

Buttsbury Junior School

Norsey View Drive, Billericay, CM12 0QR

Inspection dates 9–10 May 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' achievement has been too varied during the past two years and pupils have not made enough progress from their above average starting points.
- Year 6 test results in 2012 dipped to average levels in English, with writing being the weaker area.
- The quality of teaching is improving, but has not been consistently good enough to ensure that pupils make good progress.
- Occasionally in lessons, the purpose of the learning is not clear to pupils.
- Tasks are not always planned and set at the right level to match the differing abilities of pupils, particularly the more able.
- Learning does not always move on at a quick enough pace.
- There are weaknesses in learning resources for mathematics.
- Leaders and managers have not consistently promoted good achievement and good teaching.
- The checking of pupils' progress and the action taken to tackle under performance has not been effective enough until recently
- Not all leaders are sufficiently developed in their role to enable them to check performance and drive improvement.

The school has the following strengths

- The new headteacher brings good experience to the school and has quickly gained the confidence of pupils, parents and staff.
- She and staff are taking robust action to raise achievement and improve teaching and, as a result, pupils' progress is improving.
- The school has a positive atmosphere and is a safe and welcoming environment.
- There are examples of outstanding teaching which can be shared.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Behaviour is sometimes exemplary.
- Pupils feel safe and very well cared for by adults.
- Attendance is consistently well above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 23 lessons. Some of these were seen jointly with the headteacher or with one of the assistant headteachers.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, a representative from the local authority, governors and pupils.
- The inspectors took account of the 95 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and correspondence from parents.
- Responses to an inspection questionnaire from 40 staff were analysed.
- The inspectors examined school policies, information about pupils' attainment and progress, teachers' plans, pupils' work and the school's improvement plans.

Inspection team

Derek Watts, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynne Thorogood

Additional Inspector

Kanwaljit Singh

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a much larger than average-sized primary school.
- Most of the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion supported through school action plus or a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- A well below average proportion of the pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school converted to become an academy school on 1 May 2011. When the predecessor school, of the same name, was inspected by Ofsted in February 2010 it was judged to be outstanding.
- Buttsbury Junior School is a member of the Billericay Community Trust, an association of local schools and Anglia Ruskin University.
- The headteacher took up the post in January 2013.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is at least good by making sure that:
 - pupils are always clear about what they are expected to learn in the lesson
 - teachers always set tasks at the right level of difficulty for individual pupils, particularly for the more able
 - learning in the lesson moves on at a quick pace and pupils are moved on to the main task sooner.
- Accelerate pupils' progress and raise attainment to at least above average levels, particularly in writing by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to write extended pieces in English and in other subjects
 - improving learning resources in mathematics.
- Strengthen leadership and management by making sure that all leaders receive the necessary training and development to enable them to check performance and improve their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils' progress has not been good enough over the last two years and pupils have not reached the standards they were capable of, particularly in English.
- Pupils enter the school with attainment which is consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The Year 6 results in 2012 were above average in mathematics but only average in English. The school has not been building on pupils' prior attainment. Progress for too many pupils has been inadequate.
- Under the leadership of the new headteacher, robust action is being taken to raise pupils' achievement, although progress still requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good in all classes and year groups.
- Attainment in the current Year 6 is higher than in 2012. Pupils are benefiting from well-targeted support and one-to-one tuition. Before-school booster classes are also working well.
- Improving pupils' writing is a key priority. Pupils write in different styles and for different purposes. While pupils produce some good pieces of extended writing in English lessons and in other subjects, this good practice is not yet consistent across the school.
- Pupils' progress is improving in mathematics because tasks are usually well-matched to their needs. Weaknesses in learning resources, particularly practical apparatus and attractive texts, are limiting pupils' learning opportunities.
- Positive steps are being taken to extend the more-able pupils and their progress is improving. However, there are occasions when tasks are not sufficiently demanding or they are not moved on to more challenging work soon enough.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving because activities and adult support are now more effectively suited to pupils' specific needs.
- In the 2012 Year 6 national tests, the very few pupils supported by the pupil premium attained standards lower than the other pupils in reading and writing. They were nine months behind the others in reading and writing but only two months behind in mathematics. More recent performance information shows that both groups are now making faster progress. In some year groups, the pupils supported by pupil premium are making faster progress than the others.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has not been consistent enough over the past two years to ensure that most pupils make good progress.
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve have not always been high enough. Teachers have not been sufficiently aware of pupils' prior attainment and the amount of progress that they need to make in order to show expected and better progress.

- Learning activities and tasks have not been sufficiently well matched to pupils' abilities and needs. The school is working hard to tackle this but, in a few lessons, tasks are not sufficiently demanding, particularly for the more able.
- The pace of learning declines when introductions to lessons are too long. Pupils are not moved soon enough onto the main task. For example, in a few writing lessons, pupils spent too long consolidating previous learning when they were inspired, motivated and ready to move on to the main writing task.
- In most lessons, the teacher effectively shares the purpose of the lesson with the class so that pupils know and understand what they are expected to learn. Teachers also set specific indicators or steps which effectively guide pupils' learning. In just a few lessons, lessons lack a sharp focus and pupils are unclear about what they are learning and why.
- Throughout the school, teachers and support staff have developed strong relationships with pupils. Teachers create a positive classroom climate for learning. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. As a result, pupils are cooperative, show consideration for others and work well in pairs and in small groups.
- The teaching of essential reading and writing skills is improving. Staff have benefited from recent training and development in phonics (letters and the sounds they make), guided reading and writing. There has also been good training in the teaching of mathematics but weaknesses in learning resources are hindering the range of learning opportunities provided.
- The proportion of good teaching is increasing and there are examples of outstanding practice. In a Year 4 and a Year 6 English lesson, pupils made outstanding progress in their writing. They were fully engaged as they rose to the teacher's high expectations and to the challenge of the task. They were inspired and motivated by visual stimuli such as a film clip. The teacher demonstrated or modelled very clearly how to writing interesting sentences. Pupils were productive and their learning moved along at a brisk pace.
- The teaching of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is improving. Tasks and support are now more closely suited to pupils' learning needs. In the main, teaching assistants are used effectively to guide and support pupils' learning.
- The new marking policy is working well. Teachers' marking recognises pupils' good work and provides constructive comments to move their learning on. Pupils find teachers' marking helpful and they are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' attendance, behaviour, safety and their attitudes to learning are strong features of the school. With these positive attributes and qualities, pupils' progress should be much better than it has been in recent years.
- Pupils show enthusiasm for learning. They are courteous, cooperative and relate very well to adults and to their peers. They show consideration and respect for others.
- The parents who responded to the online survey, Parent View, were very positive about pupils' safety, the promotion of good behaviour and how well pupils are looked after. These views reflect the findings of the inspection.

- Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. In a Year 4 and a Year 6 lesson, where teaching was outstanding, pupils showed extremely positive attitudes to learning and exemplary behaviour. When teaching is less than good, pupils' behaviour occasionally is less positive and requires improvement.
- In a whole-school assembly, pupils' behaviour and cooperation were outstanding as they celebrated the wide range of achievements of their fellow pupils.
- The school's clear records of incidents show that behaviour is typically good over time. There have been no exclusions since the new school opened.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying and the different forms it can take, including persistent name-calling, physical bullying and cyber bullying. Pupils reported to the inspectors, that there is no bullying in the school. They added, 'If there was, you can rely on the fact that it would be dealt with'.
- Pupils clearly enjoy coming to school and are very well supported by their parents. Attendance levels are consistently well above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching have not been consistently good during the past two years and therefore leadership and management require improvement.
- Until recently, leaders and managers have not been sufficiently focused on the progress that pupils make. As a consequence, they have not been effective enough in identifying pupils' underachievement and taking swift action to improve it.
- Not all leaders have been sufficiently trained and developed in their role to enable them to check pupils' performance and take effective action to bring about improvements where needed.
- The newly appointed headteacher quickly identified that pupils were not progressing as well as they should and has swiftly implemented a range of measures to raise pupils' achievement and improve the quality of teaching. Many positive changes have been implemented since January and as a result, pupils' progress and the quality of teaching are showing improvement. However, the changes are too recent to have had the full impact on pupils' achievement especially when many pupils have been under achieving for a while.
- The headteacher has quickly gained the confidence and respect of pupils, staff, parents and governors. She is providing very decisive leadership in driving improvement. Other leaders are being developed and empowered so that they can play a full part in checking performance and improving their areas of responsibility. All staff are fully behind the headteacher in the pressing need to move the school forward.
- There are clear procedures for checking the performance of staff. Training and targets are linked well to the school's priorities for improvement. The headteacher is determined that decisions about staff promotion and salary increases are correctly based on responsibilities, staff performance and the progress that pupils make.
- The pupil premium funding has been properly used to provide eligible pupils with additional

support and learning opportunities.

- The new headteacher has been keen to work closely with the local authority and enlisted their support in verifying her own assessment of how well the school was doing. The local authority has provided an accurate overview of the school's performance to help the school move forward.
- The school provides an interesting range of subjects and topics to promote pupils' learning. The range of additional clubs and sporting opportunities provided are a clear strength and are much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Positive action is being taken to improve learning opportunities in English and mathematics.
- All pupils at Buttsbury Junior have access to the full range of learning opportunities provided. Discrimination in any form is not tolerated.
- Parents hold positive views about the school although some have expressed concern about pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Given the school's under performance during the past two years, these concerns are justified. A number of parents took the time to write to the inspection team praising the school. In particular, parents remarked on the recent improvements to communication and the positive changes brought about by the new headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Member of the governing body have not been sufficiently well informed about pupils' progress and have therefore not been in a position to challenge under achievement.
 - Governors now have a clear overview of the school's performance, particularly pupils' progress. They are fully aware of the pressing need to accelerate progress so that pupils reach the standards they are capable of.
 - Governors understand recent requirements relating to the management of staff performance and the importance of promotion and salary increases being linked to the progress pupils make.
 - They ensure that pupil premium funding is properly spent.
 - A range of training has improved governors' understanding of their role in supporting the school and in holding it to account.
 - The governors have ensured that all safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

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	136734
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	411972

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

Type of school	Academy converter
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Heather Stuart
Headteacher	Ann Robinson
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01277 623217
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