

Fawbert and Barnard's Undenominational Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115098
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	338510
Inspection dates	2–3 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	209
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	S Newens
Headteacher	P Saunders
Date of previous school inspection	0 November 2006
School address	London Road Old Harlow Essex
Telephone number	01279 429427
Fax number	01279 438216
Email address	office@fawbert-barnards.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. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, observed all teachers and spent the majority of the time observing learning. They held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring such as lesson observations and analysis of pupils' work and other assessment information. Inspectors scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 105 parents or carers.

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

- the impact of measures to raise attainment in writing across the school
- the impact of the themed curriculum on pupils' personal development and academic progress
- progress made in the development of subject leaders since the last inspection.

Information about the school

This is an average sized school partly housed in a historic building. It has its Early Years Foundation Stage provision in the Reception class in temporary accommodation alongside Year 1 and Year 2, but away from the main school building. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. These are mainly for moderate learning difficulties. Among others, the school has gained the Woodland Trust's Gold Green Tree award and the bronze Eco-school award.

A privately run breakfast and after-school club shares the site and is subject to a separate inspection report.

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

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Fawbert and Barnard's Primary is an outstanding school. All members of staff work together exceptionally well to provide an exciting and caring environment in which pupils thrive. Consistently good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress from their starting points and a lively thematic curriculum brings learning to life. The attractive and stimulating school grounds provide year-round interest and are used particularly effectively to enhance pupils' experiences. The pastoral care and support pupils receive are outstanding, enabling those whose circumstances make them vulnerable to get the most out of school. Excellent links with parents and a wide range of partners contribute very well to pupils' learning and personal development. Speaking for many, a parent wrote, 'Every child is treated as an individual with respect and care and this really shines through at every level of the school.'

Children join the Reception class with a wide range of skills and abilities often well below those normally found, particularly in writing. They make good progress through the school so that attainment is average or better by the end of Year 6. It is better in mathematics and science than in English, although changes to the way writing is taught are beginning to have a positive impact, and progress is accelerating this year. The school has more to do to develop the range of strategies it employs to consistently raise attainment further. This includes ensuring that marking consistently shows pupils how to improve their work. Pupils' behaviour is excellent and they are enthusiastic about learning because they find their lessons interesting and enjoyable, and because of the very positive relationships with staff. They say they feel free from bullying and harassment, and safe in school. The number of pupils having school meals has increased by half since healthy menus were introduced, and there is very good participation in a wide range of sports clubs.

The inspirational leadership of the headteacher has created a dynamic culture of excellence at the school, where high expectations are the norm, and where the pace of change moves constantly forward. Leadership is distributed highly effectively throughout the staff, so that individuals make a real difference to their subject areas, a great improvement since the last inspection. Governors are active in supporting and monitoring the work of the school, and provide a good level of challenge. Innovative and highly effective management systems ensure that the school's understanding of its strengths and areas to develop is first rate. There has been considerable progress in many aspects of the school's work in recent years and it has an outstanding capacity for further sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- – Raise standards in writing further across the school by:
 - increasing the range of strategies used to develop writing
 - improving the consistency of marking so that all pupils know what they need to do next.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Levels of enjoyment are high because lessons involve pupils in practical activities that engage and challenge them. For example, Year 6 pupils were asked to design a garden to stringent specifications and cost it all out, missing at their peril the final requirement, 'your client does not like rectangles!' Role-play areas in each classroom are linked with the topic, so that where pupils were studying wartime Britain they had an air raid shelter and a 1940s shop. Year 2 pupils enjoyed using the grid on the playground to develop their understanding of block graphs, one of many imaginative ways that the school promotes outdoor learning.

All groups of pupils achieve well, including those with moderate learning difficulties, who receive well-targeted support. The school is working hard to raise standards in writing even further, and has recently introduced some new strategies to encourage extended writing. Following a wet lunchtime, Year 2 pupils got into the mood for writing by circulating around the room and sharing a sentence that was made up of two parts joined by a connective such as 'but' or 'so'. The school is looking at different ways of motivating pupils to write well, and recognises that marking does not always give them clear guidance about how to improve their work.

Garden buddies supply the school kitchen with fresh vegetables, and help ensure the grounds are in tip-top condition. Pupils recycle many different products and have been awarded Eco School status for their environmental awareness. An extensive planting programme of trees and hedgerows has won an award from the Woodland Trust. Pupils have to apply to become prefects and go through a selection procedure. The school council is elected by a secret ballot and is influential in giving pupils a voice. Pupils have been involved in raising funds to help save a local theatre (where they perform), and have campaigned for the preservation of rainforests, setting up a stall in the high street and giving out leaflets they had published. Attendance has been rising steadily, and is now above average. Pupils are well prepared for secondary school, both through acquiring the basic skills they need and in developing the confidence and study skills that prepare them for a life of learning. An excellent understanding of other cultures and exemplary consideration for one another contributes very well to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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

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

How effective is the provision?

A pupil said, 'The teachers make lessons fun but educational as well. It makes us learn more and want to listen.' Most teaching is good or better and actively involves pupils, taking account of the different ways they learn best. It encourages pupils to become independent learners, to show curiosity in the world and to find their own solutions to problems. The use of new technology to promote learning is at an advanced stage, so that pupils can work from home and parents and carers can find out how they are getting on. In rare lessons, pupils are not clear enough about what they have to do and the pace of learning slows. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, enabling those who sometimes struggle to make good progress. The use of assessment is generally good to set challenging targets for pupils to meet. There is some variation in how effectively marking shows pupils how to improve their work, however it is usually good.

One of the main reasons for pupils' great enjoyment of school is the outstanding curriculum, which is well-tailored to pupils' needs and takes account of their interests. Year 1 and Year 2 have been relishing the topic on dinosaurs. Imaginative and exciting themed weeks, such as International Week, develop pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding. Here, the hall was turned into an airport departure lounge, pupils presented their 'passports' and 'flew' to various parts of the school where they could find out about life in particular countries such as Brazil and South Africa. Trips to places of interest such as Kentwell Hall for a Tudor day, and visitors such as the Young Shakespeare Company, further enhance pupils' experiences. Support for pupils is very well organised and meets individual needs, such as the programme to improve

mathematics for particular pupils in Year 2. Staff know pupils very well and ensure every help is given for them to make good progress personally and academically. There are excellent links with a range of outside agencies to help facilitate this.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and deputy provide extremely effective leadership that enables all staff to develop to their full potential, to be involved in evaluating the work of the school and to be held accountable for its success. Outstanding and innovative systems to monitor progress and drive improvement involve staff at all levels, so that everybody feels included. One example is the interactive school development plan that stores evidence to indicate targets are being met, and shows clearly how far the school has come in meeting its objectives. The school communicates extremely effectively with parents and carers, and gives them opportunities to come in to work with their children in class, and to find out electronically how they are doing. A parents' forum enables their views to be aired and taken into account. There is good equality of opportunity for pupils, with rapid progress in ensuring any gaps in performance are filled. The school is tackling a few remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment well. All requirements for safeguarding pupils are fully met, with excellent procedures in place to ensure the well-being of every pupil. The governing body monitors the work of the school rigorously and systematically, and holds leaders to account well. Occasionally, it does not pursue issues with the same persistence with the local authority.

The school promotes community cohesion outstandingly well, both at a local and national level and also globally. Well-established links with schools in Spain, Romania and France give pupils insight into how children live and learn abroad. The school has been influential in changing local authority procedures to make it easier for schools to communicate internationally. Visits by Chinese educationalists help pupils to understand a totally different culture. Links with rural and inner-city schools in the United Kingdom teach pupils about the contrasting experiences children face in their own country. The school reaches out extremely effectively to groups in its local community, and forms strong partnerships with a wide range of agencies and businesses.

These are the grades for leadership and management

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children settle quickly into the Reception class because of good teaching and an exciting and stimulating curriculum that takes full account of their interests and needs. As part of a topic on 'homes', the role-play area was set up as an estate agent's in the classroom, with children arranging 'viewings' of the playhouse outdoors, which had a 'For Sale' sign up! There is an appropriate emphasis on developing children's early literacy skills, with plenty of opportunities for writing, and speaking and listening. The class is housed in confined temporary accommodation away from the main school building alongside Year 1 and Year 2. Despite these limitations, imaginative use of all available space, and the installation of decking to extend the classroom outdoors, mean that pupils do not lose out and make good progress from their starting points. Effective assessment procedures build up a complete picture of each individual's development, presented in attractive scrap books for children, parents and carers to enjoy.

Detailed planning ensures learning has a clear purpose. A recent topic on 'treasure' not only enabled children to pursue their material interests and find out about pirates, but also to consider 'people I treasure' and 'what is precious to me?' There is very good transition into Year 1, but links with the many feeder pre-school settings are not sufficiently established and the school does not do enough home visits before children join the Reception class. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led well, with a strong team working effectively together.

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

Parents strongly agree that their children enjoy school and value the rich range of experiences available to them. They particularly appreciate the quality of support their children receive if they are having difficulties. Many recognise the progress their children are making and how they are growing in confidence. A few parents expressed concerns about how behaviour is managed, but inspectors found that behaviour in school is outstanding.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Fawbert and Barnard's Undenominational Voluntary Controlled 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 209 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	65	32	30	5	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	51	49	47	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	48	46	54	51	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	44	42	53	50	7	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	52	50	46	44	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	49	48	46	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	47	52	50	1	1	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)	49	47	46	44	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	47	44	42	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	35	50	48	13	12	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	34	56	54	5	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	48	46	53	50	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	62	59	40	38	1	1	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 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.



4 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Fawbert and Barnard's Udenominational Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Old Harlow, CM17 0DA

We enjoyed visiting your school. We found out that your school is outstanding in many ways. Here are some of them.

You stay safe and know all about choosing healthy lifestyles.

Your behaviour is excellent and you take care of one another very well.

You are fully involved in the life of the school and in the wider community.

You have an exceptionally good understanding about life and cultures in other parts of the world.

Learning is exciting and fun, with excellent use of the outdoors.

There are plenty of clubs, visits and visitors for you to enjoy.

The school cares for you extremely well, especially if you are finding things difficult.

The headteacher and her team lead the school very effectively. You learn well and make good progress in your work

But we would like you to do even better in writing. We have asked your teachers to think of different ways of helping you to improve, and to make sure you know what you have to do next.

Thank you once again for making us so welcome. Our very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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