

Becontree Primary School

Stevens Road, Becontree, Dagenham, RM8 2QR

Inspection dates 20–21 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The significant majority of pupils make good progress and learn well in their lessons.
- Since the last inspection, pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has improved consistently and is now above the national average.
- Pupils who are behind with their reading and numeracy skills when they start school catch up quickly and make good progress.
- Teaching and learning are good across the school and some of the teaching is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations of pupils and deliver lessons that are interesting, enjoyable and help the pupils learn well.
- Pupils enjoy being in school. They are clear that they feel safe and well cared for.
- Behaviour is good because it is consistently well managed and expectations are clear. As a result, the number of exclusions has reduced dramatically.
- Attendance has improved significantly and is now well above average.
- The headteacher leads the school very effectively and is well supported by a very strong senior leadership team. More staff are now being given the opportunity to take leadership and management roles, and do this effectively. The governing body provides appropriate support and challenge.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are a small number of lessons where the teaching is not yet good.
- The type of work set when pupils move from Reception classes into Year 1 is not always appropriate for their age.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 26 lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders. Every class was observed at least once.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and one other governor, several staff members including senior and middle leaders, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 22 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Other parents' and carers' views were sought at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, documents relating to safeguarding, and minutes of various meetings.

Inspection team

Nigel Grimshaw, Lead inspector	Additional inspector
Evelyn Riley	Additional inspector
Peter Sowrey	Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is much larger than average.
- There are more pupils from minority ethnic groups than in most schools of this size.
- Almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The school receives additional funding for around a third of pupils through the pupil premium initiative because they are known to be eligible for free school meals. This is an above average proportion of pupils.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is well above average.
- The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is broadly average.
- There is a breakfast club that is not managed by the school's governing body. This will be subject to a separate inspection.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the consistency of teaching, particularly at Key Stage 1, by ensuring all teaching is good or outstanding by July 2013 through:
 - ensuring that all pupils are clear about learning expectations in lessons
 - ensuring that the work is set at the right level for all pupils
 - making sure that the pace of learning is slick in all lessons
 - setting performance targets for teachers to achieve
 - sharing the good practice within the school.
- Improve the current transition from the Early Years Foundation Stage to Key Stage 1 by:
 - planning learning activities that meet the academic, social and developmental needs of all the pupils
 - involving more experienced practitioners in supporting teachers who are less experienced with this age group of pupils.
 - sharing the good practice that already exists within the school.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and knowledge that are well below those expected for their age. The teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes is good. Children settle well into school life and make good progress, especially in basic communication skills and mathematics. Overall standards remain below national expectations at the end of the Reception Year.
- This good progress is maintained across the school because senior leaders have successfully focused on improving teaching and learning. Consequently, attainment has improved for the last four consecutive years and, most recently, has reached levels above the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Results in reading are particularly good. Pupils say that they like reading. This is because the teaching of reading skills is particularly effective and most pupils have great confidence in their reading ability. Pupils say that they read for pleasure both in and out of school.
- Senior leaders monitor pupils' progress rigorously and hold meetings regularly with the teachers. Pupils who are falling behind are consequently identified promptly and individual plans are put in place to speed up their learning. These plans are effective and the gaps in attainment close.
- Pupils eligible for free school meals, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, make good progress because key staff monitor their progress closely. The work is therefore then set at the right level and they receive good quality support. As a result, they make progress broadly in line with their peers. All groups, including those from different ethnic groups, make similarly good progress.
- Senior leaders, ably supported by all staff, have worked hard to ensure that the more-able pupils are challenged in their work. Planning is now more focused in this area and pupils have targets to achieve, which they enjoy. Consequently, their outcomes have improved significantly, particularly in writing, which had been a recent focus for the school.
- Progress in most lessons observed was good or better. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan work that they find motivating. This was particularly true in an outstanding, pacy mathematics lesson in Year 6 where expectations were high and the problems to be solved were challenging. However, in the small number of less-effective lessons, the pace was variable and the work was not always set at the right level to be challenging.
- The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire feel that their children make good progress. This was also evident from discussions with parents and carers at the start of the school day.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers skilfully engage pupils by providing interesting work which motivates them to do their best. Expectations in most lessons are high and pupils respond well to the challenge.
- Teachers assess the attainment and progress of the pupils over time and use this information to set work that is at the right level for the pupils. Assessment during lessons is also a strength and any difficulties arising are consequently addressed promptly by the teacher.
- Resources are well prepared, including the effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons. The resources help to structure the lesson and support learning, and so the pace in these lessons is suitably challenging.
- Pupils have targets in English and mathematics. They enjoy the challenge these present and are motivated by them. Pupils, particularly the older pupils, are encouraged to assess their own progress and understanding in lessons, and also that of their peers. They use a traffic light colour code to say how well they understand the work they have completed. This is working well in improving the outcomes for the pupils. The marking by teachers is helpful and consistently applied, and time is given in lessons for the pupils to respond. In some classes an excellent dialogue has developed between the teacher and the pupils, which is proving

beneficial to progress.

- In a few lessons, the work set by the teachers did not always match the abilities of the pupils or take into account their previous experiences, and pupils were not always clear about the learning intentions. This led to variations in pace and a subsequent dip in the progress made during the lesson.
- Teaching effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is evident in lessons and around the school. Pupils generally work very cooperatively, value the opinions of others and behave extremely well. A carefully structured programme of support ensures that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are taught well, often by very effective teaching assistants.
- Teachers interpret the curriculum imaginatively. Useful links between subjects enhance pupils' learning and teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills. This is particularly true of their writing, which has consequently improved significantly in the last year. This was demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson where expectations were high on the use of adjectives and also on presentation and spelling.
- A very high proportion of parents and carers feel that their children are taught well and are prepared for the next stage of their education. The inspection findings fully support this view. Parents and carers recognise Becontree as an improving school. One parent summed up the common view saying, 'The teachers are always willing to talk to us about our children and will always try to help them with their work.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to do well. They concentrate and persevere in completing the work set for them. In a small number of lessons, some pupils found this more difficult when the work set was not at their level.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around school. They work and play together harmoniously. They are extremely polite, confident and very welcoming. Parents and carers support this view.
- The school has worked in close cooperation with other agencies to support pupils with very challenging behaviour. Most of the time, the support provided works exceptionally well but very occasionally, there can be some minor disruption. However, the efforts made by the school cannot be faulted.
- Routines are well established in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the children show consideration for others, and are able to take turns and share equipment. The consistent approach to managing behaviour ensures that this continues throughout the school. The school has clear evidence of improvements in behaviour since the last inspection in 2010.
- School records indicate that there are very few incidents of bullying, a view reinforced in discussions with pupils and parents and carers. Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, they say that bullying is very rare and is dealt with promptly and effectively by the adults in school. Racist behaviour incidents are even less common because the pupils show mutual respect for each other. The school has worked with pupils and their parents and carers to ensure good awareness of safe and appropriate use of the internet.
- The improvements in attendance have been remarkable over the last four years and now attendance rates are well above the national averages. This reflects the view that the pupils enjoy coming to school and have positive views of the importance of their learning.

The leadership and management are good

- The excellent leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, provides a strong and clear direction for the school. The focus has rightly been on a rigorous programme of improvement in the quality of teaching. Although a small pocket of teaching still requires improvement, the programme has been very successful. The improved teaching has led over recent years to much improved attainment and progress of the pupils.
- School leaders have recognised the need to extend leadership and management responsibilities to more staff and have introduced a programme to achieve this. This programme is working

well.

- The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The successful induction programme for children and their parents and carers works exceptionally well, and therefore the children settle well into school life and make good progress.
 - Similarly, the leaders of other aspects, such as ICT, literacy and mathematics, have provided clear support and direction that has helped to improve the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils. This is illustrated by the use of ICT in lessons and in the much-improved attainment and progress in reading, writing and numeracy.
 - Setting targets for teachers is well embedded. Consequently, there is an appropriate training programme in place for teachers. The staff questionnaires indicate that this is valued highly by the staff.
 - Leaders and managers have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. As a result, since the last inspection, there have been significant improvements in outcomes for pupils in reading, writing, and mathematics. The quality of teaching has also improved as well as aspects of the learning environment, such as the new and very popular, library. Consequently, the leaders have demonstrated a good capacity to improve further.
 - The school development plan accurately reflects the priorities for the school and is clearly structured to achieve the necessary improvements.
 - The curriculum has been successfully developed over the last two years to create opportunities for enjoyable learning and also for pupils to apply their basic skills in a wider range of subjects. This is particularly true of writing skills and this has led to considerable improvements at all key stages within the school.
 - The local authority has provided good support to the school to improve the provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage, ICT, literacy and mathematics. The school staff have valued the help and guidance.
 - The parents and carers value the work undertaken by the school to engage them in their children's learning. This was evident from the online questionnaire and the discussions with parents and carers. They say that they feel well informed. The school website is particularly informative and attractive, and is accessed widely.
 - Procedures to ensure the safeguarding of pupils are effective and meet statutory requirements. Staff and governors have received the appropriate training. The school provides pupils with a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe.
- **The governance of the school:**
- The governing body has a clear view of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school.
 - Governors visit the school regularly in order to provide support and gain first-hand insights into its day-to-day life.
 - Governors are knowledgeable about the standards in school and the areas requiring further improvement, although not all are fully involved in evaluating its work.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	101231
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	400461

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	484
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Philip Wood
Headteacher	Steve Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	25 May 2010
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