

Barnes Farm Infant School

Henniker Gate, Chelmsford, CM2 6QH

Inspection dates 25–26 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	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.

- Pupils achieve well, whatever their starting points, and reach above average standards by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils learn well because teachers provide interesting and exciting lessons that fire their imagination.
- Pupils make excellent progress in reading. Pupils of all abilities have very well developed phonics skills (letters and the sounds they make).
- Children in the Reception year make rapid progress because teaching is consistently good and sometimes outstanding.
- Marking in English is very detailed and helps pupils understand how they can improve their work.
- Pupils enjoy school, behave well and are kept extremely safe. Attendance levels are above average.
- Leaders are ambitious for the pupils to succeed and work exceptionally well with staff to identify and tackle areas for improvement.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, interested in what goes on and support their children's learning at home conscientiously.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing and mathematics, while good, is not as brisk as it is in reading.
- Pupils are not always clear about how to improve their work in mathematics because teachers' comments are not as helpful as they are in English.
- Pupils do not always use their phonics skills to help them improve their writing.
- Teaching assistants do not always recognise that pupils need extra help to understand what they are learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 20 lessons, three of which were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- They held discussions with the headteacher, other teachers, pupils, four members of the governing body, the school’s improvement partner and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors examined a range of documents, including a summary of the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, policies aimed at keeping pupils safe, and information about the management of teachers’ performance.
- The views of 82 parents and carers were analysed through their responses on the Parent View website. Inspectors also spoke with parents during the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by the 24 staff who returned a questionnaire.
- Pupils in Year 1 took part in a ‘Pirate Day’ on the first day of the inspection, and their usual timetable was suspended.

Inspection team

Keith Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Kelly Stock

Additional Inspector

Graham Gossage

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most of pupils come from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of pupils comes from minority ethnic backgrounds, a few of whom speak English as an additional language.
- 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 with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is well below the national average. In this school, this relates to those who are known to be eligible for free school meals.
- There are three classes in each year group. A very small number of children are taught at the Grow Project at Newlands Spring Primary School for part of the week.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching and help pupils to make even faster progress by:
 - helping pupils to use their phonics skills to improve their writing
 - giving pupils more detailed information about how they can improve their work in mathematics
 - training teaching assistants to spot and help pupils who need extra support during lessons.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception year with skills that are typical of this age. They make good and often outstanding progress so that, by the end of the year, most children exceed the goals expected of them. Excellent links are established with parents from an early stage and, as a result, children settle very quickly and enjoy their learning enormously.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils' work in their books and lessons, and the school's detailed records, show that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds achieve well. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are consistently above average. The most-able pupils rise to the challenge of the harder work they are given and use their skills well to solve problems imaginatively.
- Reading is a strength because of the school's systematic approach to teaching early skills and the very strong emphasis they place on promoting reading for enjoyment. As a result, pupils read widely, and older pupils speak enthusiastically about their favourite stories and authors.
- The school has successfully improved standards in writing, particularly among boys, and in mathematics. Pupils make good progress but staff rightly recognise that there is still more to do catch up with the rapid progress made in reading.
- Pupils do not always use what they have learned in phonics sessions to improve their writing. Nevertheless, they receive high-quality, detailed comments about their writing. The information they get in mathematics, however, is not as helpful. As a result, pupils know what they should do to improve their writing, but they are not always so clear how they can improve their work in mathematics.
- The school has used the additional pupil premium funding to give extra help for individuals and small groups. These pupils make similarly good progress to that of their classmates but there are not enough of them, this year, to comment on their attainment in English and mathematics without identifying them.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well because a close check is kept on their progress and they are given well-thought-out and timely support. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to ensure that these pupils can play a full part in lessons.
- The use of primary school sport funding has had a positive impact on pupils' skill levels in physical education, for example in high-quality gymnastic work in Year 2. The school is also more involved in team sports competing against other local schools.
- The school checks very carefully on the progress made by the very small number of pupils who are taught for part of the week at another local school. This support has been very helpful in improving pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good and sometimes outstanding progress.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers have high expectations of themselves and pupils. They make sure that pupils of all abilities learn well by providing work at the right level of difficulty. A very close check is kept on the progress made by each pupil. As a result, staff know pupils really well. Those at risk of falling behind get the extra help they need.
- A strong feature is the way teachers enable pupils to use their knowledge, skills and understanding in a wide range of interesting and, often, real-life situations. For example, during 'Pirate Day' pupils in Year 1 improved their understanding of how to place events in the right order. In addition, they made good progress in learning how to use 'time words' such as 'before', 'after' and 'next' to help their writing.
- Staff have worked closely with leaders to improve the way phonics are taught. This has contributed considerably to the rapid progress pupils make in learning to read. Staff do not always encourage pupils to use their phonics skills to improve their writing.
- Marking is of high quality, particularly in English, where pupils receive detailed comments about how they can improve their work. This contributes to pupils' good progress. Teachers' comments in mathematics are not always as helpful to pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work well together to help pupils of all abilities, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. This is best when teaching assistants spot for themselves that individuals or groups of pupils need extra help or more explanation. Occasionally, teaching assistants wait for a prompt from the teacher before stepping in and, here, the learning of these pupils slows.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is very effective. The staff plan work that builds well on children's own particular interests and, consequently, they thrive in the supportive atmosphere. The adults question children well to deepen and check on their understanding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in lessons. They are keen to learn and interested in their work. Their positive attitudes have a considerable impact upon their learning. Attendance is consistently above average.
- In every class, lessons run smoothly because pupils settle quickly, listen attentively and move from room to room, or from carpet to tables, without fuss. A small minority of pupils have difficulty managing their behaviour. The school supports these pupils very well and ensures that any slowing of their own learning or that of others is minimal.
- Behaviour outside of lessons is usually good. Pupils say they enjoy break-times because they meet with friends and there is plenty for them to do. They play energetically, but with a good regard for each others' safety.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Almost all of the parents and carers who expressed a view say that their children are safe and well looked after. Very effective steps are taken to care for those pupils whose circumstances mean they are potentially vulnerable.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in different situations. They know what to do if the fire alarm rings and understand the potential dangers of using the internet.

- Pupils report that bullying is rare. Older pupils understand that bullying can take different forms. They are confident that staff deal quickly with any incidents should they arise.

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. There is a strong vision for securing the best for pupils, making sure their personal and emotional needs are met while maintaining above average standards.
- Leaders have set a demanding programme for improvement and this commitment is shared by most staff. Excellent systems to check on teaching and learning, closely linked to staff training, ensure that weaknesses are identified and tackled. Staff share their expertise with other local schools and, in addition, learn from the staff of those schools.
- Leaders systematically use the very detailed information they collect about pupils' progress to hold teachers to account and identify where pupils need an extra boost. Subject leaders make a strong contribution to securing improvement in their areas of responsibility. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage and of the school's provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is very effective.
- Those parents and carers who completed the online survey or spoke with inspectors are very pleased with what the school offers. They attend the regular workshops about aspects of their children's learning in great numbers, and support their children's learning at home.
- The school provides an excellent range of interesting and imaginative activities that contributes to pupils' good progress and enjoyment of school. There is a strong emphasis on promoting their all-round development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Good use has been made of the additional primary sport funding it has received to extend the sporting opportunities that are available to pupils. This has been used to increase teachers' knowledge and confidence in teaching physical education, to provide specialist dance teaching and better equipment and to enable pupils to take part in competitions with other schools.
- The local authority has made a good contribution to developing the school's leadership and improving teaching and learning.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body makes a good contribution to the school's work. Governors have improved their understanding of the school's effectiveness and are increasingly well placed to hold leaders to account. They receive regular, accurate and comprehensive information from school leaders, although opportunities for them to find out for themselves are limited.
 - Governors make good use of their individual expertise so that, for example, they understand the data published about the school's performance in the national assessments. They set challenging targets for the headteacher and make sure that the appraisal of teachers is carried out fairly. There are close links between teachers' performance and pay increases.
 - Governors have good oversight of the school's funding and check that spending is securing good value for money. They know how the additional funds for school sport are being spent. The governing body has been fully involved in making decisions about the funding for pupils supported through the pupil premium, and checking it is helping these pupils to raise their attainment.

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	115044
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	440536

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	270
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Newman
Select	Kate Mills
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2008
Telephone number	01245 467474
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