

Bardfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133341
Local Authority	Essex
Inspection number	341379
Inspection dates	28–29 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Kevin Corrigan

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	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rob Purnell
Headteacher	Marilyn Hampton
Date of previous school inspection	13 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty lessons and twelve teachers were observed. Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, a representative of the local authority and a member of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school data and documentation, including the school's safeguarding records. Questionnaires were analysed from 32 parents and carers, 86 pupils and 10 members of staff.

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

■ at the following.

The attainment and progress of current pupils in the core subjects at the end of the Key Stages 1 and 2.

- The impact of the school's cross-curricular initiatives on raising standards.
- The effectiveness of the school's assessment and tracking procedures in monitoring the progress of pupils and identifying those who need support.

Information about the school

Bardfield Primary School is larger than average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, the vast majority drawn from the local town. A greater proportion of pupils than found in most schools joins or leaves the school during the school year. The percentage of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is also above average; these pupils have behavioural, emotional and social difficulties, moderate learning difficulties or complex physical and learning needs. The school has National Healthy School Status and the Activemark 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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bardfield is a satisfactory school that provides a safe and caring environment for its pupils in which the majority of them make at least satisfactory progress. Most pupils enjoy their time at school, behave well in and out of lessons and work harmoniously with each other. This contributes well to the progress they make and the positive learning environment in lessons. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment and development below, often well below, age-related expectations but make rapid initial progress as a result of the expert teaching, carefully planned activities and the effective, targeted support they receive. Nonetheless, pupils' attainment levels remain below the national averages in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school and have done so consistently over recent years. The school has greatly improved the way it tracks pupils' progress and uses this information to support under-achieving pupils. However, the school could use this information more effectively to identify early and encourage those pupils capable of achieving a Level 4 or beyond by the time they leave the school. Pupils' awareness of other cultures and the world outside the school community is underdeveloped.

Teachers plan their lessons well, including identifying different learning objectives for the range of abilities, although too often teachers do not respond flexibly enough to the different rates at which pupils are learning, including the most able pupils.

In-class support for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is well planned and encouraging and, as a consequence, these pupils progress at least as well as their peers. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel safe and appreciate the way teachers listen to them and help them with their work. Those with learning and behavioural difficulties are well integrated into the school's harmonious community. Pupils are polite and friendly, and many speak confidently about what they are learning and what their targets are.

The headteacher is committed to improving levels of attainment within a rich and rewarding experience for all pupils, a vision which is communicated to and now shared by all staff. Improvements in pupils' behaviour, the way assessment information is collected and analysed, and the development of a stimulating curriculum provides a firm foundation on which further improvements can be secured. Subject leaders are planning effectively to develop their subjects across the curriculum and ensure that all the required skills are covered. However, their contribution to the formal monitoring of lessons and measuring the effectiveness of support strategies on individual pupils is not as robust as it could be. The school has continued to make improvements since the last inspection and as a consequence has good capacity to develop further.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards further in English, mathematics and science, and particularly for the most able, by:
 - identifying at an early stage those pupils potentially capable of achieving Level 4 or above
 - providing appropriate and discrete opportunities in and out of lessons to challenge and stimulate these pupils.
- Improve teaching and learning further so that all teaching matches the best at the school by:
 - providing more formal opportunities for sharing the best practice that exists at the school
 - ensuring that all teachers respond more flexibly to the pace of learning by individual pupils.
- Develop further the role of middle leaders by:
 - involving them in more formal procedures for monitoring and evaluating lessons in their areas of responsibility
 - evaluating the effectiveness of support strategies on the progress of individual pupils.
- Improve pupils' personal and social development by:
 - widening their experiences and understanding of other cultures and the wider national and international community.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills and experiences well below their age-related expectations. Speaking and listening skills are poor, as are social skills such as sharing and the ability to follow instructions. However, children make rapid progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of well-targeted teaching and support, a careful assessment of their needs and a focus on developing basic communication and numeracy skills. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1 but progress has not been as rapid in Key Stage 2, mainly as a result of staff turbulence in the upper years of the stage, an issue which has now been successfully resolved. Girls tend to make relatively quicker progress than boys, mainly as a result of their more focused attention to class activities and tasks, although differences between them in overall levels of attainment are not significant. Pupils joining the school during the year tend to have lower levels of attainment and/or specific learning needs, but are effectively integrated into the school and most make the progress expected of them given their starting points.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress as do

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pupils with behavioural difficulties, who are supported well by adults at the school. Pupils make good progress in lessons where work is well suited to their needs and teachers explain clearly what they are meant to achieve. This was evident in a good literacy lesson in Years 1 and 2 where pupils explored and then described characters from a text using adjectival phrases. The school's highly effective tracking mechanisms to identify areas of weakness in subjects is making a significant contribution to raising standards achieved by current pupils by identifying those not making the age-related progress expected of them. The focus on improving literacy skills through appropriately targeted programmes and an analysis of which skills need boosting have all contributed to ensuring that most of the current pupils are now making the progress expected of them.

Most pupils have a good attitude to learning, enjoy their lessons and behave well although a small minority of pupils, mainly boys, require firm management to ensure they remain focused on lesson activities. Pupils say that they feel safe at school, mainly because adults are ready to listen to them. The inspection team were impressed with how polite and friendly pupils were, many greeting them with a 'hello' and a smile, and holding doors open for them. Most pupils understand the importance of healthy foods although opportunities for all to participate regularly in sporting activities are limited. Nonetheless, the school has achieved National Healthy School Status and the Activemark award. Some pupils show willingness to take on responsibilities, for instance as peer 'buddies'. Pupils work harmoniously in groups and are developing good teamwork skills when working on themed projects, for example when producing an artefact in the style of Andy Warhol. Attendance is average, when taking into account the impact of a few pupils with long-term absence through illness. Pupils have a good sense of right and wrong, although their awareness and understanding of different cultures and communities is limited.

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

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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The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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 subject knowledge and use the school's rich source of assessment data to set learning objectives for pupils with different needs when planning their lessons. However, this planning often leads to teachers not being flexible in responding to the different pace of progress by different pupils, including the most able, during lessons. Relationships in lessons are good and most pupils stay on task. Inappropriate behaviour is handled consistently and robustly, and most teachers use targeted questioning well to check on pupils' understanding. Most teachers provide appropriate feedback in their marking on what pupils have done well and how they can improve. In the most effective lessons pupils, are very clear as to where they are in their learning, what they need to do to achieve their next target level and are excited by the interesting way teachers present their lessons. This was evident in an outstanding lesson in Years 1 and 2 which used polar exploration to develop pupils' numeracy skills. However, not all teachers are sufficiently clear in defining for pupils precisely what they are to achieve or to have produced by the end of a lesson, and then in assessing these outcomes.

The curriculum is very well planned, particularly in the way cross-curricular links provide opportunities for pupils to develop their learning. For example, in art lessons famous paintings are used to develop pupils' communication and numeracy skills, and science investigations develop pupils' research and enquiry skills. Pupils have good information and communication technology (ICT) skills through regular use of the school's computers. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported through specific reading and writing programmes. The school's gym trail for younger pupils is effective in developing pupils' motor skills. However, the curriculum does not provide enough opportunities to develop pupils' cultural awareness or their knowledge and understanding of the national and global community. After-school clubs and activities, together with school visits, are enthusiastically taken up by some pupils, although the range and take-up is often limited by parents' and carers' willingness to support them.

The good care, guidance and support for pupils ensures a welcoming and friendly learning environment in which they feel safe and well cared for. The school now tracks pupils' progress in an appropriate and comprehensive manner, and identifies any pupils who are underachieving. Appropriate support procedures and specific intervention

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classes are then put in place for them. However, the impact of these initiatives is not always evaluated to ensure all pupils are fully benefiting from them. Teachers liaise effectively with teaching assistants to ensure they provide effective, well-targeted, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attendance is monitored rigorously and any absences are followed up immediately. There are very good links with external agencies to provide expert, additional support, particularly for those pupils with specific learning needs or for those who are often absent from school. Parents and carers are kept well informed of their children's progress.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has provided firm and single-minded leadership in tackling the areas for development identified at the last inspection and in successfully steering the school through a period of high staff instability. The new systems for tracking and analysing pupils' progress are already having a clear and significant impact.

The school's senior leadership team has a clear set of responsibilities linked to the school's development plan. Subject leaders are providing effective curriculum guidance, particularly in embedding and auditing the core skills which are being developed through cross-curricular themes. However, they are not yet fully involved in the systematic monitoring of teaching to ensure that these skills are being delivered as effectively as possible.

The school has had difficulties in maintaining a full complement of governors but the governing body has managed to discharge its statutory responsibilities satisfactorily and is now up to strength. The school's engagement with parents and carers is good. The school now has a parent-teacher association and parents and carers regularly visit the school to observe its work by attending classes. The effectiveness of partnerships is also good and the school has used the expertise provided by the local authority well to improve its provision. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. All pupils are encouraged to participate in the activities provided by the school, although it is only recently that the school has had a particular focus on identifying and providing for gifted and talented pupils. Safeguarding procedures are robust, staff have been appropriately trained and the school's arrangements are regularly monitored. Pupils' understand what it means to be safe, but have limited awareness of the school's religious, ethnic and socio-economic context in terms of the wider national and international community.

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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	2
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

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage from starting points in all areas of learning that are well below their age-related expectations. They make most progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world and in developing their creativity skills. Children who initially fail to adapt to the more structured environment at school settle early because of sympathetic and patient individual support and encouragement by teachers and other adults. Children understand basic hygiene rules, for example by washing their hands before activities, after playing outside and before eating. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from very patient and encouraging support and also make good progress. Learning programmes are generally well planned, particularly for those pupils with individual needs. There are well established procedures for assessing the progress of children who benefit from access to a wide range of stimulating indoor and outdoor resources.

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

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Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are positive about most aspects of provision at the school, particularly in the way that the school meets the specific needs of their children. The inspection team endorse parents' and carers' views that the school provides a safe and caring environment in which the vast majority of pupils enjoy their time there. A few parents and carers raised concerns about behaviour, but the inspection team concluded that procedures for behaviour management are robust and effective.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bardfield 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 32 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 314 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	16	50	15	47	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	13	41	16	50	3	9	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	9	28	18	56	5	16	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	9	28	18	56	3	9	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	41	18	56	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	9	28	20	63	1	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	10	31	21	66	1	3	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)	10	31	18	56	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	8	25	24	75	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	38	15	47	2	6	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	31	19	59	3	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	9	28	20	63	0	0	2	6
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	14	44	15	47	0	0	2	6

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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 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.



30 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bardfield Primary School, Basildon, SS16 4NL

I am writing to you to tell you about your school's recent inspection. I would like to thank you for the help you gave me and my colleagues. We talked with many of you during lessons and outside of class, and looked at your books. You were polite and friendly and we particularly noticed how well behaved you were. We also received 86 questionnaires from you, in which you told us that you feel safe and that teachers explain how you can improve your work.

Bardfield Primary School provides a satisfactory standard of education. It has some good features which provide opportunities for you to enjoy your time at school, such as the variety of projects and activities on your school curriculum that are used well to develop your English, mathematics and computer skills. Teachers and other adults provide you with good care, support and guidance. One of the reasons for this is that the school tracks your academic and personal development very closely and teachers know what to do to help you.

There were a few areas where the school could improve even further. These are:

- providing more opportunities for pupils with particular talents to develop these further
- ensuring that teachers always take account of how quickly or how well you are learning in lessons, and make sure they always explain precisely what you need to have achieved by the end of each lesson
- widening your experiences and understanding of other cultures.

All of you can help by telling your teachers if you find your work too easy or are unsure of what you need to have completed by the end of a lesson. You can also help by working with your teachers on developing your understanding of other cultures and the world outside your school.

Thank you again. I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Corrigan

Lead inspector

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