



# Bulphan Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115092  
**LEA** THURROCK LEA  
**Inspection number** 279511  
**Inspection dates** 20 March 2006 to 21 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Mr. David Manuel LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Fen Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		RM14 3RL
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01375891220
<b>Number on roll</b>	78	<b>Fax number</b>	01375892648
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. Janet McCheyne
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7 February 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs. Brenda Blandford

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	20 March 2006 - 21 March 2006	279511

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Bulphan is a very small village school near Upminster in Essex. Pupils come from a wide area around the school and represent the full range of social backgrounds. Almost all pupils are of White British origin and all are fluent in English. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of social and language skills which are broadly average overall. An average proportion of pupils have specific learning difficulties or disabilities. There is a higher than normal amount of pupil mobility. The school has had five headteachers or acting headteachers in the past five years and this has resulted in significant instability. The most recently appointed acting headteacher has been in post for two terms.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 4**

Inspection evidence confirms the school's own view that pupils' achievement and standards, and the leadership and management are inadequate. There has been too little improvement since the previous inspection. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money. However, following new initiatives in September 2005, the school is now providing a satisfactory quality of education. The acting headteacher has established a new curriculum which pupils find enjoyable. Teaching and standards of the youngest children in Reception are satisfactory. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall with improved planning and the use of new assessment procedures to set more challenging targets for pupils. The range of information now available, about how well pupils are making progress, is beginning to help the school understand which pupils are not doing well enough. There has not yet been sufficient time for the new initiatives to make a full impact on pupils' achievement, but there are encouraging signs of improvement. Despite all teaching staff being new to the school within the past two and a half years, and the instability caused by the many changes in leadership, the present staff have formed an effective team in the past two terms, with a shared commitment to improve further. There is now a positive atmosphere within the school and pupils' personal development is satisfactory with some good features. The governing body has sought help from the local authority, but not enough has been done by the governors to remedy the weaknesses that have developed during the period of instability. However, the school is now well placed to improve. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the achievement of pupils in English, mathematics and science and the quality of leadership and management provided by all managers and the governing body.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Eliminate underachievement and raise standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Increase the levels of involvement of all staff in monitoring progress in key areas of responsibility, to enable them to fully support the initiatives to raise standards further.
- Increase the involvement of the governing body in checking on the progress of the school's actions to raise standards.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. Pupils start school with broadly average standards, covering the full range. They make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with average levels of skills, knowledge and understanding. The school's data indicates that over the past three years, a significant proportion of

pupils did not make enough progress by the end of Year 2. Results are variable, but below average overall with no pupils reaching the higher Level 3. At the end of Year 6, standards have been significantly below average, although standards in English were just below average in the past two years. Inspection evidence confirms that achievement is unsatisfactory over the same period. Within the small numbers of pupils in each year group, there have been higher than normal rates of mobility for a range of reasons. This factor, linked to the instability within staffing, has contributed to the unsatisfactory achievement. However, as a result of improved provision and planning since September 2005, evidence of pupils' achievement and work gathered during the inspection indicate that standards are improving. The latest targets set by the school for the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are realistic and challenging and pupils are progressing well towards meeting them. Evidence indicates that results should be closer to the national average than they have been for some time. This is because better quality teaching that meets the full range of pupils' needs has recently led to pupils making better progress. Pupils with specific learning difficulties receive relevant individual support from teachers and teaching assistants to enable them to make similar improved progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory with some good features. Behaviour is mostly good in lessons but a small minority of pupils do not behave well enough and sometimes disrupt the learning of others. Effective strategies are used by teachers and teaching assistants to manage the unsatisfactory behaviour which keeps the disruption to a minimum. Discussions with pupils reveal that they now enjoy their lessons, which was not always the case in recent years. Pupils' spiritual and moral development are good. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them in assemblies and in lessons to reflect thoughtfully on the points raised and develop their spiritual awareness. These experiences help them understand more about the beliefs and customs of other religions and respect the views and feelings of others. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures is good with regular studies being made of other countries and cultures. Pupils' moral and social development is satisfactory. Some younger pupils are easily distracted but by the time they reach the upper class in Years 5 and 6, the majority of pupils work well together. Pupils gain a sound understanding of how to lead healthy lives and keep safe. There are also indications that pupils are keen to take more responsibility for helping others who are unhappy at times. Pupils provide some support within the community, particularly helping in the nearby church. Attendance has varied over the past three years but is generally above average. Overall, provision is now successfully contributing to pupils' future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory with some good features. Individual lessons range from satisfactory to good, with no teaching judged as inadequate. There are now clear routines which pupils understand and, as a result, most pupils settle quickly and enjoy their learning. Relationships in lessons are good and pupils' behaviour is managed effectively. Most pupils listen attentively and concentrate on their work. A very small minority still find it difficult to stay on task at times and teaching assistants support these pupils well. Teachers now plan their lessons in detail and suitable links are made between subjects when relevant, as seen in Years 1 and 2 when good links were made between literacy and history. Information from the new assessment procedures is being used to ensure that planning builds on what pupils already know and to begin to provide the right level of challenge. A good example of this was seen in science in Years 5 and 6 when pupils' knowledge and understanding was extended by planning an investigation into plant growth and deciding which variables should stay the same and which one should be changed. Pupils respond well to the challenges they are set.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is now sufficiently broad and balanced following improvements made two terms ago. New plans ensure that learning builds systematically on what has been taught in the past. Good cross-curricular links are also made when relevant to make learning more meaningful. The best links are made between literacy and other subjects when different writing styles are introduced or extended to meet the particular needs of another subject, as seen in geography and history. The newly created computer area has also improved links between information and communication technology (ICT) and other subjects. The school still lacks an adequate grass area which limits some outside activities. The provision of extra-curricular activities is satisfactory and includes visits in the local area and further afield. Arrangements have also been made to enable all pupils in Years 3 to 6 to receive individual musical instrumental tuition. Visitors to the school also add to the increasing enrichment of provision for learning and include sporting coaches and parents who help pupils learn about their own and other cultures.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of care, guidance and support is satisfactory. Effective child protection and health and safety procedures are in place and are known to all adults. A caring and settled environment has been created. A small number of pupils have behavioural, emotional or personal difficulties and they are cared for well to enable them to settle

into the school community. However, the support and guidance given to pupils about their academic progress has been inadequate until very recently. This has now improved and pupils are much more aware of what to do to improve their work. In the Foundation Stage, carefully introduced routines help the youngest children to settle happily and contribute significantly to their early learning. Pupils with specific learning difficulties are supported well and regular links are maintained with families to support progress and learning. Effective personal action plans are in place and regularly reviewed.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 4**

Leadership and management are inadequate overall. The frequent changes to the school's leadership and teaching staff have resulted in a period of significant instability and insufficient improvement since the previous inspection. During this time, self-evaluation has been totally inadequate. Only in the past two terms have steps been taken by the new acting headteacher to introduce effective initiatives to improve the quality of education and raise standards. There is now a positive atmosphere within the school and the new staff have formed a supportive team with a commitment to improve further. Staff and governors now have a clear awareness of what needs to be done to improve the school's effectiveness. However, although work has started, there has been insufficient time for staff to establish their leadership and management roles effectively to have a full impact on the weaknesses. The acting headteacher provides good leadership. Teaching is now regularly monitored and there is a clear understanding of the strengths and priorities for further improvement. The school improvement plan provides a good basis for the development of several key areas. Priorities for the professional development of staff have been identified and are supporting improvements. Teaching resources are satisfactory and are deployed effectively. Improvements in the accommodation are currently under way in order to improve the quality and use of specific areas. Evidence indicates that until recently, the views of parents have not been taken into account enough. A significant minority of parents have expressed dissatisfaction with some aspects of the school and steps are now being taken to involve them more. The governing body has sought help from the local authority and a process known as 'supportive intervention' has been put in place but not enough has been done by governors to remedy the weaknesses that have developed during the period of instability. However, with the benefits of the new initiatives and the commitment of all staff, the school is well placed to improve further.

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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	NA
The behaviour of learners	3	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3	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	3	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	4	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	4	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	4	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	4	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	4	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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 helping me during my recent visit to the school. I enjoyed talking with many of you and looking at your work. This letter is to tell you about the most important things that I found out during my visit. You told me that you enjoy the activities in your school and teachers give you the help you need when you ask for it. You particularly liked reading and finding out about other countries. You felt that a few children do not behave well enough but teachers help a lot when this happens. I also congratulate you on your good levels of attendance. I have asked your teachers to provide you with more challenging work to ensure that you make better progress in all your subjects, especially in English, maths and science. I have also asked the teachers who have responsibility for different subjects to find out what is happening in all classes, so that they can make sure that the activities that are planned will help you to make good progress. The governors who help run the school have been asked to find out more about what is happening in your classes and what they can do to help improve things for you. Finally, I would like to wish you every success in your time at Bulphan School and for your future education. Keep enjoying your lessons.