

Becontree Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101231
Local Authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	335680
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Wendy Forbes

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 of pupils on the school roll	457
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phillip Wood
Headteacher	Steve Peacock
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. All but one teacher was observed in 20 lessons or parts of lessons. Inspectors visited all classrooms on a learning walk to sample displays, behaviour and resources, and held meetings with governors, staff and two groups of pupils. Inspectors examined pupils' books and school documents, including school improvement plans, safety records and assessment information. They analysed 75 questionnaires returned by parents and carers together with those completed by 101 pupils and 41 staff. The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work.

It looked in detail at the following:

- how effectively the school is eliminating variations in attainment between different groups of learners throughout the school and in different subjects
- the impact of actions taken and the effectiveness of support provided to improve the achievement of pupils, particularly those more able and pupils who speak English as an additional language
- the extent to which leaders and managers are driving improvements in teaching, assessment and pupils' tracking systems to raise pupils' achievement in writing and mathematics to that in reading

Information about the school

This large primary school serves an ethnically diverse community with White British pupils forming the largest single group at 25%. Three quarters of the school come from a wide range of other ethnic backgrounds; a few are from asylum-seeking families. A quarter of the pupils do not speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. The school's Early Years provision includes a Nursery which takes children on a part-time basis. The on-site Children's Centre shares the school's facilities for outdoor Early Years provision. On-site before- and after-school child care facilities are provided by an independent child care group and were not inspected. The school has faced significant challenges in recruiting and retaining staff over a long period of time. The school has improved facilities since the last inspection, including the provision of some new teaching areas, an administration block and an additional school hall.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Becontree is a satisfactory school, but one that is rapidly improving under the positive leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher, who have built a strong team spirit throughout the school. The sound governing body supports the vision for the school wholeheartedly. Children enter the school with skills that are well below those expected of typical three- and four-year-olds. The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a good start to their learning. The impact of constant staffing changes and subsequent disruption to learning over time has led to a legacy of under-achievement which is still apparent in a few classes. As a consequence, the progress of some pupils, particularly those in Years 3 to 6, and especially in writing and mathematics, has been slow. They still have much to catch up in their basic skills. However, the drive, ambition and tenacity of the headteacher, with support from staff, has already reduced some of the previously identified weaknesses, for example in teaching, which is now mainly good. As a result, the fall in attainment has now ceased and, although still low overall, shows signs of improvement across the whole school in almost all areas of learning.

Effective systems are used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning as well as track pupils' achievement. This focus on raising standards has helped to sustain more recent improvements; as a result, pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress. Pupils who do not speak English as their first language make good progress because of the very effective support provided. Self-evaluation is mostly accurate and honest, and has already led to improvements, particularly in reading. Because of the drive for raising standards, strong leadership, and the support and commitment of staff, the school has developed a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

The school is a happy, settled and welcoming community. Pupils say they feel safe and are well cared for, knowing adults will always help them. Consequently, pupils behave well, and the majority enjoy learning and hold positive views about the school. Parents and carers are supportive, valuing the good level of pastoral care, guidance and support provided. As one said, 'The school gives my child whatever he needs; it is a special place.' Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and provide interesting, fun and challenging activities which ensure pupils are well motivated in their learning. Teachers generally take good account of information about pupils' progress when planning their lessons. However, in a few lessons, this information is not used well enough, particularly for more able pupils in writing and mathematics. The school is a harmonious community and promotes community cohesion well at the local level but its development of the national and global dimensions is at an early stage.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress, particularly in writing, and in mathematics, by:
 - ensuring that work is always matched to the needs of all groups of learners, especially the more able.
 - using assessment information consistently effectively in lesson planning to meet more closely the needs of pupils of differing ability, particularly the more able.
- Raise pupils' awareness and understanding of the cultural diversity within the United Kingdom and globally by:
 - developing links with other schools and institutions that have greater ethnic diversity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy being in school and appreciate its caring ethos. They respond well to the value staff place on their achievements, as evidenced by their positive attitudes to learning. For example, Year 6 pupils thoroughly enjoyed their mathematics lesson revising their knowledge and use of number and calculating skills in order to solve number problems. In a good Year 2 history topic lesson seen, pupils enjoyed developing their writing skills as they learnt about the value of a diary as an historical resource.

Despite pupils' enthusiasm for learning, the constant changes of class teachers in some classes mean that the rate and pace of progress throughout the school has been erratic in recent times. However, pupils currently in Years 5 and 6 have recently made good progress and made up a lot of lost ground. Although attainment at the end of Year 6 remains low, the gap is closing.. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do as well as their peers due to the good care and support they receive. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their learning as a result of high quality intervention and support provided, such as teaching assistants who act as translators and a special reading club.

Pupils work hard in lessons, enjoying opportunities to collaborate, for example as 'talk partners'. Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is seen in their good relationships and their respect for other pupils' backgrounds. Pupils make a good contribution through the important roles they play within the school and wider community improving their school by acting as members of the school council, recycling monitors, playtime buddies and class helpers. They enjoy helping others by raising funds for charity and spoke with real passion about the school's involvement in the Blue Peter 'Smile' Project. Pupils are developing their awareness of how to live a healthy life. Despite the school's best efforts and rigorous procedures, attendance remains average because of a small minority of pupils who do not attend school as often as they could. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning, their developing literacy and numeracy skills, and good information and communication technology skills ensure they are soundly prepared for their future education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Most teachers have good skills in managing their pupils, and as a result, relationships are good. Teachers work hard to ensure that learning is engaging and activities are fun, frequently using interesting texts, video clips, or props to stimulate pupils' interest. The best lessons were conducted at a brisk pace, explanations were clear, the teachers' subject knowledge was good and expectations high. Leaders' support has ensured that teachers have developed their skills, and school monitoring records show clear improvement. Pupils have individual learning and sometimes personal development targets for improvement and are involved in the assessment of their learning so that they have a clear picture of how they can improve their work. Well- developed assessment systems ensure teachers have a clear understanding of pupils' needs. Teachers have become adept at using this information to match work to pupils' needs although occasionally they do not extend pupils, particularly the most able.

The school offers a broad and varied curriculum based on the core skills. Pupils are enthusiastic about special events such as the setting up of a French Cafe in the school

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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hall, visits from theatre groups and visits to places of interest such as London Zoo. Specialist provision in sport, music, drama and French received a 'thumbs-up' from older pupils particularly. There are many opportunities for pupils to participate in a good range of extra-curricular activities such as French, expressive arts, gardening, dance and many sports clubs, which have made a significant contribution to both pupils' personal development and also the school's promotion of healthy lifestyles. Pastoral care is most effective in supporting pupils' learning. Skilled teaching assistants ensure that those who need help are included well in lessons. Adults do much to reinforce pupils' self-confidence and to promote positive attitudes to learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has worked closely with staff to ensure that effective systems are in place to bring about improvements. The classroom monitoring programme and improvement systems which involve pupils in self-assessment have already gone some way to evening out the previous inconsistencies in teaching and use of assessment. However, this has not yet ensured that attainment is high enough in writing or mathematics, or that all pupils reach their full potential. The impact of school improvement strategies such as 'Talk for Writing' has yet to be seen in Year 6 attainment. The school tracks the performance of different groups of pupils closely, setting challenging targets focused on school improvement. Senior leaders guide staff so that equality of opportunity and inclusion are sound, but recognise that occasionally, although improving, the most able pupils do not always do as well as other groups of learners.

Governors are developing their capacity to hold the school to account and are united in their commitment to help the school improve. The success of the school's various strategies and interventions is only recently becoming evident as staffing becomes more settled and the role of governors and subject leaders develops and improves. The school's systems and procedures in child protection ensure that safeguarding systems are satisfactory and ensure children are safe. The school acknowledges the need to ensure that relevant safeguarding policies and systems are regularly reviewed by governors and that risk assessments are streamlined for ease of use. The school's relationship with parents and carers is good. They speak highly of the school and the way it cares for their children. Well-developed support systems within the school are

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complemented by a good range of partnerships with outside specialists to support the needs of vulnerable pupils. The school's promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory because it has yet to develop further partnerships and understanding of the wider national and global communities.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle very quickly in a safe, secure and welcoming environment. They enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age, particularly in speech and language. Many do not speak English as their first language. Good care, teaching, and leadership and management all help to ensure that children make good progress in all areas of learning, particularly in their personal and social development. This enables them to take responsibility for small tasks and develop good skills and attitudes for their future learning. Effective systems are in place to raise attainment and improve provision in all areas of learning, particularly pupils' development of their communication, language and literacy skills. Children who are at the early stages of learning English, or who require additional help, are extremely well supported by staff, who have a clear understanding of children's needs, a good curriculum and a well-resourced learning environment. By the end of Reception, the majority are working towards, and a few above, the skills expected for their age. This indicates good progress from their starting points.

Children explore and learn effectively through a good range of activities both indoors and outside. They are provided with well-designed learning opportunities which take account of their very individual needs. Children are safe and secure, and adults promote

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children's welfare well. They are well behaved working and playing sensibly together. Effective assessment procedures are used to measure and track children's progress. Many activities require children to adapt them to their own use, making sure they use their imagination and initiative. Learning is made fun. Fun-packed moments of enthusiasm were seen as children enjoyed the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' matching and naming fruit to the story's pictures, rolling green play-dough caterpillars and developing their language as they decide which caterpillar is the longest or shortest. Both the Nursery and Reception classes provide a good range of exciting and imaginative activities which children thoroughly enjoy as they laugh and giggle their way throughout the day.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A relatively small number of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire and were mostly supportive of the school. Those who commented were in praise of the quality care provided for their child. Many parents and carers praised the good start children had in the school's Nursery which was confirmed by the inspection team. There were a few who had concerns. These were mainly about how the school manages behaviour and seeks their views. Inspectors can confirm that the school deals with any unacceptable behaviour well and it is working hard to improve communication between the school and parents or carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Becontree Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 75 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 457 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	42	56	32	43	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	48	37	49	2	3	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	47	39	52	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	32	46	61	3	4	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	31	41	41	55	2	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	35	43	57	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	22	29	48	64	4	5	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	28	44	59	4	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	20	27	51	68	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	33	34	45	11	15	2	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	21	40	53	15	20	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	23	31	42	56	7	9	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	35	47	36	48	2	3	1	1

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Becontree Primary School, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2QR

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed our visit, and were pleased that you enjoy coming to school. You behave well in class and work hard to achieve your best. Your school keeps you safe. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the good quality art displayed around the school. You told us that you enjoy the activities your teachers plan for you, particularly the special school events such as the Blue Peter 'Smile' Project, multi-cultural afternoon and sports clubs.

Your school gives you a satisfactory education, which means it does some things well but some things need to be improved. All the adults care a great deal about you, and support you well. The children in the Nursery and Reception make good progress in their learning. Because many other children in the rest of the school have had disruption in their learning over a period of time, they have not made such good progress as the younger pupils. So we have asked your teachers to do the following things to help your school improve further:

- Find ways to make sure that those of you who sometimes find parts of lessons a bit too easy are challenged to reach even higher standards, in writing and in mathematics.
- Use information on how well each of you are doing, and then make sure that you receive work that matches your particular needs so that you make faster progress.
- Help you to find out more about different lifestyles in Britain and in other countries.

You can play your part by working hard and making sure that everyone does the very best they can. We wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Wendy Forbes

Lead inspector

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