

Bocking Church Street Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114809
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	311713
Inspection dates	8–9 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Geof Timms

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr D Mann
Headteacher	Mrs R Welch
Date of previous school inspection	8 December 2003
School address	Church Street Bocking Braintree Essex CM7 5LA
Telephone number	01376 322650
Fax number	01376 321337

Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves the village of Bocking Church Street, although a growing number of pupils come from Braintree. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The majority are White British with very few pupils from minority ethnic groups. A well below average proportion have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties or disabilities is below average overall but high in some year groups. An average number of pupils have a statement of special educational need. The majority of pupils are from broadly average or below socio-economic backgrounds. Attainment on entry to the school varies but is often below that expected. The school has Healthy School accreditation and an Activemark award.

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 because it is led by a very enthusiastic headteacher who has created a positive and effective staff team. All are working hard to help pupils achieve well and do the best they can. Parents are largely positive about the school and the school is very popular. Parents' views are represented by comments such as 'a lovely village school with a happy atmosphere.'

Children's starting points vary considerably, but many have skills and understanding below the levels expected for their ages especially in language and communication. A significant minority have learning or social and emotional needs that sometimes has a negative impact on their learning. They are well provided for and supported and most pupils make good progress. Achievement is good overall. Standards are currently broadly average, although better than that in some year groups. In reading, writing and mathematics progress has improved. However, teachers are not yet using assessment information to best effect when planning their lessons and so pupils' progress is, at times, inconsistent. For example in science, teachers do not always take sufficient notice of pupils' prior learning and so standards, though broadly average, are still behind those in English and mathematics. Nevertheless, the school has shown that it can use such information to raise standards. For example, boys' poorer skills in writing were recognised and successfully addressed through a range of initiatives. The sound skills currently attained in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology are helping prepare pupils satisfactorily for the next stage in their education.

The good achievement is the result of some good quality teaching and learning. Teachers have very positive relationships with their pupils. Lessons are well resourced and teachers make good use of technology to make pupils' learning more exciting. The good curriculum is being very effectively extended through the Forest School initiative for the youngest children and through a wide range of enrichment activities.

Pupils' personal development is good and this is the result of good quality care and support. Pupils really enjoy school and this is reflected in above average attendance levels. They are very aware of the requirements for living a healthy lifestyle and keeping themselves safe. They make a good contribution to the school, local and wider community. The school promotes good behaviour and relationships well. A very small number of pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties find these expectations difficult but provision for them is good and helps their inclusion in most school activities. Safeguarding requirements are met effectively and the school works hard through health and safety procedures, risk assessments and child protection systems to ensure pupils' safety.

In addition to the good pastoral care, the school has a good system for tracking pupils' progress and setting individual targets, although the use of this information is at an early stage. The school's leadership and management are good. The headteacher is dedicated to the school and leads with enthusiasm and genuine concern for all pupils. She is well supported by her senior leadership team and subject leadership is much improved since the last inspection. The school is willing to try new ideas and is open to outside advice and innovation, although the objectives in improvement planning are not always sufficiently measurable to allow senior staff to chart its progress accurately. Even so, the improvements made since the last inspection show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved since the last inspection. Currently, teaching and learning are good and children make good progress given their skills and understanding on entry to the school. By the end of the Reception Year, the current children are reaching levels close to those expected, although this has not always been the case in the past. The children are accurately assessed on entry to the school and again at the end of the year. The current system of termly admissions clearly has a negative impact on the progress made by some children, although the school works hard to overcome this and has plans to extend the accommodation so that more children can be admitted earlier. Staff work very hard to make good use of the available accommodation, both indoors and outside. The effective planning ensures children have a good range of appropriate activities. Progress in their social skills is particularly evident in the positive way they play and work together.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the use of assessment to raise standards in science and ensure pupils progress consistently.
- Ensure the strategic school improvement planning has a clear purpose so that its impact can be more easily evaluated.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

The good progress made in the Reception class is built on well during Years 1 and 2. Standards by the end of Year 2 are usually in line with those expected or better. The basic literacy and numeracy skills are developed satisfactorily to prepare pupils for their future learning. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are currently in line to reach those expected nationally. This good progress continues through Key Stage 2. Although standards vary from year to year due to the nature of particular groups of pupils they all make good progress from their starting points. Where weaknesses are recognised the school quickly tries to improve matters. Currently, this is being done successfully with boys' writing. Standards in science are largely satisfactory but remain weaker than those in English and mathematics. Art and design standards throughout the school are good and pupils produce some high quality work.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have positive attitudes towards each other and are keen to share ideas for improving the school through fortnightly classes and school councils. Their anti-bullying poster campaign helped everyone to understand how to prevent bullying and pupils are planning a similar approach to reviewing school rules. They decide which charities to support and raise funds enthusiastically. Pupils are generally polite and considerate towards each other. Although a few parents have expressed concern about the behaviour of a small number of pupils, children say that they feel safe and have expressed confidence in the school's ability to deal with inappropriate behaviour when it arises. Attendance is monitored closely and is above the national average. Pupils are proud of their school and generate good ideas to make it even better. Pupils in Year 6 have many opportunities for taking on responsibilities and enjoy being helpful to others in this way.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The effective teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and their achievement. The quality of teaching and learning has improved since the last inspection. Teachers know pupils and their families well and have a good appreciation of any barriers to learning that may exist. However, their use of assessment information to promote effective learning is not fully effective and this adversely affects pupils' progress and the standards that they attain, for example in science. Relationships are strong and teachers deal effectively with pupils with social or emotional problems. Lessons are planned in detail and make good use of technology. The best learning is evident in lessons that have a very good pace and very effective question and response sessions. Teaching assistants support teachers well, especially with pupils who find learning difficult or who have behavioural difficulties.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Staff work hard to plan and deliver a good curriculum that is appropriate to the ages of the pupils and covers all subjects and areas of learning. This has been effectively extended recently through the introduction of French and the Forest School activities. These are having a positive impact on the youngest pupils' self-esteem and confidence. Initiatives to improve aspects of the curriculum in English are proving successful, for example in improving the standard of boys' writing. The provision for the most able pupils is improving, including some opportunities to work on projects with pupils from other schools. There is a good range of clubs and musical or sporting activities. Effective use is made of the locality and visits further afield, as well as visitors to the school, including those promoting environmental issues, such as the value of recycling and composting.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Safeguarding procedures are securely in place and reviewed regularly. The school is effective in its provision for pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities and is thorough in ensuring good support for pupils who find aspects of their learning difficult. All pupils are valued and equality is promoted well. Good academic guidance is evident in the quality of feedback that pupils receive about their progress, in effective target setting and in constructive marking, though this varies in quality in some classes. Risk assessments are rigorously carried out for visits out of school and internal monitoring of health and safety in and around school is carried out regularly. Pupils are well supervised, generally well behaved and most act sensibly when moving around school. They feel safe in school and are confident about discussing problems or worries with adults who look after them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good because the enthusiasm and dedication shown by the headteacher has rubbed off on the senior staff and all staff work well together. Consequently,

good progress has been made in resolving the issues raised in the previous inspection and the school has good capacity to make further improvements. The governing body are well organised and led by an excellent Chair. The creation of a group of governors with a specific remit to review standards has led to an enhanced ability to hold the school to account for its results. The school is open to new ideas and very willing to take on new initiatives. However, the development planning is not yet sufficiently focused to ensure it is easily evaluated.

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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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

12 May 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Bocking Church Street Primary School, Bocking, Essex, CM7 5LA.

Many thanks for the way you made us welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit and you helped us a lot by telling us about the things you like about your school.

Most of you work very hard at school. This helps you learn many new things. We know from what you and your parents told us that you enjoy the Forest School and work at the meadow, and that you enjoy learning French. In most lessons, you are very well behaved and this helps your teachers to provide interesting and exciting things to do.

Most of you reach the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. We think the school is good at helping those of you who find learning difficult to do well. We also think that you do some very good quality art and design work. Well done!

Mrs Welch and all the adults work very hard to make this a good school and to help you do your best. You can help by working hard, behaving well and joining in the lessons so you learn even more new things.

To make the school even better we have asked the teachers to do two things. We have asked them to help you get better at science by making sure the work is well planned and at just the right level to help you make good progress. You can help by making sure that the way you record your work is neat and that it is stored tidily so you can refer back to it. We have also asked the governors and staff to make sure their plans for improving the school are focused on a few important priorities and that the results are easy to measure.

Thank you again for your help. Enjoy your time at Bocking and keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Geof Timms Lead inspector