



Gosbecks Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114742
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290017
Inspection date 21 November 2006
Reporting inspector John Francis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Owen Ward Close
School category	Community		Shrub End
Age range of pupils	4-11		Colchester CO2 9DG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01206 575407
Number on roll (school)	296	Fax number	01206 369856
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs S Herring
		Headteacher	Mr D Burrage
Date of previous school inspection	1 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school serving an area of Colchester with higher than average levels of deprivation. Few pupils than average come from minority ethnic families or have English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly similar to national expectations. Attainment on entry is broadly average as is the proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities. However, more children than is usual found come into school with below average language and social skills.

The school has been awarded Investors in People, the Basic Skills Award, has an Activemark for sporting activities.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that offers good value for money. Parents are pleased with the quality of education and care and pupils are equally positive. The school has a clear, accurate view of its own effectiveness and strives to build on its strengths and address its weaknesses.

Pupils make good progress as they move through the school. A very good start to schooling means that most children in the Reception class achieve broadly average standards by the time they move into Year 1. Over time, pupils have achieved well and by the end of Year 6 standards have been above average over a number of years with particularly good results in science. A fall in standards in 2006 was against the trend of the last few years and the result of low scores in writing. The school has been quick to respond and changes to curriculum and organisation are beginning to address this.

Very good personal development linked to very good behaviour, an enthusiasm for learning and excellent attitudes all contribute to pupils' success both socially and academically. All of these are reflected in above average attendance. Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy and are well prepared for the future. Pupils' learning is well supported by good teaching. Linked well to a good and improving curriculum, with a strong emphasis on information and communication technology (ICT), it keeps pupils motivated and excited by learning. Assessment is good and self-assessment by the pupils is developing well but is inconsistent across the school. Good attention is paid to pupils' health, care and welfare and good systems provide all of the necessary safeguards. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are identified early and good support enables them to achieve well.

Leadership and management are good. The recently introduced system of devolved management is already showing evidence of success and is providing all teachers with a good understanding of whole school issues. Governance is outstanding and with the excellent leadership and drive of the headteacher the school has a good capacity for continued improvement. Changes to monitoring are providing a stronger focus on pupils' learning. However, this is not yet giving sharp enough attention to evaluating the impact of the specific priorities the school is developing, such as enhancing pupils' speaking and listening skills.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create further opportunities to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills and use these more effectively to raise standards in writing.
- Bring greater consistency to the way pupils' self-assessment is used.
- Focus more sharply on evaluating the impact of the changes being introduced.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The standards achieved and the progress for most pupils are good throughout the school. Through Reception and Years 1 and 2, pupils' early skills are built on well, particularly their language development. High expectations as pupils move through the rest of the school continue this good progress. The school has achieved or exceeded its targets over many years and overall test results at Year 6 in 2005 were above average in English, mathematics and science. Pupils were particularly successful in attaining at the higher level 5 in science. The one area of relative weakness was the lower proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in English, particularly the more able girls. Pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities are very well supported, enabling them to make good progress overall.

The most recent results at Year 6 show a drop from the high levels of attainment that have been the norm for the last few years. Nevertheless, pupils have made generally good progress from an average starting point and only in English, particularly writing, have they not achieved at least average scores.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development is excellent and well supported by good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Very good behaviour, enthusiasm for learning and excellent attitudes to school all contribute to pupils' success. Effective systems in which the pupils play an active part, for example, the playground friends, ensure a quick and sensible resolution to any disagreements. The result of this is that pupils feel safe and are keen to come to school: attendance is above average. Pupils have a very good understanding of healthy lifestyles and make healthy choices for their snacks and lunches. They enjoy a wide range of physical activities including the extra-curricular sports and games on offer, as recognised in the school's award of an Activemark for sport.

Pupils' views are regularly sought and the school council makes a good contribution to the work of the school. Their support for the wider community is seen in the good links with other schools and their involvement with the local community. Pupils are well prepared for their future well-being through the development of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills and the responsibilities they take on from an early age.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Lessons are well planned and cater for the wide range of abilities in the classes. As a result, learning is purposeful and has a good pace. Teachers make the most of the very

good relationships and pupils' excellent attitudes to engage them in good quality group work and purposeful discussions. Pupils approach all work with confidence, knowing that they will be well supported by the teacher or their classmates. Good use is made of ICT as an integral part of day-to-day teaching and learning to motivate and engage pupils. Through teachers sharing the learning intention for the lessons with the pupils, both have a clear picture of what they are working towards and how to measure their success. Teachers are skilled at providing feedback so pupils are well informed about what they need to do next to be 'even better'. There are systems for setting class, group and individual targets and assessing pupils' progress towards them. Pupils' self assessment is a developing aspect of the school's work but there is variation in how teachers use and apply this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A good curriculum with strong links between subjects and regular use of ICT keeps pupils motivated and excited, particularly where it links to the topic work they are doing. The very good provision in the Reception classes prepares the children well for the next stage of learning, particularly in their language and social skills. For those pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities their curriculum is well planned and regularly evaluated to assess its relevance. All of this is enhanced by a good range of extra-curricular activities and enrichment opportunities. As a result of the school's detailed analysis of results, the curriculum is currently being revised to provide an even closer links between subjects and the skills pupils need, particularly in numeracy and writing. However, at present the links between developing pupils' speaking and listening skills and writing are not strong enough.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's aims show that they take the care and welfare of pupils very seriously and there are secure systems in place to ensure this. Pupils say they have very good relationships with staff and know that if they are worried about anything they will be listened to. The excellent promotion of pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievement can be seen, for example, in the way pupils in Year 2 are trained to look after younger children in the playground and where older pupils support younger ones with their reading. Pupils' targets in literacy and numeracy are generally challenging and based on a detailed analysis of their performance, although there is some variation in teachers' expectations. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are identified early and very good support systems are in place to enable them to achieve as well as they can. The school works well with others. Communication with parents is very good and the school takes many opportunities to canvass the views of parents and pupils. Parents are very supportive of the school and say the systems for keeping them informed about their children's progress are very good. The well attended family literacy sessions provide parents of younger children with a good insight into how they can support their children's learning from an early age.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The excellent direction given by the headteacher, with the good support of the senior strategic team and an outstanding governing body, is driving the school forward all the time. The quality of the governors' monitoring and reports and their regular canvassing of parents' and pupils' views all demonstrate a relentless drive for improvement. The active involvement of all staff and governing body ensures total involvement and commitment by all. The system of devolved management introduced recently is providing a strong team approach across all classes and year groups. These changes enable all teachers to be involved in monitoring the work of the school and provide good professional development. However, this is still fairly new and while it is already having an influence on school development, its full impact has yet to be seen.

Monitoring is good and the move to evaluating pupils' learning rather than teaching is strengthening this further. However, this has not yet developed the sharp focus needed to evaluate some of the specific developments the school is working on, for example, teachers' questioning, as part of the drive to link speaking and listening skills more closely with the development of writing.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	2
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	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

22 November 2006

Dear Pupils

Gosbecks Primary School, Owen Ward Close, Colchester, Essex, CO2 9DG

Thank you for making me welcome in your school. I enjoyed meeting you and was pleased that you wanted to share your views about your school with me. This letter is to tell you what I think of your school and how I think it can be even better.

You told me that your teachers made your lessons interesting and in the lessons I saw I would certainly agree with you. In the classes I visited I was very impressed by the way you worked together and, in your discussions, how you expressed your views so clearly and politely. I also saw that you listen carefully to your teachers and do all that is asked of you. This means that you do well in your work. I was also impressed by your enthusiasm for ICT. You say that everyone in school cares for each other and I could see this through your very good behaviour in school and the way you play together. I liked the way that the school council and playground leaders carried out their jobs. I am pleased that you enjoy other things about school such as the visits, clubs and sports. These give you good opportunities to widen your education.

To make the school even better I have asked the teachers to do three things. Some are things you can be involved in but others are more to do with the organisation of the school. The first is about talking about the work you are doing more so you can improve your writing. The second is about the school checking on how well the changes it is making are working and the third is about helping you to understand how well you are doing through helping you assess your own work.

I am sure that Mr Burrage and the teachers will continue to work as hard as they do to keep the school interesting and exciting. You can be part of this by keeping up your wonderful attitudes and continue to enjoy all you do so your school becomes even better.

Mr Francis Lead inspector