

Nelmes Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102321
Local Authority	Havering
Inspection number	307969
Inspection date	14 July 2008
Reporting inspector	Nicola Davies

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	400
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Roger Weatherley
Headteacher	Mrs Vivien Shooter
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2004
School address	Wingletye Lane Hornchurch Essex RM11 3BX
Telephone number	01708 447676
Fax number	01708 453780

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school, and investigated the progress and attendance of pupils and opportunities for independent learning in the Foundation Stage. Evidence was gathered from the analysis of pupils' test results, observation of lessons and pupils' work, parents' questionnaires and discussions with the headteacher, staff, governors and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a two-form entry primary school with two Reception classes. Most of the pupils are from White British backgrounds; a growing minority are from a wide range of other ethnic heritages. Around one in ten pupils is bilingual. Few pupils are entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average, but is increasing. These mostly relate to difficulties with speech, language and communication and autism.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Nelves Primary School provides its pupils with an outstanding education. Since the time of its last inspection, the school has successfully maintained and improved its high academic standards as well as continuing to extend the opportunities it offers to pupils. This track record of improvement is due to the excellent leadership and management of the outstanding headteacher. Together with her team, she has developed an extremely thorough system of self-evaluation followed by very effective action. The result is the school's sustained improvement and its excellent capacity to continue to improve. Just one example is the way that the school has continued to enhance its facilities to provide pupils with the first class setting in which they now work and play.

The excellent and hugely enjoyable curriculum has been strengthened by a focus this year on creativity. Staff have worked hard to ensure that pupils' creative and learning skills are developed in the same excellent way as their basic skills. This is showing good results in the enthusiasm shown by pupils and teachers when studying particular topics in depth. The school has identified that it could further enhance the curriculum by making extensive opportunities for pupils to learn beyond the classroom. These are included in its carefully considered plans for next year. For instance, staff plan to extend pupils' learning about real life local and global issues and to enhance opportunities for outdoor learning in the school's extensive grounds. Already younger and older pupils very much enjoy growing vegetables in their gardening clubs. This adds to their very good understanding of healthy eating and lifestyles. Plans to market their produce are designed to enhance their understanding of enterprise and economics.

Staff pay very careful attention to pupils' individual needs, whether these are academic, personal or social, and provides them with excellent care, guidance and support. Tracking of pupils' academic progress is comprehensive as staff are determined to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can, regardless of their abilities or circumstances. This effective focus on inclusion has highlighted that the needs of pupils have become more diverse over the past few years. As a result, plans are in place to strengthen the knowledge and skills of staff in this area. Similarly, the school is currently working with a small group of pupils whose absences are due to minor ailments as part of its action plan to promote excellent attendance.

Pupils' achievements and personal development are outstanding. Across the school, their excellent attitudes to learning combined with the high quality teaching they receive mean that they make outstanding progress. By the time pupils leave for secondary school, standards are consistently high and often exceptionally so. For instance, in 2007 and 2008, over half of Year 6 pupils were working at higher levels in English and mathematics and nearly all were doing so in science. Their very good grasp of basic skills, very positive attitudes and their excellent capacity for hard work means that they are very well prepared for their next steps in education.

Very good links with parents enhance the overall effectiveness of the education that the school provides and secure its local reputation for excellence. Moving with the times, it has recently adopted both email and text messaging as a way of keeping in regular contact with parents. Parents are rightly lavish in their praise of the school. One parent summed up the views of many when commenting that 'Nelves Primary exceeds all expectations of what makes a wonderful school. My child loves the school and has made wonderful progress there'.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The Foundation Stage has been transformed since the time of the last inspection when children in the Reception classes were not always given sufficient opportunities to make choices and learn independently. In contrast, children now get a flying start to their learning in the exciting and stimulating environment of the open plan Reception classes and develop their attitudes and skills very well.

Most children join the Reception class with the expected skills for their age even though, for some, this is their first experience of learning outside the home. Regardless of their previous experience, they make very good progress to reach and often exceed expectations by the time they enter Year 1. Children benefit from skilful support from adults and the well-planned and exciting activities which they prepare. These now include a blend of adult-led and child-chosen activities. For example, at times during the day, children work together with their class teachers to learn more about sounds and letters. They enthusiastically develop their early spelling skills by learning how to build up words from different sounds and to use these skills in their own writing. At other times, children will choose their activities independently, opting, for example, to develop their speaking skills by working with friends in the role-play areas.

The well-equipped Foundation Stage includes a large outdoor area which children can use in all weathers. Children enjoy using this area and show considerable maturity in the way they choose and pursue different activities, for example, creating their own plays in the puppet theatre. As yet, activities in this outdoor area do not match the quality of learning opportunities provided in the indoor environment. The school has rightly identified this as an area for further improvement as part of its plan to extend creative curriculum approaches to the Reception classes.

What the school should do to improve further

- Extend opportunities for children and pupils to learn outdoors and beyond the classroom.

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Annex A

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?	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Achievement and standards

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

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	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

03 September 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Nelmes Primary School, Essex, RM11 3BX

Thank you for helping me when I visited you recently. Nelmes Primary is an outstanding school and it was a real pleasure to spend the day with you and to join in some of your activities. You and your teachers made me feel very welcome and you were all very helpful in answering all my questions. I was particularly grateful to those of you who spoke to me about all the things you enjoy and the things you are most proud of.

Your parents were full of praise for the school too. One of them told me that 'All staff are very committed and take pride and care when delivering their best'. This commitment and care from all the adults is one reason why the school is such a happy place, and why you enjoy your time at Nelmes so much and leave as such successful and mature young people. Another reason is that all of you work so hard and try your best in your lessons and in your homework. This means that you all make very good progress in your studies. Just as importantly, you behave extremely well and show respect for each other and all the adults at the school. So well done!

When I arrived at your school, your headteacher's office was full of files. These files were the ones that your teachers keep to see what is going well and what they could improve next. The way that they keep thinking about how they can make the school even better plays a big part in its success. The changes they have made to the topics you study and how they help the youngest children to learn are just two of their successes since the last time inspectors visited you.

There was another big file in Mrs Shooter's office and that was all the plans for what the school will do next year. One of the things in there was making the very best use of your lovely outdoor areas and the local community to give you different opportunities to learn. I am sure that you will enjoy these new opportunities.

Thank you for helping me get to know your school and please pass on my thanks to all the adults at the school and your parents too.

Yours sincerely

Nicola Davies

Lead Inspector