



Barling Magna Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114830
LEA ESSEX LEA
Inspection number 279453
Inspection dates 22 November 2005 to 23 November 2005
Reporting inspector Mr. Ian Nelson LI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Little Wakering Road
School category	Community		SS3 0LN
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01702218961
Number on roll	160	Fax number	01702217837
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs. Hilary Hall
Date of previous inspection	11 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs. Marion Still

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 22 November 2005 - 23 November 2005	Inspection number 279453
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average sized school serves a rural community near Southend in Essex. Nearly all the pupils are of White British descent and few are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is a little below average. These pupils have mainly moderate learning or behavioural difficulties. The school has been through an unsettled period with staff absence and movement in recent times. The head teacher has been in post for two terms following a period when the school had an acting head.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school's overall effectiveness is satisfactory and it gives satisfactory value for money. The governors and head teacher have a very accurate understanding of how well the school is doing and this matches the inspectors' view. Pupils make broadly satisfactory progress through the school, except in information and communication technology (ICT), where progress is good. Pupils who find learning difficult also make good progress because of the good support they receive. Provision for reception children is satisfactory and they make sound progress. The head teacher has got to know staff, parents, governors and pupils very quickly and has put in place systems to tackle the main priorities for improvement, although as yet they are too new to have had a significant impact on standards and achievement. Attendance has improved and teaching is more consistent, being satisfactory overall, with much that is good. The school now has very secure systems for tracking how well pupils are getting on with their learning. The school recognises that it still has some work to do to eradicate the very small amount of unsatisfactory teaching and to improve elements of pupils' reading and writing. Parents and pupils have overwhelmingly positive views of the school and are impressed with the recently appointed head teacher.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the recently introduced systems for checking how well the school is doing are consolidated and built upon by all those with leadership positions so that teaching and learning continue to improve.
- Improve the pupils' handwriting, and skills in writing in different styles for different audiences.
- Help pupils to improve the range of techniques they use to understand fully the meaning of what they are reading.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter reception with the skills and knowledge expected for their age and make satisfactory progress to give them a sound preparation for starting the National Curriculum in Year 1. They continue to make satisfactory progress through the school to gain broadly average standards in the national tests. Standards at Year 6 declined between 2000 and 2003, mainly due to staff turnover and inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning. The achievement of most pupils, whatever their ability, gender or background, has been broadly satisfactory over recent years. Those who find learning hard make good progress because the school provides effective support in lessons. National test results for Year 6 in 2005 show broadly satisfactory progress and average standards. The school has set appropriate targets for Year 6 pupils to aim for in the national tests. Pupils make good progress in ICT because the school makes very effective use of the resources it has and of the expert support available through links with the e-confident school initiative. The school has identified weaknesses in pupils' handwriting, their ability to write in different styles and in the range of techniques the pupils use to fully understand the meaning of what they are reading.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Behaviour is good overall, although a few parents have expressed concerns about the behaviour of a very small number of pupils. The school has responded positively and works closely with the parents of pupils with behavioural difficulties, and takes the firmest action when needed. The vast majority of pupils behave very well and older ones often support younger ones. Pupils enjoy their lessons and say teachers make learning interesting. The school has worked effectively to reverse the decline in attendance rates, which are now broadly average. Pupils say they feel safe in school and that teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors look after them very well. They always have someone to turn to if they have worries or fall out in the playground. They play energetically at break times, enjoy adequate physical education lessons and after school sports clubs. They are well prepared for the next stage of education and the world of work and make a satisfactory contribution to the school community. The school council has been established fairly recently and pupils enjoy being able to represent the views of their classes to the staff and to explore ideas for improvements to the school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Pupils make the expected progress because the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is often good, but it is not consistent across all classes. Very occasionally it is unsatisfactory when pupils are given work that is too hard or too easy. Teachers usually make learning enjoyable and relevant, so pupils look forward to their lessons. Staff have mastered the use of ICT well. They use interactive whiteboards effectively to give clear instructions and show pupils' successful work. Relationships are good and routines are clear, so little time is lost in sorting out inappropriate behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants work very effectively as a team to make sure that pupils make adequate progress. Pupils with additional needs learn well because the staff work very effectively together to find the best strategies to support their progress. Most teachers know the levels at which their pupils are working and match tasks to their needs. Teachers are good at encouraging pupils to gauge how well they are doing and see what they can do better. In most classes teachers mark books regularly, but do not all add sufficiently helpful comments to challenge the children to do better. Parents are interested and supportive of their children's learning because teachers keep them well informed on how their children are doing.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides pupils with a good range of activities and experiences. Teachers are particularly adept at bringing elements of language and literacy into other lessons, such as history and personal and social education. The school ensures that pupils are taught all that is required. There is an effective plan to ensure that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat or miss work. ICT is used effectively in many lessons and prepares the pupils well for life beyond primary school. Visitors to the school, including parents, sports professionals and support staff provide good opportunities for pupils to cook, dance, do craft and learn the basics of archery. This enhances their learning and enjoyment. Pupils also talk enthusiastically about their after school clubs, themed weeks and trips. Personal, social and health education has a high profile in the school. Pupils learn to eat healthily, take plenty of exercise and look after each other. Activities, such as the gym trail and '5 minute boxes', are used very effectively for pupils who find learning difficult.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care and support of pupils are good. Staff and parents communicate very well, leading to particularly strong pastoral guidance. First aid and medical care are good. All staff keep a close eye on vulnerable pupils or those with particular special needs. They work closely with outside professionals for expert advice. Accidents are carefully recorded. Health and safety routines are methodically followed and lead to a school site where pupils feel safe and secure. Child protection procedures are fully in place and the school ensures that all staff receive appropriate training. Teachers track the academic progress of pupils satisfactorily. The introduction of targets for reading is helping pupils to focus on personal achievement. Pupils with learning difficulties are especially well involved, the child-friendly plans help them in identifying what they are good at and what they need to do better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory overall and there are some strong features. The head teacher has made an excellent start in getting to know how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve. She and the governors have a very clear and accurate picture of its strengths, the areas for improvement and how to take the school forward. They are continuing to develop the roles of the subject leaders to improve the accuracy of their understanding of how well pupils achieve. Leadership in information and communication technology and the provision for pupils who find learning difficult are good and pupils make good progress in these areas. The school has very good systems for checking the views of parents and pupils, who think highly of it and of the head teacher. These views feed into the very good systems introduced to check the school's performance and to identify priorities for improvement. The

school has improved attendance by sharpening up the systems for checking on absences. It has improved the consistency of teaching, although there is still some work to do. The school now has rigorous and effective systems for checking how well pupils are doing and how good teaching and learning are, although these are too new to have had a significant impact on standards and achievement as yet. Given what has been achieved over the last two terms, particularly in improving teaching and attendance, the school is well placed to carry on improving.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. This letter is to tell you what we think your school does well and how it could be better. We think all the grown ups in school look after you very well so that you always have someone to go to if you feel worried or upset. Most of you behave very well and are very polite and well mannered. You told us that there is hardly any bullying but that teachers and lunch time supervisors quickly sort it out when it does happen. You enjoy your lessons and make satisfactory progress in most subjects. You also do well in ICT. Those of you who find learning hard get lots of help so that you make good progress. Those of you on the school council enjoy finding out what children in your class think and talking with the adults about your ideas. We think some of you could do a bit better with your handwriting, and in writing in a range of different styles, like diaries, or reports. We also think you could improve the techniques you use to understand what you read. We have asked your teachers to help you with these areas. Your head teacher and governors have put a lot of systems in place to help the school get better and better and we have asked them to continue to build on them so that you do even better at your lessons. Best wishes for the future.