



Bardfield Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 133341
Local Authority ESSEX
Inspection number 294075
Inspection dates 13–14 March 2007
Reporting inspector Paul Cosway

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Clay Hill Road
School category	Community		Vange, Basildon
Age range of pupils	4–11		Essex SS16 4NL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01268 553488
Number on roll (school)	313	Fax number	01268 556330
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mrs Cynthia Folkard
		Headteacher	Mrs Yvonne Burgess
Date of previous school inspection	29 April 2002		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	13–14 March 2007	294075

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Bardfield Primary School is an average-sized primary school, serving the district of Vange, to the south of Basildon. It has an attached nursery. The local population served by the school represents a wide mix of social backgrounds. Attainment on entry is below average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. Two pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, including those with statements, is higher than the national average. The school is in an area where it is difficult to recruit teachers and this has meant in the recent past that the school has had to appoint temporary teachers to cover classes. It now has a more stable staff.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges itself to be satisfactory and improving, and the inspection team agrees. Almost all parents are pleased with the education that it gives their children. They say, 'There is a lovely atmosphere... our children are doing really well'.

Standards are rising. Currently, achievement is satisfactory and Year 6 pupils are reaching standards that are close to the national average, though slightly below, in English, mathematics and science. The attainment of most children is below average on entry to the Reception class. They make sound progress in the Nursery and Foundation Stage classes, because of the amount of support and encouragement that they receive, but their attainment remains below average. Around half the children reach the standards expected by the time they begin Year 1. At the end of Year 2, standards are below the national average but pupils are becoming more confident at speaking and listening, as well as more numerate.

Pupils' personal development is good. They are well behaved and have positive attitudes to learning. Almost all parents who responded said that their children are happy in school. They learn in an ethos in which all pupils are valued, no matter what their backgrounds or abilities. Good provision for their welfare, health and safety ensures that all pupils fully understand how to lead healthy lives and feel secure at school. They have a sound preparation for their lives beyond school, arising from the emphasis the school places on the teaching of literacy and numeracy, the many opportunities to work collaboratively and the good contributions they make to the school community and local charities. The school council is effective and the pupils learn to care for each other, partly through the good examples set by all adults in the school. Attendance is close to average and improving.

The curriculum is good. There is some good teaching in the school but teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked by the school and support given if they fall behind, but not all teachers have a thorough understanding yet of how to use assessment to meet the needs of all learners. Sometimes, insufficient attention is paid to improving their basic skills of literacy and numeracy whilst they are taught more advanced work, such as character analysis or algebra.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has shown good leadership in taking the school forward since the last inspection, improving behaviour, attendance and accommodation, although test results have been slow to improve. Now that the school has a stable staff, it has good capacity to develop further and gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Strengthen teachers' understanding of the use of assessment data to ensure that they monitor their pupils' progress systematically and have high expectations of what they can achieve.

- Use marking to identify the errors that individual pupils make, especially in the basics of literacy and numeracy, and tailor work to address these so that their work becomes more accurate.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Results in the national tests are improving year on year and, in the current Year 6, pupils' achievement is satisfactory and their attainment is close to the national average, though slightly below. Pupils start school with standards that are below, in some cases well below, average for their age and make sound progress. Around half meet the standards expected for their age by the end of the Reception year and a few exceed them. By the end of Year 2, around two thirds of the pupils have reached the standards expected for their age. Most pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and the gifted and talented, meet their individual targets.

Over the last three years, standards in the national tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been below to well below the national average. The school has failed to meet its overall targets. It has been difficult to attract permanent staff and pupils' education has been disrupted in a number of classes by staffing changes and temporary appointments. The school now has a stable staff and the work that has been done by the management team on monitoring and improving the effectiveness of teaching has brought improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness, is good. Although their attendance has been below average for a number of years, it is now close to average and continues to improve. Pupils say how much they enjoy coming to school. Behaviour is good and they say there is no bullying. Pupils are courteous and considerate towards each other and adults. They know how to stay safe and healthy. If they feel upset or worried, they are confident that one of the adults in school will help them. Some classes have a 'worry box' and use their 'bubble time' to discuss and resolve any worries. They have a good sense of responsibility and contribute to the local community by raising funds. Pupils of all ages are keen to be helpful and to take responsibility, and members of the school council are proud to represent the interests of their classmates. 'We communicate ideas and help others,' said one. Older pupils act as buddies and play leaders to help the younger ones. Pupils' good social skills in addition to the literacy, mathematics and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that they acquire, give them a satisfactory grounding for the next stage of schooling and adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Although teaching is satisfactory overall, some good and outstanding lessons were observed. Teachers' expectations and the pace in these lessons mean that pupils learn quickly and make good progress. In other lessons, the expectations are sometimes not appropriate for all the pupils in the class, so that some are attempting work that they are not ready for. Generally, pupils concentrate and work hard because the lessons are interesting and enjoyable. The management of pupils is good and relationships are often very good. Teachers use ICT very well as a teaching aid to make lessons exciting. In almost all classrooms, there is a good learning ethos, with pupils working well both individually and in small groups, learning to collaborate and listening to the ideas of others. Questioning is used well to check how much has been understood and to extend pupils' ideas. Teaching assistants make a good contribution: the support they give to the less able pupils is particularly helpful in ensuring that they gain the maximum benefits from the lessons. Not all the marking is helpful enough in pointing out to pupils how they can improve their work, however, especially in basic literacy and numeracy skills.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Beginning in the Foundation Stage, the school provides a broad and balanced curriculum with a wide range of relevant and interesting learning opportunities that stimulate pupils' interest and imagination. Provision for basic skills, such as ICT, is increasingly effective. The curriculum is modified to take account of the needs of the less able; less so the needs of those with particular talents. There is a particular focus on ensuring that pupils are healthy and fit. Themed weeks further stimulate interest and enthusiasm and there is good provision for art, music and drama.

The provision for personal, social and health education is good and pupils are taught to appreciate the many cultures in the modern world. Accommodation is very well cared for. The high quality displays in classrooms place value on pupils' work, encouraging them to greater efforts, and help pupils to learn. The 'learning walls' are used well to display words and ideas that the pupils can use in their own work. A good range of popular clubs enrich learning. Visits and visitors extend and enliven the curriculum. Residential visits are limited, however, and the school is considering the introduction of a foreign language.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Arrangements to ensure pupils' safety are robust and meet current requirements fully. Teachers and other staff know the pupils well and thoroughly understand their needs. Pupils and parents express confidence that

staff give them all the support required in case of any difficulty. One parent wrote, 'The school has worked with us to improve my son's special needs and is dedicated for him to gain as good an education as he can.' The needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those of lower attaining pupils, are identified at an early stage and a range of good additional programmes is used to help them to overcome the challenges they face. High quality care is given to pupils attending the Sunshine Room, the provision designed to support pupils who are vulnerable and lacking self-esteem. Pupils learning English as a new language are supported well. The school has secure systems in place for checking how well pupils are doing. The teachers are still refining their use of assessment to help pupils to understand how they can improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Good leadership from the headteacher has brought about some significant improvements in the effectiveness of the school and standards are beginning to rise. Overall, leadership and management are satisfactory. The governing body's support and monitoring of the school are sound and they provide material help in a number of areas, such as the design of the new buildings. The co-ordinators in English, mathematics and science now have a clear understanding of how to take their subjects forward and are beginning to provide effective leadership. All teachers take part in the process of school improvement planning and review, and the senior team has a commitment to developing the skills and expertise of all who work in it, including teachers and support staff. The school has productive partnerships with other organisations that help to meet the needs of all pupils.

Parents value the leadership of the headteacher and both they and pupils recognise that their opinions are taken account of in the running of the school.

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	3
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?	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	2
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?	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?	3
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	3
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

14 March 2007

Dear Pupils

The School Council, Bardfield Primary School, Vange, Basildon, SS16 4NL

Thank you for being so friendly and helpful to us when we visited your school. We enjoyed sharing your lessons and talking to you. You all told us how much you love your school. We think that it is giving you a sound education and that there are some good things about it. We were impressed with how helpful you are to each other. We enjoyed the morning assembly and the song about the tortoise. You were very well behaved and there was a real sense of a very special occasion, as you applauded those who had done well. These are some of the other good things about your school:

- you work hard in lessons and your behaviour is good
- you are doing better at your work and standards are rising
- your headteacher and senior teachers have good ideas about ways to improve the school
- teachers make lessons enjoyable
- teachers, teaching assistants and all adults care for you well
- you are helped to be healthy and safe.

We have asked your school try to make things even better. The most important things are that:

- they set you work that will help you all to make good progress in literacy and numeracy
- when teachers mark your work, that they always pick out two or three things for you to practise so that your spelling, punctuation and number work improve.

Keep working hard and make the most of your time at this lovely school.

Paul Cosway

Lead Inspector