

Bentfield Primary School

Rainsford Road, Stansted Mountfitchet, Stansted, Essex CM24 8DX

Inspection dates

24–25 April 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders provide a strong team with a determination to improve outcomes for all pupils.
- The school's vision, 'Inspire, discover, encourage one another', demonstrates a strong commitment to equality and inclusion as key values at the heart of the learning process.
- Parents are very positive about their children's experience at the school. One parent described this by saying, 'The environment is inclusive, nurturing, welcoming and respectful.'
- Leaders and governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have concentrated on those actions which will help the school to improve most rapidly.
- Monitoring by leaders and governors is having an impact. Middle leaders are not as skilled and effective in monitoring their actions. This means that their impact on school improvement is variable across subjects.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced to meet the needs of pupils. However, there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to write for a range of audiences and purposes and to develop key vocabulary across a range of subjects.
- Teaching and learning have improved since the previous inspection, with increased challenge in lessons, matched to the ability of pupils. Teachers use questioning effectively to support and challenge pupils in lessons.
- Assessment is used effectively by teachers when planning. Pupils understand what they are learning, but tasks are not always adapted as their learning needs change to ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes.
- In the early years, children get off to a good start at school. Adults support children well when leading groups. However, adults do not always question or intervene when children are choosing their own learning activities in order to provide support and additional challenge and maximise children's learning opportunities.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy learning in lessons. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities benefit from effective provision to meet their complex and varying needs. Highly skilled teaching assistants work well alongside teachers in lessons to provide additional support. This enables pupils to make strong progress from their different starting points.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the impact of middle leaders in contributing to school improvement by:
 - developing their role in monitoring and evaluating so that next steps for improvement are clearly identified in all subjects
 - holding middle leaders to account for their identified responsibilities for school improvement.
- Improve the use of assessment so that tasks are consistently modified and adjusted, as required, to enable all pupils to achieve the best possible outcomes.
- Further develop the curriculum by:
 - planning increased opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills across a range of subjects and improve their presentation of work
 - identifying and promoting key vocabulary related to each subject area.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership with his determination to provide an inclusive education and improve outcomes for all pupils, whatever their ability or special educational need. He is well supported by other senior leaders. The school is a very positive place to work, with good relationships between staff, pupils and parents.
- Parents speak very highly of the school, particularly about its inclusive nature. One parent summed up the views of many by saying: 'Every child is made to feel equal, irrespective of any mental, physical or learning difficulties. I am thankful that my children have learned the importance of this at such a young age as it is a very valuable lesson in life.'
- Leaders and governors know the school well. Their evaluation of the school's effectiveness is accurate and informs school improvement. Systems to improve the performance of teachers are rigorous. Performance management procedures are strongly focused on key school priorities. Targets are linked to the quality of teaching, pupils' outcomes and teachers' professional development needs.
- Middle leaders are developing in their role in leading subjects across the broader curriculum. They have written their own action plans for their areas of responsibility but their monitoring of actions is not always incisive enough. This means that next steps are not clearly identified and the impact of middle leaders on school improvement is variable across subjects.
- The school provides a broad and balanced curriculum. It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities. Visits and visitors enrich the learning opportunities for pupils. For example, parents who had trekked across the Himalayas came into school and shared their experiences with the pupils. Pupils are well prepared to be good citizens in the wider world and take a keen interest in learning about how other people live.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the use of pupil premium and SEN funding is effective. Barriers to learning are identified and the use of nurture groups, along with mentoring, has a direct impact on pupils' emotional well-being and their ability to access classroom activities. The headteacher and head of learning support have incisive knowledge of individual pupils who are vulnerable or have more complex needs. They make sure that they work with and challenge external agencies to get the right sort of help and support for pupils. The progress of disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities is tracked to assess the impact of interventions and additional support so that any gaps in their learning can be addressed.
- The physical education and sport premium is being used to employ a sports games organiser. This is providing increased opportunities for pupils of all ages to learn new skills and compete against others in a wider range of sports.

Governance of the school

- Governors are committed to the success of the school.

- Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders provide governors with high-quality and relevant information on the school's effectiveness in a wide range of areas.
- Governors use this information well to provide both support and challenge to the leadership team. Governors work alongside leaders on their visits to the school and meet with pupils to see the school in action. This enables them to measure the effectiveness of leaders' actions on school improvement.
- Relationships between governors and parents are positive. This is because governors aim to be visible, initiating surveys with parents, and parents feel that they can approach them.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safer recruitment procedures are robust. Appropriate checks are carried out to ensure that adults employed are suitable to work with pupils.
- There are clear procedures in place for logging and monitoring any behaviour or safeguarding concerns to ensure that pupils are safe in school and well cared for.
- Staff and governors are trained and regularly updated in the latest safeguarding arrangements. They know how to protect pupils from radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders and governors responsible for safeguarding work together by undertaking regular health and safety walks and audits. As a result, issues are quickly addressed and the school continues to have effective policies and procedures for all aspects of safeguarding.
- Staff, parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and those spoken to during the inspection, agreed that pupils are kept safe and are well looked after.
- The school keeps meticulous records with regard to safeguarding pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching continues to improve and develop as teachers share their best practice. There is increased challenge in lessons, matched to the ability of pupils. This results in pupils making good progress over time. Relationships between staff and pupils are positive. Pupils work well on their own, with partners and in groups. They are encouraged to show resilience and learn from their mistakes.
- Lessons are well planned and organised, with a range of resources which pupils can choose from to support them when working on their own. Teachers show good subject knowledge, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Teachers use probing questioning, which encourages pupils to think and consolidate their learning or extend their ideas. Teachers provide clear explanations and a step-by-step approach for learning. As a result, Year 3 pupils worked to a clear structure in writing a set of instructions to make a tuna sandwich.

- Pupils value the guidance that they receive from their teachers on how they can improve their work. Pupils in key stage 2 describe how they edit and improve their writing. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils in key stage 1 to respond and improve their writing.
- When expectations are high, pupils achieve well in lessons, particularly the most able pupils. Sometimes opportunities to address misconceptions are missed and tasks are not always adapted as the needs of learners change during the lesson. Teachers do not always identify those pupils who need more input and support within lessons and learning slows when teachers then provide input to the whole class.
- Leaders have identified texts related to topic themes to make stronger links between reading and writing within the curriculum. For example, Year 6 pupils enjoyed reading 'Letters from the Lighthouse', which they used to model their own writing as evacuees from the Second World War.
- Leaders have introduced a cursive style of handwriting. However, the quality of pupils' handwriting and presentation varies in books, within classes and across the school. There are too few opportunities for pupils to write at length, explore their ideas and use their developing writing skills sufficiently well across a wide range of subject areas.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from strong, inclusive provision across the school. Teaching is matched to individual learning needs and is supported through a wide range of specialist therapies and interventions, as well as through opportunities to use the school's 'soft play' area and 'light and sound' zone. Learning support assistants are highly skilled and make a positive contribution in lessons. As a result, pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities, are well supported and make strong progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils recognise that treating everyone fairly is at the heart of the school's work. They look out for each other, including pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities, and recognise the unique nature of their school. One pupil described this by saying, 'You can never feel left out, because everyone is different.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying. They say that they feel safe in school and that, if there is a problem, teachers are approachable and will always consider both viewpoints.
- The school supports pupils in understanding how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet, and this is reinforced in lessons.
- Pupils are well supported, whatever their needs, to develop personally, socially and emotionally. Staff receive regular training to enable them to support and manage the varying needs of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils genuinely care for each other. During a personal, social and health education lesson, inspectors observed how maturely pupils responded to the opportunity to gain

an understanding of the effects of bereavement and showed empathy towards others.

- The school council has recently been re-established, but pupils feel that it is not currently providing them with a platform to make their views known. Although members are currently considering strategies for developing friendships and promoting healthy eating, other pupils would like to have the opportunity to share their ideas too.
- The breakfast club provides pupils with a nutritious start to the school day.
- Diversity within the school is celebrated, and at the forefront of school values is the commitment to equality and inclusion.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are welcoming and polite. They conduct themselves well in lessons, around the school and at various points during the day.
- Pupils enjoy school and learning. They have positive attitudes to what they are asked to do in lessons and work well together, regardless of their ability. Low-level disruption is rare and those pupils who sometimes exhibit more challenging behaviour are well supported.
- Pupils enjoy assemblies and are engaged through the themes. During the inspection, pupils reflected on how to be a good friend and to build positive relationships which make their friendships even stronger.
- Leaders have been pro-active in following up absences from school and attendance is average. There is a range of strategies in place to promote regular attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- At the end of key stage 1, there was an improvement in attainment in reading in 2017 compared to 2016 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are now in line with national averages.
- At the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading was in line with the national average, and the proportion reaching the higher level was above average. There was an increase in the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics and in those reaching the higher level. Overall, pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics. Work in pupils' books shows that there is increased challenge for the most able pupils. For example, pupils talked to inspectors about how they are encouraged to explain their reasoning in mathematics when solving problems.
- At the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in writing decreased in 2017 and was below the national average. Pupils made less progress in writing than in reading and mathematics, and progress in writing was significantly below that of other pupils nationally. Leaders have identified writing as an area for improvement and have introduced a number of strategies to address this. Standards in the use of punctuation, grammar and spelling are improving. There is

evidence, both in lessons and through the work in pupils' books, that pupils are now making stronger progress in developing their writing skills.

- Pupils enjoy reading and generally read widely, with fluency and comprehension that is appropriate to their age. The majority of pupils in Year 1 are on track to achieve the expected standard in the phonics check.
- There are clear tracking systems in place and current school assessment information shows that pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities benefit from effective provision to meet their complex and varying needs. This ensures that they are fully integrated, working alongside their peers in the classroom, and make good progress in lessons.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged. However, they make good progress and achieve in line with similar pupils nationally.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leader knows the children well, having identified their needs and starting points. She has a thorough understanding of areas for improvement and is not complacent about the successes already achieved in the early years.
- Children get off to a good start in Nursery. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of Reception Year increased in 2017. It was in line with the national average, so that children were well prepared for Year 1. There was a significantly higher number of boys in this cohort. They achieved in line with other children nationally in developing their reading, writing and mathematics skills and made good progress in these areas. However, they made less progress in areas such as physical development, technology and expressive arts compared to the girls.
- Adults check children's progress and use these assessments to plan activities and target support for individual children. Children who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points.
- The teaching of phonics is good in the Nursery and this continues into the Reception Year. Although adults support children well in developing their writing skills when they work alongside them, children are not always encouraged to use their knowledge of phonics and tricky words when writing on their own.
- Children enjoy their learning and engage happily in the activities provided. There is a good balance between work that is led by the teacher and opportunities for children to explore ideas themselves and follow their interests. Some curriculum areas in Reception could be given greater depth, as, currently, the overwhelming focus is on English and mathematics.
- Children love the experience of outdoor learning, particularly when they take part in forest school. There is a range of activities in the outside area, but leaders recognise that this needs further development. Effective support is provided by adults when leading activities. However, adults do not always question, or intervene sufficiently to provide support children with additional challenge and maximise their learning opportunities.
- Children behave well and feel secure, they readily take turns and share. Routines are

clearly established. Children are developing concentration and the ability to see things through when choosing activities. For example, children were drawing how their garden grows and one child was keen to explain to the inspector that apples grow on the trees in the summer when there are lots of bees around.

- Independence is encouraged and children show this when putting on shoes, fastening up their coats and tidying away within the classroom. Children show an awareness of how to keep themselves safe and healthy but are also confident to take risks within a safe environment. Leaders ensure that all safeguarding and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	114978
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10041787

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Samantha Matthews
Headteacher	David Rogers
Telephone number	01279 813 626
Website	www.bentfield.essex.sch.uk
Email address	admin@bentfield.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 January 2014

Information about this school

- Bentfield Primary is an average-sized primary school and nursery.
- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage, with a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, some of whom speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than that found in most schools and increased in 2017. The number of pupils with an education, health and care plan is much higher than in other schools nationally. This is because the school offers enhanced provision of two places in each year group to pupils with complex health, physical and developmental needs. Many of these pupils have much more severe needs than those usually found in mainstream education.
- A smaller than average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and supported by the pupil premium.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in all classrooms, including through observations carried out jointly with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made short visits to look at learning at other times, to observe small groups of pupils being taught, and to review the teaching of phonics and the broader curriculum, including how the school promotes aspects of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and British values. One inspector reviewed provision for pupils attending the school's breakfast club.
- The inspectors looked at pupils' work from all year groups in different subjects, both within lessons and through a joint work scrutiny with leaders, to see what progress pupils make and how well the school's marking policy is being applied.
- Meetings were held with pupils to discuss their learning and gather their views about the school, behaviour and safety. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1, 2 and 6, and discussed their reading with them.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, head of learning support, other members of staff with leadership responsibilities and governors. Discussions were had with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including: the school's self-evaluation summary; the school development plan; information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; and the school's own checks on the quality of teaching.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding policies and procedures, including records of checks on the suitability of staff and other adults, behaviour and attendance records.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents and carers through the 66 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 50 free-text messages, and through speaking to parents and carers at the start of the second day of the inspection. They also took into account findings from the school's recent survey of parents' views and the 30 responses to a questionnaire for members of staff.

Inspection team

Pauline MacMillan, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Linda Allison	Ofsted Inspector
Simon Bell	Ofsted Inspector

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