in Need. A large number learn to use signs and symbols systems so they can communicate with all of their friends. Pupils were involved in the appointment process for the present headteacher. Many pupils join clubs with a sporting element and a large majority take advantage of the healthy lunches provided by the school.

Pupils' good behaviour and high levels of attendance contribute to their learning. They are well prepared for their future lives, for example by learning to work together in teams.

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The school's determination to tackle barriers to learning means that all pupils develop skills in numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

Lessons are very well planned, because teachers use their good knowledge of each pupil's progress to tailor learning to their needs. All teachers now have the confidence to monitor pupils in the classroom and adapt their planning accordingly during the course of each lesson. Pupils know their targets and how to improve their work because of the regular and accurate marking. Some pupils would like lessons to include more opportunities for active learning through games, practical activity and problem solving. Such features are increasingly evident in mathematics lessons.

The school has a broad and balanced curriculum that meets pupils' needs well, including their need for physical activity. An increasingly effective cross-curricular approach is taken to the teaching of writing and the school promotes reading for enjoyment. Pupils' learning is enriched well with trips out of school, visiting speakers and numerous after-school activities.

The school has made a considerable improvement to its systems of assessment and academic guidance, which are now well understood by all teachers. Senior leaders monitor the progress of individuals and groups so they can take early action to tackle under-

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achievement. All pupils benefit from the very good pastoral support. The work of the inclusion team to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is exemplary.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school's leaders and managers, including the governing body, have shown great determination and drive to lift the school out of special measures in a single year. The headteacher has fostered a unity of purpose among everyone involved with the school. The governing body has streamlined its committee structures and now holds the school to account well. More teachers have taken on subject leadership, giving them a better perspective of the work of the school. The school's highly inclusive ethos has been retained. It is captured in the high regard for the school's enhanced provision; the exemplary disability equality scheme and the developing work on community cohesion.

The school is expanding its outstanding work in partnership with other agencies and institutions. The headteacher has taken a lead in establishing a cluster group of local primary schools to work together on common interests.

The school safeguards pupils well. Vetting and checking requirements are followed carefully. The new fence and revised access arrangements mean that the school site is now secure. A fire drill, held during the inspection, demonstrated that evacuation procedures are effective.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children show a high level of enjoyment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Although many are a little behind age-related expectations when they join the nursery, they quickly learn to join in, cooperate and share with each other. Their behaviour is very good. They develop very enquiring natures because of the excellent organisation of learning. This rapid progress continues in the Reception class and is evident in the school's Early Learning Profile records, where a very large majority of children achieve at least level six in all areas of learning. Children with complex needs are well integrated in all activities because the learning support assistants understand their needs very well. Children learn about the world around them through the 'Forest School', which takes place in a wooded area of the school grounds. They enjoy the physical activity and the challenge of solving problems.

Teaching is outstanding, partly because the curriculum is well designed to create rich opportunities to learn through play and small group activities, but also because all adults understand the importance of engaging pupils with questions and challenges. Teachers show a very high level of expertise. The high quality of observations made by adults results in very thorough assessments, which are then used exceptionally well to guide further teaching and learning.

Children show a very good understanding of dangers because of the consistently high priority adults give to safeguarding and to their health and well-being. For example, all children know that they must not enter the wooded area until their teacher has 'asked the trees' if it is safe. They learn to look at how the wind is causing the trees to 'wave' at them.

Leadership and management are outstanding because of the very good organisation, the excellent links with parents and carers and the attention paid to their views, and those of

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the children and staff. Leaders work closely with other agencies to promote the children's development and well-being.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so. However, inspectors examined the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views and validated the findings by talking to several parents and carers both formally and informally. The overwhelming view from parents and carers is positive. They feel that the school does a very good job in meeting their children's needs. They recognise the value of the school's enhanced provision for all children, giving them a more realistic picture of people's different abilities and needs. Parents and carers appreciate the guidance they receive from the school to support their children's learning. They are pleased that the school offers a range of after-school clubs, but some are concerned that younger children tend to miss out when clubs are over-subscribed. They like the easy access to their children's class teachers, and the headteacher's regular coffee mornings are popular. However, a few parents would like the headteacher to be more visible at the beginning and end of the school day.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



18 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bentfield Primary School, Stansted, CM24 8DX

Not long ago, I visited your school for the third time, along with another inspector. This is because the inspection last year showed some problems. I have been checking on how well the school is tackling these problems. This letter is to tell you about what I found. First though, I want to thank all of you for being so helpful to the inspectors and for being so good during the fire drill.

The good news is that the school has made lots of improvements. Bentfield Primary is now a good school with some outstanding features. You are now learning well because the teaching is better. Your teachers know more about how well each of you is doing. This means they can make sure you get work that is right for you. A lot of credit must go to your new headteacher, but all the staff and the school governing body have played their part. You can all help too by continuing to work hard.

Some things the school does are outstanding. This means they are so good that other schools could learn from them. The school gives excellent care and support, especially for pupils with disabilities and extra learning needs. We were really impressed with the way everyone gets along and how everyone is valued. You told us that you share things well, that lessons are fun and staff are really helpful. The Nursery and Reception classes are very good indeed.

To help the school get even better, we have made three suggestions. These are for the school to:

- set higher targets and write a new plan to meet them
- give you more chances to find out about people from different backgrounds
- think hard about the best ways of teaching you mathematics, so you understand it even better.

You can be very proud of your school. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Abbott

Her Majesty's Inspector

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