

Baddow Hall Junior School

New Road, Great Baddow, Chelmsford, CM2 7QZ

Inspection dates 14–15 November 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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 extremely effective headteacher has led an unrelenting drive for continued improvement. Success can be seen in the pupils' improving attainment year on year to the current high levels.
- Pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment in English and Mathematics is well above average.
- All groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- The quality of teaching is good and there are some examples of outstanding practice.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They feel safe in school and their attendance is well above average.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The governors come into school often, and robustly require the school to provide them with details of all pupils' progress, and to explain any differences.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and some teaching still requires improvement. In the less effective lessons, teachers set work that is too easy for the most able pupils.
- Although attaining standards well above average in writing, boys could be further stimulated to write by giving them subjects to write about which appeal to them more.
- Pupils are not always provided with enough opportunities to develop the skills of finding things out for themselves and then testing what they have found out by applying those skills to real-life investigations.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons, three of which were joint observations with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and analysed their work. They held two formal discussions with pupils and spoke to others informally in lessons, at breaks and at lunchtime.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders and with two governors, one of whom was the Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with the local authority's Assistant Strategic Lead Commissioner for Primary Education.
- 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.
- Inspectors took account of the 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), telephone conversations with parents and the results of the school's most recent parent questionnaire.

Inspection team

Ronald Cohen, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Matthew Klimcke

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized junior school. Numbers are increasing year on year. There are more boys than girls in most year groups.
- Most pupils are White British. A very small number of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. Only a very small number of pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is average. However, the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, in local authority care, or whose parents are in the armed forces, is below average.
- 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?

- Further improve teaching so that it is never less than good and more is outstanding by:
 - ensuring that pupils in all year groups have opportunities to develop the skills of how to find out things for themselves
 - ensuring that, from the outset of lessons, all groups, including the more able pupils, are set appropriately challenging tasks.
- Improve writing, particularly that of boys, even further by:
 - offering more opportunities for writing in subjects other than English
 - giving pupils topics which excite them, and which appeal to both boys and girls.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils join the school with standards in English and mathematics which are above average. This means that they are the equivalent of a term ahead of their year group nationally. When they leave at the end of Year 6, they are around a year ahead. This represents good progress overall.
- The school has been very successful in narrowing the gap between the achievement of pupils supported by the pupil premium and other pupils. The gap has been similarly narrowed for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. No specific groups of pupils achieve significantly more or less well than others, but the progress of the more able pupils could be better in some lessons.
- Most pupils enjoy reading, and the vast majority read with expression, understanding and fluency. The few less developed readers occasionally need to apply their knowledge of letters and the sounds they make (phonics), and are able, therefore, to correct their own mistakes. Girls, who are quite heavily outnumbered by boys, attain better than boys in all areas.
- Pupils currently at the school show, in their lessons and in their workbooks, a continuation of the well above average levels of attainment of previous years, and pupils are making good progress. There has been a very successful concentration on improving mathematics. However, attainment in writing, although still well above average overall, is less strong amongst boys than girls.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities for writing beyond the formal lessons in English, and across other subjects. Boys are sometimes encouraged to write by topics which appeal to both boys and girls. For example, in one outstanding Year 4 lesson concerning bullying, pupils were encouraged to write down their thoughts in any way which they felt they could address the issue with their friends. Girls wrote meaningful poems, but several boys wrote 'rap' poems, which, as one said, 'Speaks about my feelings in the language that I would be happy to use with my friends'. However, such lessons are not yet the norm.

The quality of teaching is good

- The best teaching is characterised by activities which capture pupils' interests and which ensure a brisk pace of learning where pupils get a lot done. In such lessons, pupils are active participants rather than passive recipients in their learning. Teachers use well-targeted questions to check pupils' understanding and to correct any misconceptions. From the beginning of the lesson, pupils are set appropriate tasks which provide additional challenge for the more able and targeted and monitored support for the less able pupils.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This was demonstrated clearly in a Year 5 mathematics lesson, which allowed pupils to reflect on, and question each other's understanding of mathematical concepts until the correct answer was discovered. They were required to do this in a positive, yet collaborative way. In such an environment, pupils were encouraged to be resilient and independent in their learning, whilst being sensitive to the other pupils in their group. They demonstrated these skills to good effect.
- A minority of teaching requires improvement because progress for pupils, particularly but not exclusively the most able, is not sufficient for them to attain the higher levels of which they are capable. Too often, the pace in such lessons, and the over-involvement of the teacher, means

that the pupils are not sufficiently engaged. Their interest often wanes; their behaviour becomes restless, or at best, pupils become quietly inattentive and, as a result, their learning and progress slows.

- Classes are set according to pupils' ability. However, even within the sets, there is still quite a wide range of abilities. Activities are not always sufficiently diverse to cater for the full range of pupils' needs, both in terms of challenge or in terms of time being allocated to tasks. Too often, therefore, this results in some pupils, particularly the high ability pupils, not being sufficiently challenged. As a result, they do not always attain their highest possible level.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils behave well and are courteous to visitors. They get on very well with each other. They have a mature understanding of what is right and wrong and a keen sense of justice.
- Pupils say that bullying and racism are very rare. They are very clear about who to go to if they have any worries, and they are confident that 'it gets sorted out'. Class and school rules are well known, and respected.
- In lessons, pupils' conduct is good and they get on with their work. Very occasionally, however, pupils are not well motivated by their work, and then the usually very high standards of behaviour wane a little.
- Attendance is well above average and punctuality is good.
- The pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are very happy to be in school, where 'everyone is friendly and the teachers really care for you, and help you'. Whilst there is a very small amount of disruptive behaviour, pupils are adamant that their classes and lessons are not much affected by it. As one pupil said, 'It is usually just one or two pupils, and they can't always help their feelings. They are usually taken out to a place where they can calm down.' Pupils are also aware of the hazards of internet use, and how to keep safe.
- A small number of parents expressed concerns about the behaviour of a small number of children and about the safety of their children. However, inspectors' findings agree with the large majority of parents and carers who responded to Parent View and to recent questionnaires who stated that behaviour of the pupils and the safety of their children were good.

The leadership and management are good

- The vision and drive of the headteacher have steered the school successfully. His inspirational leadership, and its impact on the school's increasing successes, has earned him the respect and admiration of staff. He is well supported by senior staff and a team of middle managers, whose skills are improving quickly.
 - Self-evaluation, based on a comprehensive range of evidence, is thorough and accurate. There is a strong focus on monitoring the quality of teaching, linked to performance management. Where necessary, teachers are given clear areas for improvement, and the incidence of outstanding and good teaching indicates that teaching is improving as a result.
 - The progress of all groups of pupils, including those for whom the school receives the pupil
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premium, is monitored regularly and rigorously. This ensures that any pupil at risk of falling behind is quickly identified and given the specific help they need in order to catch up. The impact has been especially marked in relation to less able pupils.

- The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and monitors any incidences of inappropriate behaviour meticulously. There are good systems to support children with challenging behaviour.
 - The procedures for keeping the pupils safe are robust and meet the current requirements.
 - The school's own questionnaire and inspectors' perusal of parents' statements show that the majority of parents are happy with the school's provision. The school's good-quality website keeps parents well informed, with useful links and advice to help them to support their children's learning.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - Through detailed and robust information from the headteacher, and from their own detailed visits to the school, governors are very knowledgeable. They are aware of the strengths of the school and areas for development, and they are rigorous in holding the school to account. Although they give unwavering support to the school, they ask searching and challenging questions about pupils' performance, especially, but not exclusively, of those pupils for whom the school is in receipt of pupil premium funding. Governors also have full knowledge of the school's use of performance management and its relation to the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. This is linked to governors' maintaining a clear understanding of what is being done for the continued professional development of teachers. They do this by visiting lessons and even, occasionally, the training sessions for teachers' professional development. Governors understand the data presented to them by the school concerning pupils' performances and they challenge the school about any areas which appear to be underperforming. Governors ensure that they keep abreast of all current legislation which is pertinent to them by participating in regular updating training sessions. Governors fulfil their statutory requirements concerning the safeguarding and safety of pupils. They maintain a close eye on the school's overall budget and its use for the current and future direction of the school. The wide range of experience within the governing body enables governors to make a good contribution to the school's strategic development.
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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	114913
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	403249

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Joanne Hampton
Headteacher	Guy Niven
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
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