

Vange Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114811
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311714
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2007
Reporting inspector	Florence Olajide

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	131
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Headteacher	Mr James Rogers
Date of previous school inspection	8 November 2005
School address	London Road Vange Basildon SS16 4QA
Telephone number	01268552160
Fax number	01268581840

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small school serves the Vange area to the east of Basildon town. Pupils come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who are entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are above the national average. The majority of pupils are White British, with only a tenth of the pupils from minority ethnic groups, but all of these have English as their first language.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses. It is currently going through a period of significant change following new appointments to several key posts, including the entire senior leadership team and the chair of governors. Some of the senior leadership appointments are still temporary. Nevertheless, the change process is being managed effectively and staff morale is good.

The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory, leading to satisfactory standards and achievement. Teaching within the school generally ranges from satisfactory to outstanding, and pupils' achievement reflects this. For example, achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 has been outstanding over the past two years. However, a lack of consistently good teaching combined with unavoidable but frequent staff changes in some year groups has had a negative impact on the progress of pupils, including some with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Consequently, the standards currently reached by pupils vary between year groups and are generally below age-related expectations, particularly in writing. The school is currently unable to maintain the very high achievement of the past two years.

The new senior leadership team has been quick to identify shortcomings in pupils' achievement and has put in place appropriate strategies to address the issues. These have included establishing more robust systems for tracking pupils' progress and for meeting the school's responsibility towards pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. Nonetheless, leadership and management are only satisfactory because most of these systems have not been in place long enough to achieve the desired outcomes on pupils' achievement. In addition, many governors are new and, although supportive of the school, they are still in the process of establishing more effective systems to enable them to discharge their responsibilities.

The curriculum is satisfactory and the positive links with parents and outside agencies are being used effectively to enrich provision. While the care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, pastoral care is good and parents appreciate the support that the school provides for them and their children. The good pastoral care fosters very positive relations between all members of the school community. This promotes pupils' personal development and well-being, which are also good.

The school has made adequate progress in addressing the issues raised in the previous inspection and provides satisfactory value for money.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The Foundation stage is well led and provision and standards are good. Children learn in an attractive environment with good access to outdoor learning space. They enjoy a very positive relationship with adults and the good care provided by staff boosts their confidence and independence. They settle into school quickly and, from the very low standards on entry, make good progress particularly in their last year in the Foundation Stage. As such, standards by the end of the Foundation Stage are in line with national expectations. The planning makes good provision for most of the different areas of learning. The school is now focussing on improving the quality of the planning and teaching of literacy so that children can make rapid progress in their communication, language and literacy skills. There are also plans to improve the quality of outdoor learning resources.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and achievement particularly in writing.
- Enhance and embed assessment and tracking systems to ensure that all groups of pupils make equally good progress.
- Accelerate pupils' progress by ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good.
- Strengthen leadership and management through the appointment of key permanent staff and through appropriate training and support for leaders, including governors.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. The 2007 national test results indicated that standards at Key Stage 1 were below average in reading and mathematics, and particularly in writing. Nonetheless, this represented satisfactory progress from the pupils' starting points, which were well below average. At the end of Key Stage 2, standards were good in English and mathematics and outstanding in science. This represented excellent progress from Key Stage 1. However, lower down the school, current standards are below age-related expectations because pupils in these cohorts have made slower and uneven progress. The performance of boys and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities was particularly low in Key Stage 1 last year. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are currently making similar progress to other pupils. Those from minority ethnic backgrounds are too few to form an overall assessment but there is no evidence to suggest that their attainment or progress is any different from other pupils. The school meets or exceeds its targets but these are not always sufficiently challenging.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being, and their spiritual, moral and social development are good. The positive relationships that pupils enjoy with each other and with adults does much to promote their well-being. Pupils are polite, confident and well behaved. They enjoy school and have good attitudes to learning. They have a strong awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. They make a good contribution to the school community, particularly through their roles as school council members, play leaders and peer mediators. In this regard, pupils have been very influential in maintaining the friendly atmosphere that they enjoy at play times. Other pupils appreciate this and describe the peer mediators as being 'quite good at it'. Pupils contribute to the wider community by engaging in local community events and fund-raising. Pupils' cultural development is satisfactory, but they do not have a strong enough awareness of the similarities and differences between their own and other cultures. Although improving, attendance is below average despite the school's best efforts to raise it. Pupils' satisfactory basic skills prepare them adequately for the next stage in their learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The teaching has some good features and there is no inadequate teaching. Pupils pay good attention during lessons because of the mutual respect between them and staff and because teachers use a range of strategies to engage their interest. Resources including information and communication technology are used effectively to enhance learning. Teaching assistants support learning well. Better use is being made of assessment data to ensure that learning activities match the needs of different ability groups. Nonetheless, until recently the outstanding standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2 relied too heavily on the excellent teaching skills of a few staff. In addition, assessment data was not used rigorously enough to track pupils' progress and inform target setting, especially for those pupils who were underachieving. As such, although much of the teaching is now good, it is yet to have an impact on raising standards. Staff are currently being trained on how to improve the teaching of writing to raise standards, particularly for boys.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Although satisfactory overall, the curriculum makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development. A range of clubs and other activities, visits and visitors contribute to making learning interesting and enjoyable for pupils. Links with parents and other community agencies are particularly strong and used to good effect to enrich learning. The curriculum does not yet promote good achievement in writing. Weak leadership of the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities in the past reduced the effectiveness of the academic support provided. This has now been rectified and all pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have had their individual education plans reviewed and updated.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has appropriate procedures and policies for safeguarding pupils' well-being. Following recent changes in responsibilities, there are advanced plans to ensure that child protection training of new staff is up to date, in line with government requirements. Academic guidance has improved significantly and is now good, enabling pupils to have a clearer understanding of how well they are doing and the next steps in their learning. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities now receive adequate academic support.

The school liaises appropriately with external agencies to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils. Pupils and their parents appreciate and comment on the high quality pastoral care and support for pupils' emotional and physical needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher provides the school with good leadership, which is enabling it to cope well with the high level of change. The leadership team and governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There are clear plans to tackle weaknesses and decisive action has already been taken to address some issues. The collection of assessment data and its use to track pupils' progress is becoming more robust. Other teachers are taking increasing responsibility for standards in their classes.

Nonetheless, the current leadership remains fragile, as all senior leaders are new to their posts as indeed are many governors. The school is benefiting from the support of Local Authority (LA) consultants who are helping it to devise strategies for raising standards in mathematics. The LA has also expressed a commitment to providing similar support for literacy. The school demonstrates satisfactory capacity to improve.

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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?	3
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	3

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 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	3
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?	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.

Annex A

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	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
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	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?	No
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

17 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Vange Primary School and Nursery, Basildon, SS16 4QA

Thank you for taking the time to talk to me when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed listening to what you had to say and as I promised, this letter is to tell you what I thought about your school.

Your school is satisfactory. You told me that you like your teachers and it was clear that you and the adults treat each other with a lot of respect. I was impressed by how friendly, confident and well behaved you were. You told me that the play leaders and peer mediators do a good job of ensuring that everyone enjoys themselves during playtime. The adults all work very hard to help you when you are unhappy or have problems. The teachers are doing a good job of helping you to understand how well you are doing in your work, and you know what you need to do next to get better. The school works closely with your parents and other people to make your learning more interesting.

However, while some of you do very well in your work, others are not doing as well as they should, particularly in writing. As you know some of the staff and your headteacher are new to your school. Since September, they have made some important changes to ensure that you all do very well. To make your school even better I have suggested that they should do the following.

- Help you to achieve better particularly in writing.
- Improve how they check to make sure that you are all doing well in your learning.
- Make sure that the teaching is as good as it could be so that you learn better and faster.
- Ensure that the headteacher and other people who lead your school get all the help they need to help them to do their jobs well.

I hope you will continue to do your best and that your parents will support the school even more by ensuring that you all attend school regularly.

Florence Olajide

Lead inspector