

# Bentfield Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114978
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	338487
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 October 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Norma Ball

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	217
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Robert Coop
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr Patrick Draper
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Rainsford Road Stansted Mountfitchet Essex
<b>Telephone number</b>	01279 813626
<b>Fax number</b>	01279 816696
<b>Email address</b>	admin@bentfield.essex.sch.uk

---

---

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

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

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)

W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2009

## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors visited nine lessons, held meetings with governors and staff, met with parents on the first morning of inspection and spoke to pupils. They observed the school's work; this included scrutinising samples of pupils' work, school data, management and curriculum documentation, teachers' planning and the responses to 50 questionnaires returned by parents, and also those completed by pupils and staff.

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

- the steps the school is taking to improve achievement, especially for pupils in Key Stage 1
- the quality of teaching and learning and the extent to which teachers set clear expectations and challenges for all pupils including those with special educational needs and/or learning difficulties
- the effectiveness of assessment and the way it is used to differentiate work for all groups of pupils, set clear targets, and involve pupils in their progress.
- the impact of leaders and managers at all levels on raising achievement and driving improvements

## Information about the school

Bentfield is an average size primary school. Most pupils are White British with a few of mixed heritage. Very few pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is high and the school has enhanced provision for 15 pupils with severe, profound and multiple learning needs. All places are filled. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a morning and afternoon Nursery and one full-time Reception class. The governing body is registered for childcare provision and manage the Bentfield Breakfast Club and Kids Club after school. A new hall and information and communication technology suite were added to the school in May 2009. The school holds the Sports Mark award.

**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?**

**4**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**4**

## Main findings

In accordance with section 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Although Bentfield provides a friendly, warm atmosphere and the majority of parents appreciate that their children like their school, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Leaders and managers have been too slow to react to the issues identified for improvement at the time of the last inspection. Self-evaluation is not accurate because monitoring of the work of the school lacks rigour and regularity. Leaders and managers have not worked as an efficient team to recognise and respond to the need for urgent improvement in the work of the school. An over optimistic view of how well the school is doing has resulted in groups of pupils underachieving. Whilst almost all parents who responded to the questionnaire reported that their children enjoy school, around a quarter considered that their children are not making enough progress. The school does not meet its aim to inspire all pupils to reach their true potential.

Most children make a sound start to their learning in Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 with skills and abilities that are expected for their age. Children settle quickly and enjoy learning and playing together. In Key Stage 1 the impetus in their learning is lost and there has been an unremitting and escalating decline in the standards attained by pupils at the end of Year 2. In the most recent national assessment tests for Key Stage 1, attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was exceptionally low. Some ground is regained in Key Stage 2, although work is often repetitive and there is too much variation in progress between groups of pupils. More able pupils, in particular, are not sufficiently challenged and so do not reach their full potential by the end of Year 6. By contrast, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make steady and sometimes good progress throughout the school relative to their low starting points. This is because they receive good support from well-trained learning support assistants and work is adapted to meet their needs. Many pupils do not show or express real excitement in their learning. One pupil described lessons as, 'Okay. Sometimes interesting, sometimes boring, I suppose'.

The monitoring and assessment of pupils' progress throughout the school is developing slowly but insufficient use is made of the assessment data collected by most teachers. Teachers do not consistently plan lessons that structure learning activities for pupils of different abilities. Limited guidance is provided for pupils on how to improve their work, for example, in teachers' marking or by clear, sharp, targets to signpost what they need

**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

to do to make better progress. As a result, lessons for most pupils, especially those who find learning easy, are not challenging enough, so they lose concentration and this suppresses their potential for progress. A lack of co-ordination in planning through key stages also results in repetition of work between year groups. Teachers are aware that much needs to be done and show a willingness to improve the progress pupils make. They are frustrated in this drive by leadership which lacks determination and clarity of purpose to move the school forward.

The satisfactory curriculum has recently been improved by the introduction of a limited range of strategies, for example, in mathematics in Key Stage 2. An appropriate range of visits and visitors refresh learning and bring new experiences for pupils outside the classroom. Pupils have a sound understanding of keeping safe and healthy. During the inspection shortcomings in safeguarding were drawn to the attention of the school. Although good arrangements are made for the care of pupils who receive enhanced provision, the issues around safeguarding mean that care, guidance and support are judged inadequate.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Improve achievement, especially in Key Stage 1, by developing rigorous and robust strategies to:
  - monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and its impact on learning
  - plan sharply the next steps required to raise pupils' achievement, especially more able pupils.
- Use assessment data with greater efficiency and to greater effect by:
  - ensuring that lessons are planned to provide work which challenges pupils of all abilities
  - identifying sharp targets for pupils that make clear the next steps in their learning to help them make better progress.
- Improve leadership and management at all levels by ensuring that governors hold the school to account, and together with the leadership team, monitor regularly and carefully the work of the school to provide a more accurate assessment of its effectiveness, making this central to their planning.
- Ensure that safeguarding arrangements are fully met as a matter of urgency.

### **Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**

**4**

In lessons pupils make at best satisfactory progress but too often it is inadequate. This rate of progress in learning is not good enough to raise pupils' attainment significantly. Standards are broadly average. Able pupils are not stretched or encouraged to move forward and reach for higher goals. Many pupils are passive learners and not motivated because the work they are given is often too easy, or has been covered before in their previous class. In some lessons, pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas and reflect on

**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

how well they have done and they respond well to this. By contrast, questions posed by teachers often do not allow extended answers and opportunities are missed to explore ideas.

Pupils do not make the progress they should because the work planned for them in lessons is not sufficiently challenging. They do not receive consistent and clear guidance on how to improve their work and make better progress. Progress is inadequate in Key Stage 1 because pupils do not learn enough. The skills gained in Nursery and Reception are not applied appropriately or extended well as a direct result of inadequate teaching. Although pupils make satisfactory progress between Years 3 and 6, this is not good enough to enable them to gain the ground lost in Key Stage 1. For the more able pupils, progress is limited because they do not receive a stimulating diet of learning activities which grip their imagination and promote better than average progress. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory. They settle in lessons and respond quickly to their teachers. However, when work does not capture their interests they drift off task and learning opportunities are missed. Pupils' attendance is satisfactory overall. It is good in Year 6 but below the national average in some other year groups.

Pupils have a limited range of responsibilities within school and show pride and a good sense of responsibility for their duties. The school council has elected representatives from all year groups and there are monitor duties such as helping with assembly. Links with the community, especially through choir performances and charity events are likewise satisfactory. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. They have a clear perception of right and wrong and a good regard for the needs of others. This is demonstrated in the kindness and respect shown by pupils for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Less well developed is an awareness of other cultures or ways of life beyond an understanding of some of the basic elements of other faiths. Links are being established with an inner city school to help extend awareness of the multicultural context of modern society.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>3</b>

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

<b>Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate</b>	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	<b>3</b>
	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Lessons generally begin with clear lesson objectives that are shared with pupils and sometimes pupils are encouraged to evaluate how well they have done using simple success criteria. Assessment of pupils' progress has been introduced recently and staff are beginning to gain confidence in interpreting the data. However, there are inconsistencies in the use made of this information throughout the school. There is no common and accepted format which prompts staff to consider the needs of different groups of pupils, especially the more able.

Tasks are planned mostly for the whole class with more structured and adapted tasks for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Marking does not clearly direct pupils' attention to how and where a piece of work could be improved. Marking praises both effort and good work and pupils take this to mean they are doing well when they could be encouraged to do even better.

Older pupils are provided with commercially produced descriptions of what they should be studying in literacy and numeracy. Areas are marked by pupils in red, orange and green to show what they need to learn, what they are not yet confident with and what they know. Pupils find this interesting, but when asked how valuable they find such prompts they are unclear. Class targets have been introduced but pupils were again unclear as to what these were or their value. The end result is pupils are unsure about exactly how well they are doing or the next steps needed in their learning to help them make better progress. This lack of involvement in learning stifles progress. Staff are very aware that teaching and learning must improve. They are not complacent, but rather frustrated that they are not given clear leadership.

Recent initiatives to help raise attainment in literacy and numeracy are still developing and not yet having a significant impact on improving pupils' achievement by the time they leave the school. Pupils enjoy information and communication technology which is integrated into some lessons so that they can carry out word processing and research tasks in class. There is limited use of interactive white boards so this resource does not stimulate the pupils' imagination or interest. Links are beginning to develop across subjects, notably in the project work for older pupils. A wide range of clubs are popular with pupils, especially those involving sports and, together with the provision for

**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

physical education, has contributed to the school gaining the Sports Mark award. The school provides a welcoming environment which has been enhanced by the recent building programme. Learning resources and equipment, especially for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are of a good quality.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	4
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>4</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Senior leaders and managers have had too little impact on improving outcomes for pupils since the last inspection. The roles of senior leaders and middle managers have not been clearly defined by the headteacher. Staff remain committed and hard working but their energies and good will are dissipated through the lack of clarity about their roles and responsibilities. Staff are loyal but the lack of leadership from the senior team has stifled innovation and hindered effective team work. Until recently there has been no coordinated programme for identifying and prioritising improvements. Areas for development have only comparatively recently been succinctly defined in a one-year plan initiated by governors.

The senior leadership team has held an unrealistically positive picture of the school which has not been challenged until very recently. Governors have recognised that they have not been appropriately involved in school development and strategic planning and have accepted the information provided to them without sufficient scrutiny. They have acted with tactful zeal to correct some of the issues but there are other areas of their responsibilities which have not been fully addressed. For example, governors have not ensured that all requirements for the safeguarding of children are met. Governors have reviewed their own structures and reassigned responsibilities but in some cases training opportunities have been limited to helping staff and governors to act on the school's shortcomings. Year-on-year optimism that things would improve did not lead to incisive action by leaders and managers. The monitoring of teaching and learning carried out by the school has not been sharply focused and has failed to identify important areas for improvement.

The decline in attainment in Key Stage 1 has not been addressed. The lack of challenge for pupils who find learning easier has resulted in groups of pupils who have not had the same opportunities as others to thrive in their learning. This, together with the inadequate quality of teaching means that the school provides inadequate value for money. There is no clear planning or set of actions to promote community cohesion and



**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

raise pupil's awareness of the rich diversity within our society and their future role as global citizens.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>4</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>4</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

A stimulating learning environment is created in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children settle quickly because they are well supported and learn to share and develop independence with equal confidence. Although not all children join with the expected skills for their age, most reach the expected milestones in most areas of learning. This is achieved by careful assessment and monitoring of children's development and sound planning to ensure all areas of learning are covered. A number of children have limited communication skills when they join. Satisfactory opportunities are taken to encourage speaking and listening skills and develop an interest in sounds and letters during teacher led activities. However, opportunities are sometimes missed for adults to subtly extend communication and other skills when children select their own activities.

A good feature of the Early Years Foundation Stage is the 'forest school'. A copse adjacent to the school is used well as an exciting learning base to extend pupils' awareness of their world, of nature and even textures and colours. Use of the outdoor learning area is incorporated into planning but limited use was made of it during the inspection because of heavy rain. Satisfactory relationships are established with parents. Home visits are effectively used to help establish a clear understanding of the needs and abilities of each child. There is a regular flow of information between school and home so that parents are kept appropriately informed of their children's development.

**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

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

Parents' views of the school were mostly positive. Almost all parents felt their children enjoy school. However, nearly a quarter of all parents who responded to the questionnaire were concerned that their children did not make enough progress and they did not receive support to help with their child's learning. About a fifth of parents felt that children's needs were not well met and that the school was not effectively led and managed. More than one in ten parents did not feel they were sufficiently well informed about their child's progress and the same proportion did not regard teaching as good. The concerns expressed by parents, often with accompanying commentary, were supported by the inspection findings.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bentfield 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 50 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 217 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	34	68	15	30	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	25	50	24	48	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	21	42	22	44	7	14	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	42	16	32	10	20	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	24	48	19	38	5	10	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	21	42	18	36	7	14	4	8
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	52	21	42	3	6	0	0
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)	23	46	22	44	5	10	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	54	13	26	9	18	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	34	26	52	4	8	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	18	36	23	46	9	18	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	36	21	42	8	16	3	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	30	60	13	26	6	12	1	2

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



8 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bentfield Primary School, Stansted Mountfitchet, CM24 8DX

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school.

We enjoyed seeing how you work in lessons, talking to you, and sharing in your assembly and playtime. We worked very closely with your headteacher and also spent some time talking to your teachers and the school governors. We were very impressed with your new hall and the computer suite. You told us how proud you were of the new building.

As a result of our inspection we have judged that, although there are some things about your school which are satisfactory, there is much that needs to be improved.

We know that you get on well together and you told us that you 'love coming to school'. You have a sound understanding of what you need to do to be safe and healthy and have interesting clubs and visits out of school which you said you enjoyed. However, there are groups of you who do not make as much progress in your learning as you should so we have placed your school in special measures to help it to improve quickly. This means that inspectors will visit again to check the school is improving. We have talked about this with the headteacher and the governors and we have asked them to do three things to make your school better.

The headteacher and senior staff should look carefully at your lessons to make sure that the teachers are helping you to learn as much as you can by planning carefully what it is you need to learn and always make learning interesting.

Make sure the teachers use what they know about how well you are doing to make sure the work they give you is not too easy or too hard. They should also guide you to improve how well you are learning by setting little goals.

The headteacher and governors should keep a really close watch on all that the school does, especially how well you are learning, so they can plan ahead and make sure your school improves.

Thank you again for your warm welcome and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Norma Ball

Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**