

Baddow Hall Infant School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114898
Local Authority	ESSEX LA
Inspection number	311746
Inspection date	19 March 2008
Reporting inspector	John Messer

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4-7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	175
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Sue Cilvert
Headteacher	Mrs Gill Marrion
Date of previous school inspection	17 November 2003
School address	New Road Great Baddow Chelmsford Essex CM2 7QZ
Telephone number	01245 471338
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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 pupils' progress, especially that of boys, in literacy and numeracy as well as the breadth of the curriculum and whether it matched the interests of pupils. Evidence was gathered from classroom visits and discussions with staff, pupils and governors as well as examination of pupils' work and school documents, especially assessment data. 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 form, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is smaller than average. There are many more boys than girls, especially in Year 1. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small number are from minority ethnic families. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. Attainment on entry to the school is broadly average in most areas of learning but for many children it is below national expectations in communication, language and literacy. The school has received International School status, the Healthy Schools award and the Active Mark.

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 that has done well to maintain standards that are above average despite considerable changes in staff. This has been managed well by the headteacher who has succeeded in ensuring that the continuity of pupils' learning has not been unduly affected. Teaching is good and so pupils make good progress. An excellent system for teaching pupils the links between letters and the sounds they represent has recently been introduced. This is helping pupils to make particularly good progress in reading and writing. In the national assessments for pupils in Year 2, the school's performance is above the average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school's analysis of assessment data confirms that girls perform better than boys, especially in writing. The school has begun to address this by tailoring the curriculum so that projects engage all pupils more fully. Faster learners make good progress and the proportion of pupils who attain the higher Level 3 standard is above the national average. Pupils who are particularly able are identified and challenging work is provided so that they also achieve well.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Pupils enjoy school and behaviour and attendance is good. Pupils are encouraged to be self-confident and sensible. There are good opportunities for them to use their initiative and develop independence. They appreciate their teachers, 'Our teachers are helpful, brainy and very special.' Staff treat all pupils with great respect and act as good role models. The academic skills pupils develop, together with their good attitudes to learning, prepare them well for the next phase of their education. Nearly all pupils behave well. They are courteous and sensitive to the needs of others. They are keen to take on responsibilities and make a good contribution to the smooth running of the school. They have a good understanding of how to lead healthy life styles. Pupils know how to stay safe and look after themselves. Their understanding of environmental issues is good and they are keen to support the school's recycling initiatives. This underpins their moral development and helps them to understand their responsibilities towards the wider community.

The good curriculum is enriched by a wide range of lunchtime and after school activities as well as visits to places of interest. Good links are made with schools in Brunei, Ghana, India and the United States, via email and letters, to share cultural experiences. Visits to the theatre and participating in an annual music festival help to promote pupils' enjoyment in learning. There is a strong emphasis on developing communication skills in order to boost language and self-confidence. Pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas with their 'talking partners'. Staff create opportunities to talk with pupils but do not always fully explain the meaning of unfamiliar words. The curriculum includes projects designed to match pupils' interests. The school has identified the need for developing imaginative role play and drama to stimulate children's imaginations and encourage more creative writing, especially among boys.

Good care, guidance and support help pupils to understand what they should do if they are upset or worried about anything. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Staff fully understand child protection procedures. Pupils receive good guidance, particularly about what they need to do to improve their work in literacy and numeracy. Many can recite their targets. 'Mine is to discuss impressions of a book from skim-reading the title, contents and blurb'. They rise to the challenges set and are successful at meeting their targets.

Good leadership and management provide the school with clear direction. The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work well as a team committed to further improving standards. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. A great deal has been achieved since the last inspection. There have been exceptional improvements in provision for information and communication technology and pupils now develop a wide range of skills. Data on pupils' performance is now analysed extremely well in order to identify precisely where extra learning support is required. Parents are pleased with the education provided for their children. One comment was typical, 'The teachers are approachable, caring and brilliant.' Some have concerns about staff turnover but others explained how these changes had been beneficial to the school. One parent summed it up when they said, 'There were some concerns about the number of changes of staff but these changes have been very successful and I have only heard positive comments about new staff.' The governing body supports the school well and monitors its performance thoroughly. The school's consistent track record of helping pupils to attain standards that are above average demonstrates that it has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Staff visit children in their homes before they start school and this helps to sow the seeds for a good partnership in learning. Relationships between parents and staff are good. One parent's comments summed this up, 'The induction programme for children starting school is first class. It gives children and their parents confidence and my son skipped happily to school on his first day due entirely to the efforts made by staff.' Teaching is good and helps the children to become confident learners. Relationships between staff and children are warm and friendly. Planning is clear and defines what children are expected to learn. Record keeping is thorough and is used well to tailor learning programmes to individual needs. Interactive white boards are used well to support learning. Children go shopping locally to purchase snacks for the week and this supports their learning well. The team of teachers and support staff place strong emphasis on developing early reading and writing skills. A new programme to teach children the links between letters and the sounds they make is proving highly successful and helps children to get off to a flying start with their reading. Children achieve well and standards are slightly above average by the end of the Reception year.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the curriculum to include more opportunities for drama, imaginative role play and make believe to stimulate children's imaginations and to encourage more creative writing, especially among boys.
- Make sure that the unfamiliar words and new vocabulary that are introduced in lessons are fully explained to pupils.

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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	2
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	2

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

20 March 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Baddow Hall Infant School, Great Baddow, CM2 7QZ

I thoroughly enjoyed my short time with you. Thank you for being so friendly and helpful. There are lots of good things about your school. Here are some of them.

- The good teaching from the Reception to Year 2 helps you to learn well and so you make good progress.
- Teachers and classroom helpers are especially good at helping you to learn to read and write so that you reach standards that are above average.
- You like number work and enjoy exploring shapes and patterns so you reach standards that are above average in numeracy.
- You are looked after well and everybody makes sure that you are safe in school.
- You work and play happily together and make good friends.
- I visited every classroom and in each one you were all concentrating hard on learning new things.
- You know how to stay safe and look after yourselves and you are sensitive to the feelings of others.
- You are polite and your behaviour is good.

I have asked Mrs Marrison to make sure that you have more opportunities to have fun by acting and playing imaginary games. I think that this might help all of you, especially the boys, to write even more imaginatively. I have also asked her to make sure that you fully understand all the new words you are introduced to in lessons. I wish you every success in the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

All best wishes

John Messer