

Bonnygate Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114968
Local Authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	378970
Inspection dates	8–9 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Spicer
Headteacher	Louise Coates
Date of previous school inspection	10 September 2008
School address	Arisdale Avenue South Ockendon RM15 5BA
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Eighteen lessons, taught by 11 teachers, were observed. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, senior and subject leaders, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Governing Body. The inspectors looked at a range of documentation and a sample of pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from pupils, staff and 133 parents and carers were analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How well does the curriculum extend pupils' literacy skills in a range of contexts?
- What are the key factors that have brought improvements in outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?
- How effective is the school's support and guidance for pupils from Traveller families?

Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. The pupils are predominantly from White British backgrounds. A fifth of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups, of which Black African is the largest. The proportion of pupils from Traveller families has fallen since the last inspection and they now make up 4% of the school population. Almost a quarter of the pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities; this is above the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average.

The headteacher took up the post in April 2010. Over the last two years, about half of the teaching staff have changed.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school which has improved considerably over the last two years. Pupils, parents and carers, staff and members of the governing body all welcome the transformation that has resulted from the highly ambitious leadership and unrelenting drive of the headteacher and senior leaders. They have created the conditions for learning that have allowed pupils to thrive. Together with the staff, they have created an ethos which promotes very positive attitudes to learning and an environment that allows pupils to feel safe. Their consistently high expectations of the 'old-fashioned values' of respect and good manners are rewarded with excellent behaviour, concentration and perseverance in lessons.

Pupils are achieving well. They are making good progress from relatively low starting points. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress through a wide range of activities. There is a strong trend of improvement in attainment, which is now broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 6. Attainment in mathematics now exceeds the national average. In English, pupils make faster progress and reach higher standards in reading than in writing. A sharp focus on developing pupils' knowledge of letters and sounds is having a notable impact on the progress of the younger pupils.

The care, guidance and support for pupils from all groups are good. For example, pupils of Black African heritage spoke appreciatively about how warmly they were welcomed into the school, and how their fears of racism and bullying quickly evaporated. Good links with the Traveller community ensure that pupils from Romany, Irish and Showman families are well supported, both in school and, where possible, when they are travelling.

The teaching is good. Lessons are interesting, well paced and, generally, meet the needs of all abilities well. However, there are occasions when targets and tasks for those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are not focused tightly enough on their specific needs. Nevertheless, these pupils make progress in keeping with all other groups. Discussions with pupils show they not only enjoy lessons, but also appreciate the work of their teachers and recognise their own responsibilities. Teachers' expectations are high, but not always entirely consistent. For example, the quality of pupils' writing in science is not always subject to the same scrutiny as that in their English books. In addition, not all of the marking of writing routinely sets out precisely how pupils should improve their next piece of work.

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The headteacher and senior leaders have a very clear vision for the school. Plans for further improvement are comprehensive and are thoroughly monitored. All aspects of the school's improvement strategy are robustly evaluated. Morale is high among both staff and pupils. The school is well placed to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate pupils' progress in writing, so that by July 2013 attainment in English exceeds the national average, by:
 - ensuring that marking and feedback are consistently sharply focused on enabling pupils to improve their next piece of writing
 - expecting a consistently high quality of writing in all areas of the curriculum.

- Accelerate progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities by:
 - ensuring that targets and tasks are always tightly focused on their particular needs
 - rigorously monitoring the support and teaching they receive.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils are doing well and making good progress in lessons. The teachers and teaching assistants work together well, and set carefully focused tasks that present a good level of challenge for all ability groups. Pupils contribute fully to discussions and are eager to answer their teachers' questions. Behaviour is excellent. They concentrate well, and the older pupils are very thoughtful when discussing their own learning. They recognise the importance of reaching their targets, and the need to be well prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils' good progress in mathematics was particularly evident when Year 6 was solving money problems that involved a series of steps and calculations. They worked with considerable enthusiasm and were keen to complete their work. Pupils also make good progress in reading through a successful programme of guided reading activities.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well to complete the tasks that they are set by their teachers. Consequently, most of them make progress on a par with that of their peers. However, occasionally the tasks set for these pupils are not focused sharply on what they need to learn next. Pupils from Traveller families play a full part in lessons: their teachers draw them into discussions and ensure that they are engaged by the tasks they set. Black African pupils also make good progress.

Pupils' involvement in art and a range of musical activities enhances their spiritual development. Taking on additional responsibilities in school extends their social development well. In discussion, older pupils display a very thoughtful and

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considered view of the importance of celebrating the diversity of the cultures represented in the school. They are particularly keen to talk, for example, about their African or Eastern European heritage. The heritage of the Traveller communities is promoted through displays and posters, towards which some families have contributed. As a result, pupils have a particularly strong cultural awareness.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	3
Pupils’ attainment ¹	2
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	2
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	3
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The teaching motivates and interests pupils, who feel that they are doing well because they are given clear guidance by their teachers in the form of targets, and both written and verbal comments on their work. However, some of the written comments about how to improve their next piece of work are, on occasions, too broad to help them to make rapid progress.

The teaching is lively and firmly committed to helping pupils reach their potential. This underpins the good progress that pupils are making in lessons. Teachers use interactive whiteboards well, and explain and demonstrate their expectations clearly. They make good links between subjects in a way that creates interesting tasks. Following a visit by a theatre company during the inspection, many tasks were based around the pantomime *Jack and the Beanstalk*. Teachers used this well to engage and develop pupils’ writing. However, scrutiny of pupils’ work in their exercise books shows that their progress is not as rapid as it could be, because the high expectations of writing in English are not being consistently applied in other subjects.

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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Thorough assessment arrangements are central to the good progress that pupils are making in lessons. Detailed recording, incisive analysis of pupils’ progress, and very detailed plans to plug any gaps in pupils’ learning, are all proving beneficial. The one-to-one tuition programme, for example, has proved particularly effective. These developments are also ensuring that the curriculum is tailored well to the needs of most of the pupils. The good range of extra-curricular learning opportunities is very well received by the pupils.

There is a very positive ethos within the school, which results from pupils feeling safe and knowing that their contributions are highly valued. Arrangements for promoting good behaviour and positive relationships are extremely successful. This good care and guidance is particularly evident in the school’s support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school can clearly illustrate the impact of its work in removing barriers to learning for those who are potentially vulnerable. The circumstances of each pupil are very well known to the adults, who, for example, visit the local Traveller site. These links have also enabled the school to improve attendance, although the persistent absence of a very few remains to be overcome.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The appreciable improvements in pupils’ behaviour and achievements are underpinned by the very determined and ambitious leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders. They have monitored, coached and improved the teaching team to make sure there is consistently good teaching throughout the school. In addition to the detailed tracking of each pupil’s progress, regular meetings focus on evaluating and setting challenging targets. Middle leaders are increasingly effective in their roles and fully involved in raising attainment further through very focused improvement plans. However, the targeted teaching for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is not as rigorously monitored as most aspects of the school’s work.

The governing body, headteacher and senior leaders take good account of the views of pupils, parents and carers, and staff. The governing body’s involvement and influence has increased. Its members provide good support and challenge for the

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school, and now use a range of strategies for finding out for themselves how well the school is doing. The increasing popularity of the school is illustrated by the rise in interest from parents and carers in becoming a governor. Recent elections for a new governor were the first for many years.

The school has taken steps to make sure that arrangements for the safety and well-being of pupils are robust and meet requirements. Almost all of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that their child is kept safe at school. The school has good links with a range of partners; some of whom make a strong contribution to the well-being of, for example, those pupils from Traveller communities. The school is a cohesive community. It strongly promotes respect and tolerance, and provides good opportunities to learn about the lives of others. This illustrates very well the school’s commitment to equality of opportunity and its strong promotion of cultural diversity.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Many of the children start school with knowledge and skills that are less well developed than is expected for their age. Some have weak communication skills. A few parents and carers commented on how successful the school has been in developing their children’s ability to speak and communicate during their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage. An analysis of the performance of the children in the Reception year, last year, shows that they made particularly good progress. Over the last two years, the school’s data show that progress has accelerated considerably. Children now reach a secure level of development, although their attainment in writing is a little below what they achieve in other areas.

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Children play and work well together, and display a good level of independence that allows them to pursue their learning through a broad range of activities, both those led by the teachers and those which they choose themselves. Children have opportunities for learning, both inside the classroom and in the outdoor areas. The outdoor area for Nursery children has been refurbished and enhanced, and a similar development is planned for the Reception outdoor area. Children are gaining considerable confidence. They respond very positively when they are working with their teachers to develop their knowledge of the sounds that letters make. In most activities, the adults are constantly developing conversation, and encouraging and helping children to develop their skills. Very occasionally, the transition between activities is not managed as seamlessly as it usually is.

The improved provision and children’s increased progress are the result of the work of a knowledgeable leader, supported by the headteacher, who has planned and implemented considerable change to the organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage. This has included new approaches to planning, assessment and the teaching of letters and sounds. Home visits have also been introduced prior to children starting school. As a result, children settle quickly and the involvement of parents and carers is increasing.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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

The proportion of parents and carers who returned a questionnaire was higher than usual. Almost all of those who responded were happy with their child’s experience at this school. Similarly high proportions of parents and carers agreed that their child enjoys school and that the school keeps their child safe. A number made additional comments. These were predominantly very positive, many praising the headteacher and teachers. A very few parents and carers expressed concerns about the way behaviour is managed. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school at playtime and lunchtime. They also talked to individuals and groups of pupils about what behaviour is like in lessons every day. Pupils were very positive and appreciative of improvements in behaviour, and were very confident that any poor behaviour or bullying would be dealt with quickly. The striking aspect of these discussions was the strong understanding pupils had for the need to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bonnygate 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 133 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 252 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	100	75	31	23	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	92	69	40	30	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	74	56	55	41	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	80	60	50	38	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	59	52	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	70	53	58	44	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	63	47	65	49	3	2	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	61	46	57	43	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	68	51	62	47	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	58	44	64	48	6	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	54	41	76	57	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	78	59	49	37	0	0	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	97	73	34	26	1	1	0	0

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 are for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



12 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bonnygate Primary School, South Ockendon RM15 5BA

Thank you for taking the time to talk to the inspectors about how well you are doing and how you feel your school is helping you. You told us you are proud of your school. You go to a good school, one which is getting better and better. You behave very well indeed and do as your teachers ask. You told us how important this is to helping you to make good progress. Your lessons are very calm so you can get on with your work. You said that you enjoy lessons because they are interesting, and often good fun! Some of you told us how the school has improved and that it is friendly and caring, which helps you to feel safe.

The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants are helping you to make good progress. They give you a lot of help to make sure that you improve. The teachers have been very successful in helping all of you to improve your reading and mathematics. Your progress in writing is not quite as good, so we have asked the teachers to make sure that you are expected to do your best writing in all subjects. We have also asked them to mark your work thoroughly and tell you exactly how to improve it. Those pupils who need extra help do as well as everyone else. Often the work they are set is just right for them, but sometimes it is a little too easy or a little too hard. We have asked the teachers to check that it is always just right.

The headteacher is leading the school extremely well, and is always trying to make more improvements so that you can make faster progress. Attendance has improved, but you can make it even higher by attending school every day.

I hope you continue to work hard for your teachers and to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker
Lead inspector

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