



Notley Green Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 132020
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 293917
Inspection dates 9–10 November 2006
Reporting inspector Gillian Smith

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blickling Road
School category	Community		Great Notley, Braintree
Age range of pupils	4–11		Essex CM77 7ZJ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01376 343485
Number on roll (school)	384	Fax number	01376 553894
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Janet Turner
		Headteacher	Mrs Jacqui Green
Date of previous school inspection	12 March 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 9–10 November 2006	Inspection number 293917
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Notley Green has grown rapidly since it opened in 1999 and it is now larger than average. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Several minority ethnic groups are represented in small numbers but few pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils joining or leaving the school during the year is high. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals and the number with learning difficulties and disabilities is slightly below average. The proportion with statements is above average.

The present headteacher has been in post since April 2006.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education. This judgement closely matches the school's own view of its effectiveness. Although there has been little improvement overall since the last inspection, the new headteacher's outstanding leadership is now enabling the school to improve rapidly. Well supported by the local authority and the newly appointed deputy headteacher, she has recently instigated a thorough review of provision. This has accurately identified the school's successes and its areas for development.

The school's leadership and management are good. Changes to the curriculum have led to improvements and it is now satisfactory. Self-evaluation procedures are good; all members of staff know what needs to be done. Governors, the headteacher and the leadership team share a commitment to improve and are focusing ever more sharply on the promotion of pupils' learning and progress. Although much remains to be done, a newly established system of tracking and target setting is beginning to help the school to provide pupils with more demanding targets and guidance on how to improve. The school's capacity for further improvement is good.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The school has little historical information about most of its pupils' standards when they started school, but the current Reception Class entered with levels of skill, knowledge and understanding below normal expectations. Teachers' experience over the years indicates that attainment on entry has fallen since the previous inspection. The quality of education in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory; children in Reception make sound progress. Elsewhere in the school, standards are broadly average although standards in science in Year 6 fell sharply in 2006 and were well below the national average. Test data indicate that pupils' current achievement is satisfactory although the standard of pupils' writing seen during the inspection was poor. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. There are examples of good practice throughout the school; teachers carefully plan lively and interesting lessons. Working relationships are good but some teachers do not explain the purpose of the lesson and provide few opportunities for pupils to work independently. They manage behaviour well but pupils' progress and achievement have been hindered by the lack of assessment information which has limited teachers' ability to pinpoint what pupils need to do to improve. Furthermore, the quality of teachers' day-to-day assessment and the provision of suitably challenging work for pupils of differing abilities are areas for improvement. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive good support and make steady progress.

There are some real strengths throughout the school. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good, including their attendance and behaviour. Children make a sound start within the Foundation Stage and learn to trust adults within the school. Good pastoral care helps pupils of all ages to feel safe and happy. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to school life through the school council. There are, however, relatively few other opportunities for them to use their initiative and become more self-reliant. Pupils speak enthusiastically about educational trips and visitors and

develop sound basic skills that prepare them adequately for the next step in their education.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in writing and science.
- Improve the use of day-to-day assessment and the provision of work that challenges all pupils.
- Develop the use of assessment data to track pupils' progress and raise their achievement.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and develop their ability to work more independently.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Prior to the start of the current academic year, the school did not collect assessment data to show children's attainment on entry. Similarly, it has not kept track of the attainment of the many pupils who join the school after Reception. The limited data available indicate that children in the Reception Class make satisfactory progress. By the start of Year 1, many attain the standards expected. Between 2003 and 2005, pupils in Years 1 to 6 made sound progress and reached broadly average standards in English, mathematics and science. While the outcomes of tests undertaken in 2006 were more variable, pupils' overall progress and achievement remain satisfactory. Year 2 results show that, while standards were average in science, they were above average in reading and below in writing and mathematics. Recent Year 6 results indicate average standards in English and mathematics, with an increased proportion of more able pupils attaining the higher levels. By contrast, the standard of pupils' writing seen during the inspection was poor. Performance in science in the 2006 tests was exceptionally low. Pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and disabilities make steady progress and attain satisfactory standards.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. Most of the pupils work hard during lessons and speak highly of recent changes. In general, pupils enjoy school, working relationships are warm and pupils are keen to adopt a safe and healthy lifestyle; they make nutritious choices at lunchtime and many participate in the additional sporting activities held outside the normal school day.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. A strong emphasis is placed upon the development of 'The Notley Child'. Pupils respond well to the clear focus placed upon the school's eight core values. They work and play amicably and have a good understanding of other cultures. Their contribution to the school and local community is satisfactory. Pupils raise funds for charities and voice their views

through the school council. While these activities encourage pupils to use their initiative and develop their personal independence, the range of opportunities to consolidate these skills is limited.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers use computer technology skilfully and this helps them to spice up their teaching and accommodate pupils' different preferred learning styles. Most of the pupils willingly undertake the work set and make satisfactory progress. Working relationships are good and teachers manage pupils' behaviour consistently well. Teaching assistants support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities well and pupils of all abilities make steady progress as they move through the school.

The introduction of a formal assessment system is helping teachers to monitor pupils' progress more closely than hitherto and set challenging targets. It is too early to gauge the full impact of these new arrangements. The frequency and standard of teachers' day-to-day marking and on-going assessments are too variable. The teaching of basic skills across the school is satisfactory. Although teachers explain what pupils are intended to learn from each lesson, they do not always do so in a form that is easy for pupils to understand. In addition, the development of pupils' ability to work independently is not good enough. There are too few opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school has reviewed its previous curricular provision and is beginning to implement an extremely well-planned, revised curriculum. It has very good potential to support teachers in providing the full National Curriculum, including French, in an innovative way. The most recent national guidance on the primary curriculum has been incorporated well. Long-term planning provides a clear focus on the key skills to be taught, overall and for each subject, including the development of independent learning skills. Carefully chosen topics successfully increase the pupils' enjoyment of their work. An increasing number of visitors to the school and visits undertaken to places of interest are further extending pupils' understanding. Teaching based on this new curriculum is starting to motivate pupils successfully. There is satisfactory provision for pupils to learn about their growing bodies and the hazards they may face in life. The school provides an average range of activities outside the school day and these contribute well to pupils' understanding of healthy living.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Parents' confidence in the care, guidance and support provided for their children is mostly well-placed. All pupils, including those who join during the academic year, are well looked after on a day-to-day basis and this makes a strong contribution to their welfare and personal development. Close links with specialist agencies within the community ensure that pupils receive good guidance and support as and when the need arises. Procedures for child protection and health and safety are rigorous. The supportive and caring ethos of the school promotes pupils' personal development well. Pupils are becoming increasingly familiar with their targets for improvement. Academic guidance, however, is unsatisfactory because assessment procedures are not yet sufficiently rigorous. Therefore, some teachers cannot yet give pupils sufficiently clear advice on how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides outstanding leadership and management. She enjoys the confidence of the entire school and demonstrates an accurate and very perceptive understanding of the school's relative strengths and weaknesses. Rigorous monitoring and thorough evaluations are used to identify shortcomings and to support staff. The recently assembled bank of assessment data is beginning to enable staff to track pupils' progress and highlight underachievement effectively. The headteacher has identified the strategies needed to bring about improvement. Her recently appointed deputy contributes a wide range of skills and experience and senior managers have a very good understanding of how to bring about change rapidly. Improvement planning demonstrates considerable ambition for the school and its pupils. Actions already taken, for example on the development of the curriculum and pupils' attitudes, have had a considerable impact.

The energetic and enthusiastic members of the newly formed senior leadership team understand their roles and carry out their responsibilities competently. All members of staff have embraced the changes. Plans are well advanced to develop curriculum teams, and the leadership and management roles of the rest of the staff are developing well. The school works increasingly closely with parents, many of whom are delighted with the recent changes. The governing body carries out its responsibilities satisfactorily and the chair of governors works very closely with the headteacher.

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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?	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	3
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	No

Achievement and standards

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	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
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

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?	3

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	3
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

12 November 2006

Dear Children,

Notley Green Primary School, Blickling Road, Great Notley, Braintree, Essex, CM77 7ZJ

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited you recently. Your willingness to talk to us made it easy for us to find out what it is like to be a pupil at Notley Green Primary School.

Yours is a satisfactory school and it is rapidly improving. The things we particularly liked about it are:

- the headteacher, deputy headteacher and your teachers are working very hard to bring in lots of new and interesting things for you to do
- you enjoy learning and attend school very regularly
- you get on well with each other and behave well
- staff take good care of you and help you feel happy at school so that you can concentrate on your learning
- the school works well with other people in the community to give you extra opportunities and support those who need extra help.

We have asked your school to do the following things to make your school even better:

- help you all to become better at writing and science
- use information about what you already know to help you to improve and to plan work that makes you all think hard
- use information about your work to keep track of how well you are doing and to give you something to aim for
- encourage you to come up with your own ideas and suggestions about school life and give you more time in lessons to work on your own or in small groups.

Best wishes for the future.

Gillian Smith

Lead inspector