

Gosbecks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114742
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338437
Inspection dates	30–31 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Ronald Hall

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 of pupils on the school roll	299
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Phil McCusker
Headteacher	Mrs Jayne Mitchell
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
School address	Owen Ward Close Shrub End Colchester
Telephone number	01206 575407
Fax number	01206 369856
Email address	admin@gosbecks.essex.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited 22 lessons taught by eleven teachers. They talked to several parents, and held meetings with groups of pupils, governors and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at assessment information showing pupils' progress, safeguarding procedures, a range of policy documents, teachers' planning, external reports of the school's progress and plans for development. They analysed 42 questionnaires completed by parents and carers alongside questionnaires returned by pupils and staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the achievement of boys, Black African pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the most able pupils to determine whether teaching is effective in promoting their progress
- how effectively teaching and the curriculum meet all pupils' needs, abilities and interests
- the extent to which the new leadership and management team have successfully improved provision and outcomes for all pupils
- the extent to which pupils are aware of and involved in the multi-racial and cultural society in the United Kingdom.

Information about the school

This larger than average-sized primary school caters for pupils from predominantly White British backgrounds, with a small group of minority ethnic pupils, some of whom have a first language other than English. More pupils than average have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs is also greater than in most other schools. The present headteacher joined the school about two years ago. There is a breakfast club provided before school each morning.

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

There have been many changes in the school since the last inspection, with many pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities joining the school. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is broadly in line with national expectations but below in Key Stage 2 although this is improving. Boys' writing is below expectations and there is insufficient challenge for the higher attaining pupils. However, Black African pupils are making progress in line with their peers. Assessments show that the majority of pupils in the present Year 6 are on track to attain levels closer to those expected for their age at the end of the year. Progress has started to accelerate over the last year, as teachers begin to make better use of accurate tracking data to provide additional support. However, this is still not being used as well as it could be to raise attainment and progress further. Teachers now adapt their lessons for pupils of varying abilities, but not all ensure a close enough match of learning objectives and outcomes to challenge fully the higher attaining pupils. Monitoring and evaluation has improved, generating pertinent plans for improvement firmly rooted in raising attainment. Safeguarding procedures are good, as is the care, guidance and support the pupils receive. Governors are increasingly involved in monitoring performance and support the headteacher well. The headteacher has been effective in enabling them, and the staff, to take responsibility and to contribute to school improvement and evaluation. These changes have resulted in many aspects of pupils' learning and personal development improving. Nonetheless, because they are at a relatively early stage, their full impact is not yet evident and leaders and governors' capacity for further improvement is satisfactory.

Although children make broadly satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, there are insufficient opportunities for children's independent learning. When children work with the adults they make satisfactory progress, but too many of the activities children choose are not focused towards extending their learning or challenging their thinking. Throughout the school teachers question pupils effectively, but do not always adjust their teaching sufficiently well during lessons to extend pupils' learning. Pupils are beginning to assess their learning, and decide how to improve their work, but this practice is not yet established across the school.

This is a happy school where achievement is celebrated. Pupils feel safe in school, secure in the knowledge of their teachers' support. Behaviour around the school is satisfactory. One pupil described the school as 'fun, caring, kind helpful and respectful.' They enjoy school but attendance is only broadly average, in spite of the school's efforts to encourage parents to ensure their children attend regularly. The school is attractive, with displays of high quality art and other examples of pupils' work, including pupils' understanding of special people and poetry. Pupils do not have a clear enough

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understanding of the multi-ethnic society in which they live because cultural aspects of the school are under-developed.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Disseminate the good practice of teachers to ensure all groups, including higher attaining pupils, are fully challenged.
- Raise attainment further by teachers using the very good data collected by the school to plan activities that closely meet pupils' individual needs.
- Ensure pupils have a clear understanding and experience of the diverse multi-ethnic and cultural society of the United Kingdom.
- Increase the opportunities for boys to write for a wide range of reasons to raise their standards in writing.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills broadly in line with those expected for their age, and by the time they join Year 1 pupils have made satisfactory progress. Most pupils across the school make at least satisfactory progress in lessons and where teaching is good or better, they achieve well. They generally listen attentively and work hard, taking a pride in their achievements. Pupils are eager to learn and almost all enjoy their lessons. In one lesson observed during the inspection pupils were changing aspects of a folk story and then discussing the effects on the characters. They work well together and respect each other's views and comments. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to their peers and some make good progress because of the good support they receive. The higher attaining pupils currently make satisfactory progress because they are not always challenged enough. When progress in lessons is not good, it is because the work does not always match the objectives for the lesson. Although pupils' progress is accelerating, the school has not had enough time to make up for previous years of under-achievement to attain above average standards. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

Whilst the vast majority of pupils behave well, low level disruption means behaviour is satisfactory overall. The school has worked hard with a number of pupils to modify their behaviour. The pupils' responsibilities around the school such as being monitors and 'Special Friends' contribute to their confidence. They know how to care for themselves and each other, whether on the roads or when using the internet. There is no evidence of any discrimination towards minority groups, including the minority ethnic groups or the pupils who find either learning or acceptable behaviour challenging. Pupils enjoy the many sporting and other extra-curricular opportunities on offer and pupils take pride in their sporting achievements. Pupils carry out their duties conscientiously and the school

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council play an active role in the school. They contribute to a range of charities and are involved in other fundraising events, including facilities for the school grounds. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is enhanced by a range of opportunities for art and music, and a range of visits and visitors. However, cultural aspects are not as well developed.

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	3
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	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
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	3

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have good relationships with pupils and generally make learning enjoyable. Teachers are not always clear about the expectations for each group in their class. Pupils mostly know their targets and what they need to learn next but marking does not always support this effectively. Teachers often question pupils well to extend learning and check understanding but not all adapt their lessons as a result. Several teachers have high expectations of their pupils, generate good pace, lively discussions and set challenging tasks to ensure learning is rapid. This good practice is not shared sufficiently widely with colleagues. Teaching assistants are skilled in extending the learning of the pupils they work with. Assessment procedures are now firmly established but teachers

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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do not always use this data effectively enough to plan activities that closely meet pupils' individual needs.

The curriculum ensures pupils learn the basic skills they need and there are increasing opportunities for them to use these across a range of subjects. The good range of clubs and enrichment activities provide additional breadth and balance. The good provision for personal, social and health education has helped to improve pupils' behaviour and personal development. The curriculum is evolving to involve pupils in planning the themes they study, based on a secure framework of skills. However, this has not yet had time to impact on the pupils and so raise attainment. There are effective procedures for caring for pupils. When support is needed, it is identified swiftly and action is taken. For example, robust internal procedures for improving attendance have resulted in the attendance steadily improving. The school ensures that pupils have the academic and pastoral support they need, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 been a catalyst for improvement since joining the school approximately two years ago. In spite of large staff changes, having to restructure the school and introduce many new initiatives, she has the support of the staff and governors in driving the improvements needed to raise the outcomes for pupils. Due to inconsistencies in the attainment and progress of the higher attaining pupils, the school's promotion of equality of opportunity is satisfactory. The phase leaders, being a newly formed team, are supportive but are not yet fully involved in driving improvements in the school. Effective safeguarding and child protection procedures have been swiftly established and pupils are set realistic and challenging targets that link to teachers' performance management targets. Procedures for monitoring teaching, planning and progress are now in place and phase leaders have an overview of pupils' progress and where there needs to be improvements in the provision. These changes have not yet had time to make a full impact and assist in raising standards. For example, writing was a weakness and there has been a whole school focus on improving this. Although there is still an issue with boys' writing, the improvements in general are clear in pupils' work.

Leaders take effective action to raise teachers' professionalism. As a result, inadequate

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teaching has been eliminated. The breakfast club provides pupils with a good start to the day. The school promotes local community links well, with parents helping throughout the school, involved in a very active parents group and arranging a wide range of activities for the children. However, pupils lack a real awareness of the multi-ethnic and cultural society within the United Kingdom and wider world. Leaders and managers know what they have to do to tackle weaknesses and there is a strong ethos of resolve and enthusiasm for future improvement.

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	2
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

The Early Years Foundation Stage is improving rapidly. There are visits to families at home and children visit school before entry and start on a part-time basis to help them settle into school swiftly. Adults record children's progress, taking photographs and commenting on what they have learnt. However, these are not always used to identify the child's next steps in learning. Children's 'Learning Journeys' are shared with their families, but the contribution to them by parents and the children themselves is limited. There is a satisfactory range of activities available in the classroom and outside that help children to consolidate their skills. Planning for developing children's communication, language and literacy and problem solving, reasoning and numeracy is satisfactory and ensures they make steady progress. A range of topics extend their knowledge and understanding of the world. There was satisfactory learning for most children during the inspection as they learnt new letter blends with their teacher. Teachers and support staff work with children on specific tasks linked to themes. However, although children happily play independently with the available toys and other resources, staff do not

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provide sufficient scope and opportunity for children to pose questions and experiment. Children's personal, social and emotional development is promoted well, and in the lessons children co-operate well with each other. Risk assessments are carried out daily but records of these are not always kept.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers are very positive about the school and their children's experiences. A small minority expressed concerns about behaviour or the account the school takes of their suggestions or concerns. The inspectors found behaviour management effective and communication to be good. Other parents had reservations about the way classes are organised in the upper part of the school. Inspectors found that this had initially slowed pupils' learning. However, a more creative curriculum, improved assesment and recording procedures and more sustained good teaching were impacting on the pupils by improving progress and standards.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gosbecks 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 299 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	26	62	15	36	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	22	52	16	38	3	7	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	45	18	43	5	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	38	22	52	2	5	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	21	50	17	40	1	2	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	40	18	43	7	17	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	38	24	57	0	0	1	2
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)	11	26	22	52	4	10	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	33	21	50	5	12	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	40	16	38	5	12	2	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	29	18	43	7	17	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	15	36	19	45	3	7	3	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	50	16	38	2	5	2	5

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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

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 pupil's 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.



2 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Gosbecks Primary School, Colchester, CO2 9DG

Thank you all very much for your friendliness and help during our visit to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and seeing your lovely work around the school. The group of school council members and other pupils who spoke to us were very helpful and we appreciated you giving up your time to talk to us.

Your headteacher, teachers and governors are making your school better. This is helping you all to make better progress. You all work hard and try to do your best and we can see that your work is improving. We have asked your teachers to help each other to make sure you all achieve well and have plenty of challenge. We have also asked them to improve the writing of boys, particularly in Key Stage 2. We want all teachers to be aware of your needs and, if necessary, change their plans to help you understand or to move on to new things. We want them to plan to ensure all groups reach their potential and that lessons challenge you all. The children in the Reception class learn steadily when they are working with an adult. We want their teachers to give them lots of opportunities to learn for themselves, by giving them things to do by themselves or with other children that makes them think, ask questions and find the answers.

We know you enjoy school and feel safe and happy. We want your teachers to help you understand the minority-ethnic and multi-cultural society in which you live and in the wider world.

We know you will help your teachers continue to make your happy school even better and wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Ronald Hall

Lead inspector

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