



High Beech Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 115096
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 290126
Inspection dates 7–8 December 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Mott Street
School category	Voluntary controlled		High Beach, High Beach
Age range of pupils	4–11		Loughton, Essex IG10 4AP
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0208 508 6048
Number on roll (school)	98	Fax number	0208 532 0161
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs D Chilton
		Headteacher	Mrs G M Thom
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a small over-subscribed primary school. Although in a village setting, very nearly all the pupils come from urban areas, particularly the nearby towns of Waltham Abbey and Loughton. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage and there are a few pupils from each of four other ethnic groups. There are no pupils who are at an early stage of learning English. Pupils are from a mix of economic backgrounds and the number entitled to free school meals is very low. The number with learning difficulties and disabilities is about two thirds of the national average. Attainment on entry is at levels expected.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

High Beech is an effective school, on an upward trend, and it has some outstanding features. Almost all parents are supportive of the school. In particular they say that their children enjoy school, are safe and make good progress because teaching is good. The inspection confirms all these features. As a result of the excellent care, guidance and support, there is an overwhelming atmosphere of friendship, community and concern for others. This helps the pupils to thrive in their learning. The youngest children in the Reception class are helped to feel secure and confident and they progress well because of the good provision. By the time that they enter Year 1, almost all meet the expected goals for children leaving the Foundation Stage. Due to the consistently good teaching and learning and the rich curriculum, progress continues to be good in the other three classes and, in consequence, pupils' achievement is good. At the end of Year 6, standards are very high in mathematics and science. In English, standards are well above average, though they are much higher for reading than writing because current planning gives some pupils a relatively narrow range of writing.

Pupils have fun at school. As one pupil said, 'We enjoy learning new things in lessons and our teachers are fair to us.' This is reflected in the pupils' good behaviour, very positive attitudes and their willingness to help and support each other. One parent commented 'The older children take care of the younger ones from day one.' This is certainly the case. Year 6 pupils, for example delight in running lunchtime clubs for the Key Stage 1 children. Also, they take responsibility as play leaders to support younger pupils during lunchtime. These are two examples of the pupils' excellent appreciation and understanding of their role in the community of the school. Pupils have a good appreciation of both how to stay safe and to lead healthy lifestyles.

The headteacher is effective; she has steered the school very well through the many improvements to the accommodation that now help the school to provide an excellent learning environment. However, there is still not enough cover and shade to enable the Foundation Stage children to continue outdoor learning when it is very wet or sunny. But changes to the accommodation are not all that the head has done! She has brought about considerable improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, the curriculum and pupils' achievements since the previous inspection. Supported well by other members of staff with responsibilities, she ensures that the work of the school is checked effectively and regularly to enable any weaknesses to be ironed out. For example, there was a need to give pupils more opportunities to organise their own work and to get them to check their own progress at the time of the previous inspection. These are now strengths. Teachers regularly set good quality, open-ended activities that are targeted well to engage and interest, and pupils have a good idea of what they need to do to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing at Key Stage 2 by planning consistent approaches to the teaching of writing skills that give all pupils opportunities to write in a broader variety of styles.

- Ensure that there is cover and shade outside the Foundation Stage class.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress throughout the school from their entry into the Reception class. In consequence, standards in national tests at age seven have been consistently above average for the past few years and are on an upward trend. Although there has been a slight dip in progress in Years 3 and 4, achievement remains good. It quickens in Years 5 and 6 so that, in the national tests for 11 year olds, provisional figures for 2006 show exceptionally high standards in mathematics and science and significantly above average standards in English. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are well above average. This is the result of the good provision and resources.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. This is the result of very good provision in which, for example, pupils' views are valued and built upon and there is a strong code of conduct to which pupils adhere. This supports the pupils' growing sense of social and moral responsibility exceptionally well. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and this leads to them having a high regard for the importance of the community. Behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Attendance is at the national average. The school has excellent procedures for boosting attendance, and the only thing that stops it from being even better is the few families who take term-time holidays. Pupils are well prepared for their future lives because they enjoy working and playing together and have very good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good with outstanding features. Teachers plan lessons well. They provide good quality activities and make sure that the work is matched well to the different ages and learning needs in each class. Relationships are good and teachers use a variety of learning styles to make sure that pupils' interest and excitement are captured well. In addition, they provide good purpose for the lessons. For example, in an excellent literacy lesson in Years 1 and 2, a letter arrived at an opportune moment from Santa, which gave good reason for the pupils to write a response. This was a task that they thoroughly enjoyed! Teachers question pupils well and use ensuing assessments to amend future plans.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is of good quality. All statutory requirements are met and the school has made good adaptations to the national guidelines to meet the needs of High Beech pupils. For example, ICT work is planned well to integrate into the topics being studied. The recent work on Victorians in Years 5 and 6 required pupils to develop a database from information gained in the graveyard at the church of the Holy Innocents. There are good opportunities for pupils to reinforce literacy skills through work in other subjects, although the overall range and variety of writing styles that some pupils in Years 3 - 6 experience is not yet wide enough. Teachers make topics lively and interesting by arranging outings and visits. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the suitable range of extra-curricular activities provided.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding aspect of the school. All the staff work closely as a team to ensure that the pupils are exceptionally well cared for and supported. Staff know the pupils very well. All current regulations for safeguarding pupils are met and exceeded. For example, the risk assessments carried out to ensure pupils' safety throughout the building works over the past two years are exemplary. Teachers ensure that pupils are provided with clear and challenging targets, particularly in literacy and numeracy and that there are good procedures in place to check pupils' progress towards these.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Because of the good quality of its leadership and management, the school has maintained and built on the high standards that were reported in the previous inspection report and there is good capacity for further improvement. Everyone matters in this school and teamwork is one of the keys to its success. Teachers with subject responsibility are trained well for their work and they provide strong and effective leadership in their areas of responsibility. Planning for improvement is thorough. The school maintains good partnerships with the local primary school network which has resulted in good improvements in the quality of teaching and learning. The physical education curriculum has benefited from the school sports partnership with a local secondary school. It is also part of a consortium of schools that takes responsibility for the training of teachers. There are good systems in place to check how well the school is doing and all staff contribute well to the evaluation of improvement projects. Governors play an effective role in the school's development. They support the school well and, because of their training, they are well placed to take an even more active part in the school's forward planning and strategic development. Resources are deployed well and the school provides good value for money.

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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?	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	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

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?	1

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	2
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

13 December 2006

Dear Pupils

High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Mott Street, High Beach, Loughton, Essex, IG10 4AP

Thank you very much for making me so welcome when I came to visit your school. You told me that you enjoy school and lessons and I can see why! Here are the things that I discovered:

- The new buildings are a real improvement since the last inspection! You are particularly lucky to have the all-weather surface so that you can play on the astro-turf even in the winter.
- Your school is a good one because almost everyone makes good progress; you reach high standards and you enjoy all the school has to offer.
- Both you and your parents say that you feel safe in school. All the adults care for and support you exceptionally well.
- Your teachers are good because they work hard to make sure that lessons are fun but challenging.
- Your behaviour is good; you know how to keep yourselves safe and healthy, and you delight in helping younger children and taking responsibility.
- You have a good headteacher. Along with the governors and other teachers, she leads and manages the school well.

I have asked your teachers to make two improvements. First, I have asked them to help you to make sure that you do even better in your writing so that standards in writing are as high as they are in reading, mathematics and science. Second, there is a need to provide a cover for the Foundation Stage outdoor learning area so that the youngest children can still have outdoor learning when it is raining and also to protect them in the summer from the sun. You can help the school continue to be successful by working hard and meeting the targets set for you.

With best wishes

Keith Sadler

Inspector