

Becontree Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 101231 |
| Local Authority | Barking and Dagenham |
| Inspection number | 285999 |
| Inspection dates | 30 April –1 May 2007 |
| Reporting inspector | Judith Dawson |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School | 442 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mrs Jacquey Newton |
| Headteacher | Mr Steve Peacock |
| Date of previous school inspection | 18 November 2002 |
| School address | Stevens Road Dagenham RM8 2QR |
| Telephone number | 020 8270 4900 |
| Fax number | 020 8270 4901 |

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|--------------------------|----------------------|
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This large primary school serves pupils from mainly disadvantaged households. The proportion of pupils believed to be entitled to free school meals is well above average. More pupils than average come from ethnic minority backgrounds and over a third of the pupils do not have English as their first language. Forty-eight pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time of entry is above average and increasing. Eighteen pupils are from families with refugee status or are seeking asylum. Attainment on entry to the Nursery is low. A building programme has just been completed and there is a Children's Centre on site. There have been significant changes in the leadership team over the past two years.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a sound education for its pupils. It has been through a period in which standards have been falling and pupils have not been achieving well enough. The headteacher and staff are committed to raising standards and the school has put in place a range of measures to raise attainment. As a result, pupils' achievements are now satisfactory and pupils in Year 6 are working at the expected levels for their age.

Most children start school with low attainment. They receive a good education in the Foundation Stage although, by the time they leave their Reception year, very few reach the expected levels for children of this age, especially in literacy and numeracy. As a result, many have difficulty adapting to the more formal National Curriculum in Year 1. By the end of Year 2 standards are below average. Although standards and achievements were low in the 2006 national tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils now in Year 6 have made the progress expected of them, and more pupils are working at the higher levels.

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are good. Most pupils behave well and work hard. Older pupils are becoming increasingly responsible for influencing the life of the school through the school council and other responsibilities. The school is an orderly and calm environment where pupils enjoy their learning and have a good understanding of how to keep healthy and safe.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. More able pupils, those with learning difficulties or disabilities, and those with English as an additional language have good support, enabling them to achieve as well as their peers. Procedures for tracking pupils' progress are good. However some teachers do not use this knowledge to adapt lessons to ensure pupils of all abilities achieve well. Marking is good and shows pupils how they can improve their work. Very occasionally, the poor behaviour of a few pupils is not managed effectively, adversely impacting on learning. The satisfactory curriculum is becoming increasingly broad, with a good range of activities, visits and visitors to enliven learning. However, the curriculum in Year 1 does not build effectively enough on children's experiences in the Foundation Stage. Pastoral care, guidance and support are good, enabling pupils, including those new to school, to feel secure and happy. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Pupils have targets in English to help them improve, but these are very general and pupils are not involved sufficiently in setting their own targets.

The leadership and management team is committed to raising standards. The good tracking systems clearly show that measures to raise achievement for all groups of pupils are beginning to have an impact. Plans for improvement are based on an accurate assessment of the needs of the school. Monitoring is beginning to improve teaching although inconsistencies remain. The potential for future improvement is satisfactory.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching, with particular emphasis on using assessment more consistently to ensure that the differing needs of all pupils are met.
- Focus the new tracking and assessment systems more sharply on setting personal targets for pupils in English and mathematics and involving them in the progress.

- Ensure the curriculum in Year 1 builds effectively on the experiences of children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Several children join the nursery with limited spoken English each year and most children have poor communication, language and literacy and mathematical skills. The rich and stimulating environment in the Nursery and Reception classes and the generally good teaching enables them to make good progress. However, by the end of their Reception Year, very few children acquire the expected skills for their age or are ready to start work on the National Curriculum. Standards have been falling in Year 2 in recent years and remain below average. Few pupils attain the higher levels, due in part, to the increased number of pupils joining the school after the Foundation Stage.

Pupils' achievement has improved and is now satisfactory. This is because the school has been successful in identifying pockets of underachievement and providing additional support for pupils from all backgrounds and abilities. Measures to challenge more able pupils are beginning to have an impact and this is reflected in the increasing number of pupils in Year 6 working at the higher levels. Standards are now average and most pupils meet their targets.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is good. Most pupils have good attitudes to work and enjoy learning. They behave well and understand how their actions affect others. Racial harmony and relationships are good. Pupils say that any incidents of bullying and rough play are dealt with effectively. They say how well the 'playground buddies' and security cameras help them feel safe. Pupils are proud of what they achieve, for example, one young child beamed with pride as he showed an inspector how he could now write his name. Pupils have a sound knowledge of different faiths and cultures. They understand the need to eat healthy food and exercise regularly. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and participate willingly in a variety of fund raising activities and community events. They are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being, for example, through opportunities to work collaboratively in sporting activities and lessons, and to serve on the school council. The school recognises that more should be done to increase opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning. Attendance is improving and is now approaching national levels.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils. As a result, most pupils have good attitudes to their work and are eager to learn. Teachers explain things clearly and the best consistently check pupils' understanding to ensure they are successful in their tasks. Marking is good, giving pupils praise and clear guidance on how to improve their work. Although some teachers ensure pupils act on their advice, this is not consistent throughout the school. Teachers assess pupils' work thoroughly and are beginning to set them targets in English to help improve, but these are not clearly matched to individual needs. While a few teachers plan work at different levels

in order to challenge all pupils, this is not a consistent feature of all the teaching. This means that, although pupils make satisfactory progress, many do not have the opportunity to fulfil their full potential in lessons. In the Foundation Stage, the good balance between activities directed by the teachers and those chosen by the children enables children to learn at their own pace and to make good progress. Teaching assistants, working closely with the teachers, provide good additional support throughout the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is broad and inclusive with a strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. These skills are beginning to be developed within other subjects. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) has improved since the previous inspection although there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers to support work across the curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced and enriched by a good range of additional activities including after school clubs, visitors, visits and participation in sports. Pupils' personal and social skills are developed well. The Foundation Stage curriculum is good, well organised and effectively covers all areas of learning. The curriculum in Year 1 does not take sufficient account of the needs of the many pupils who are not yet ready to access the National Curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The school provides a supportive environment in which pupils feel safe. Pupils say they will be listened to if they have any problems or concerns. Systems for supporting pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are good, well managed and inclusive. This enables these pupils to make good progress towards achieving their targets. There is good support for pupils at the early stages of learning English. Pupils' academic guidance is satisfactory overall, although there is some inconsistency across classes. Where guidance is good teachers make sure pupils respond to their comments about their work. However, although pupils have targets for English, these are very general and do not involve the pupils in identifying where improvements are needed. Arrangements for child protection are good and the school works well with other agencies to support vulnerable pupils. There are effective partnerships with other schools to ensure smooth transition of pupils both in and out of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, supported well by the senior managers, provides satisfactory and improving leadership. There is a good ethos that reflects improvements in pupils' behaviour and attitudes and good teamwork. A stronger Foundation Stage has been developed, providing a firm base from which the school can build. Standards are improving across the school and pupils are making steady progress from a low base. All staff are clear about their corporate responsibilities for raising standards. Senior managers and subject leaders have a stronger voice in planning school improvement and feel more empowered and involved. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. There is more effective use of the good monitoring, tracking and data analysis systems. This has helped to pinpoint general areas for improvements in teaching and to highlight groups of pupils who need additional support. More needs to be done to consolidate and extend these

systems to eliminate inconsistencies in the teaching and to set individual learning targets involving the pupils. The school is taking greater account of the views of parents and pupils. The large majority of parents who expressed an opinion supported the school in all aspects of its work. Governors fulfil their statutory duties and support the school well. They are becoming more involved in strategic planning and in holding the school to account.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

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| How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners? | 3 |
| How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education | 3 |
| How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets | 3 |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can | 2 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities | 3 |
| Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements? | Yes |
| Does this school require special measures? | No |
| Does this school require a notice to improve? | No |

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

10 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Becontree Primary School, Stevens Road, Dagenham, RM8 2QR

Thank you very much for your friendliness and help when we visited your school. We were very impressed with how well you concentrated on your work in your classes. A special thanks to those of you in the school council who met Mr Johnstone on Monday. You made it very clear that you enjoy coming to school, feel safe and know how to take care of yourselves. Your school takes good care of you. You told him that most of you behave well and we agree with you.

Your teachers make sure that those of you who are learning to speak English have good support. Teachers keep good records of how well you are learning and, if they think any of you need a bit of extra help, they make sure you get it. This helps you with your learning. Those of you who find your work easy are beginning to have more challenge. We have asked your teachers to make sure that lessons have different tasks so that all of you work at levels that suit you best. We want your teachers to set you targets for English and mathematics, with your help, that match what each of you needs to do to make your work even better. You will know exactly what you need to do. Don't forget to take the advice your teachers give you when they mark your work! You make satisfactory progress at the moment but these things will help you to make good progress and achieve well.

You have a satisfactory range of things to learn and have some interesting clubs, visits and visitors to make learning fun. Children in the Nursery and Reception classes learn well because they have lots of practical things to do. We want this to continue for a while in Year 1 so that you do not start more formal lessons until you are ready to.

Your school provides you with a sound education and leadership and management are satisfactory. Your headteacher and teachers know what needs to be done to make your school even better. The things they have done so far are already improving things and have helped you to make steady progress. We are sure that, with your help, your school will continue to improve.

Best wishes

Judy Dawson

(Lead inspector)