

Bridgemere CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111343
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	378283
Inspection dates	27–28 March 2012
Lead inspector	Sarah Drake

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alan Branthwaite
Headteacher	Jane Dickinson
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2009
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sarah Drake

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by five different teachers, plus a series of short sessions promoting children's and pupils' understanding of the links between letters and sounds. She also heard pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 reading and talked with them about their enjoyment of books. The inspector held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and one group of pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a range of documentation relating to pupil progress and school management including work in pupils' books, tracking data, development planning, monitoring records and information about safeguarding. She also took into account the responses to the inspection questionnaire made by pupils, staff and 34 parents and carers.

Information about the school

Bridgemere is a smaller than average-sized primary school. It serves a rural area in south Cheshire. The great majority of pupils are White British. Few pupils are of minority-ethnic heritage, speak English as an additional language or are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average overall although the proportion that has a statement of special educational needs is above average. This fluctuates because year groups are small and more pupils than is usual join or leave the school part way through their primary education. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

A large majority of teaching staff have joined the school since the previous inspection. There has also been new accommodation to house the Early Years Foundation Stage unit. Since January 2010, the school has offered flexible nursery provision, combining maintained provision with the opportunity for parents and carers to pay for their child to attend for extra hours. Since September 2010 the school has offered before- and after-school childcare provision for its pupils.

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

- This is a satisfactory school. It is also an improving school because settled staffing and the recently created, strong leadership team mean that it is now possible to take concerted steps forward. This is already making a difference to the quality of provision. The school is not yet a good school because pupils' achievement over time is only satisfactory and the quality of teaching is not yet consistently good or better.
- Children make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and good progress in Key Stage 1 because the activities capture their interest and are very well adapted to their different abilities. In Key Stage 2 pupils' progress is satisfactory. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning but they do not have enough opportunities to practise their basic skills or to write at length.
- The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. In some lessons a brisk pace and high quality questioning from adults skilfully extend pupils' thinking. Some other lessons, especially in Key Stage 2, are not sufficiently well organised and opportunities are missed to help pupils make more rapid progress. Marking does not always give pupils enough guidance on how to improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy being at school and the great majority of them say that they feel safe there. They describe the school as, 'friendly, caring and fun'. Behaviour is typically good and helps to create a warm and happy learning environment.
- The school's leaders have built a supportive staff team in which everyone's contribution is valued. It is now possible for responsibilities to be shared and carried out competently. Former weaknesses in teaching have been eliminated through effective management of performance but there is still room for further improvement. Parents and carers are very supportive of the school.

Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the rate of pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to practise their spelling and problem-solving skills, and to write at length
 - improving the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation to that of the best
 - linking the success criteria for development planning closely to improving pupils' achievement.

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - all teachers provide pupils of different abilities with the right level of challenge
 - all lessons are well-organised and move at a good pace
 - all teachers make clear to pupils what they expect them to learn in lessons
 - all marking makes clear to pupils what they have done well and what they need to do to improve their work.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers are largely positive about the progress their children make at school. Typical of the comments made by those who have children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is, 'My child has made an excellent start to her education; she is always excited about coming to school.' These views are supported by the inspection evidence. In recent years increasing numbers of children have joined the Nursery with skills that are somewhat below those expected for their age whereas in the past children's skills were broadly as expected. Children quickly become eager learners who concentrate equally well on redrafting their writing using a computer or on carefully building a nest for a duck. For the past two years almost all children have left Reception with above average skills.

Pupils in Key Stage 1 now make good progress in response to high quality teaching. In a history lesson they quickly moved from organising a time line to developing arguments as to whether the Great Fire of London was good or bad for the city. They linked their learning to their visit to Nantwich, which also had a fire, and eagerly set about assigning roles for different members of their group. In Key Stage 2, while the content is often interesting, pupils' progress is only satisfactory because the activities are not so well adapted to their different abilities. Sometimes this leads to pupils drifting off task. While some pupils' work is beautifully presented, not all pupils take enough care with their handwriting and many make basic spelling errors. Attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6 is average although the small numbers in each year group lead to considerable variation from year to year. Pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average at the end of Year 6 and the end of Year 2. Two thirds of the pupils in Year 2 joined the school after the Reception Year. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs develop positive attitudes to learning and make similar rates of progress to their peers. The many pupils who join the school partway through their education also make satisfactory progress overall. The small numbers who speak English as an additional language swiftly acquire the necessary communication skills to support their learning in other areas.

Quality of teaching

The great majority of parents and carers agree that their children are well taught but a minority consider that their children could be challenged more. The inspection findings also highlight inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. All teachers' planning clearly outlines the different levels at which pupils are working and the objectives for the lesson. In some lessons this translates into activities that build very effectively on pupils' interests and are finely tuned to provide good levels of challenge for all. For example, pupils in Key Stage 1 chose adjectives such as 'see-through' and 'triangular' and similes such as 'spiky as a thorn' to describe the Bog Babies that they had made the day before. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, high-quality questioning inspired Reception children to think hard about their choice of words for a poster. Similarly, outdoors, sensitive but well-focused discussion led forward Nursery children's thinking about the properties needed to provide comfort and warmth in a nest. In such lessons, the teaching promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well as they consider others' needs and add zest to their writing. Similarly, in all classes, the use of partner and group working extends pupils' social and communication skills.

Some lessons are less well organised and move at a slower pace. Teachers do not always make sufficiently clear their different expectations of those with different abilities. Activities for the more-able pupils, in particular, do not always provide them with enough challenge. The taught curriculum ensures that pupils develop their skills sequentially. However, teachers do not all provide pupils with enough opportunities to consolidate and apply their knowledge of, for example, different mathematical functions or how letters link to sounds. Pupils' books do not contain enough examples of good quality, extended writing. Throughout the school, teaching assistants provide good levels of support for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This enables them to participate fully and make similar progress to their peers.

Recently introduced target-cards, attached to pupils' literacy and mathematics books, identify the specific requirements for different levels of work. As one pupil perceptively commented, 'If you know how to use them properly, they are helpful.' However, they are not always changed quickly enough once the pupil has achieved the targets and teachers do not all refer to them when marking pupils' work. Most pupils consider that teaching is good and they appreciate teachers' help and praise but they indicate that they are not always sure about how well they are doing or what they should do to improve their work. This is because not all teachers provide clear written pointers for improvement or, when they do, give pupils the opportunity in later lessons to consider and respond to the comments made.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

All parents and carers agree that their children are safe at school. Most consider that behaviour is typically good and that any, rare, instances of bullying of any kind are dealt with effectively. Similarly, pupils say that behaviour is generally good. They describe the school as, 'like a family' where, 'everyone is a team player' and they understand that name-calling and other acts of unkindness are wrong and hurtful. The school's systems are effective in helping those who find self-discipline difficult to improve their behaviour although, on occasion, a small minority of pupils cause low-level disruption in lessons. Pupils are alert to any potential hazards around school, such as damaged fencing, and are quick to inform staff when necessary. They understand the need for firewalls on the school computers but are less aware of the hazards posed by electronic communications in the

wider world. Pupils are outgoing, polite, form good relationships and play together well. All those spoken with appreciate the work of pupil 'buddy guards', introduced this year at the instigation of the school council, who offer support and help to sort out minor playground spats. Pupils enjoy their time at school and attendance is consistently above average.

Leadership and management

Steadfast leadership from the headteacher has guided the school through a period of unsettled staffing. At the same time, the provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage has greatly improved and the numbers of children in Nursery have increased. Successful action has been taken to improve the quality of teaching. The decision to take over the running of the out-of-school club has also enhanced the provision for pupils as it offers them a relaxed, supportive environment at either end of the day.

Skilful nurturing of all staff, development of those who have been at the school the longest and swift harnessing of the skills of those who have arrived most recently, have built a good sense of teamwork. The current, strong leadership team has introduced many actions to improve the provision but there has not yet been enough time for these to have a measurable impact on pupils' achievement. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve. The teaching of the links between letters and sounds is now more systematic than in the past. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress now give a very clear picture of how well each is achieving. This provides useful information that allows members of the governing body and senior leaders to hold the school and individual teachers to account. The information is also used to target extra support where it is most needed. Staff have good access to continuing professional development, often in collaboration with other local schools and is suitably linked to the priorities in the school's development plan. However, this does not yet identify clear, measurable targets related to pupils' achievement through which to measure the success of actions.

Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The school satisfactorily promotes equality of opportunity. All pupils are fully included in activities and discrimination is not tolerated. Pupils of different abilities and home circumstances make similar rates of progress within classes. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through, for example, topics such as the Rainforest Rescue challenge, and the school's links with a school in Uganda. The curriculum is currently being reviewed to ensure that it provides plenty of opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across a range of subjects that are of interest to them. Parents and carers provide the school with strong support both as volunteers in lessons and through impressive fundraising which helped, for example, to finance the school's contribution to the new Early Years Foundation Stage unit.

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.
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.

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.



29 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bridgemere CofE Primary School, Nantwich, CW5 7PX

Thank you very much for the warm welcome that you gave me when I visited your school. Particular thanks to those of you who spoke with me or read to me and to all of you who returned questionnaires – including your parents and carers. I enjoyed my time at Bridgemere and was very pleased to see how well you behave and get on with each other. It was also good to see you caring for the duck eggs in the playground. I wonder whether they have hatched yet!

Bridgemere is a satisfactory school that is improving well. It has not yet had quite enough time for all the changes, such as to your phonics and guided reading lessons, to help all pupils make good progress. I have asked the leaders to make sure that this does happen. There have been good improvements for children in Nursery and Reception which mean that most of them make excellent progress. The quality of teaching has also improved but it is not yet consistently good or better so I have also asked the leaders to make sure that this happens too, including making some marking more helpful for you. At the moment attainment at the end of Year 6 is broadly average. In addition to improvements in teaching, most of you can help to raise your own standards by taking much greater care with your spelling and the presentation of your work. I am well aware that some of you already do this – well done! Another 'well done' should go to you all for your good attendance.

The school's leaders and all the staff work together as a good team. Your parents and carers also make a strong contribution towards helping the school to improve. Through your openness and care for others you help to make Bridgemere a happy school that welcomes newcomers. I hope you continue to enjoy school as much as you do now. This letter comes with my best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sarah Drake
Lead inspector

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