

Bessemer Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	130918
Local Authority	Southwark
Inspection number	360156
Inspection dates	27–28 January 2011
Reporting inspector	Robin Gaff

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	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sara Luder
Headteacher	Sarah Beard
Date of previous school inspection	13 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, observing at least once all 13 teachers present in the school during the inspection. Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils, members of the governing body, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at planning and evaluation documents. They scrutinised the school's own analysis of pupils' attainment and progress. A total of 74 questionnaires completed by parents and carers were received and analysed, as were questionnaires completed by staff and a sample of pupils.

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

- The extent to which the rise in pupils' attainment and improvement in their progress, demonstrated by results in national tests, are being maintained.
- The success of the school's strategies for improving attendance and reducing the proportion of persistent absentees.
- The impact of measures taken to address aspects of weaker teaching.
- The extent to which the school is meeting all requirements to promote community cohesion.

Information about the school

Bessemer Grange is larger than the average-sized primary school and includes a Nursery currently attended by 46 children. This is now located, together with two Reception classes, in a new building which opened in September 2010. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average. The main groups represented in the school are Black British, African and Caribbean, and White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is larger than that found nationally. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These cover a wide range of additional needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The current headteacher took up her post in September 2010, following the retirement of her predecessor. The school operates a breakfast club. An after-school club is organised by the local authority on the school premises. A new building for the children's centre, which was inaugurated in 2008, opened in September 2010. These facilities are subject to separate inspection arrangements.

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

Bessemer Grange Primary is a good and improving school. The new headteacher has added new impetus to the trend of significant improvement which began under her predecessor. Working closely with her senior colleagues, she has focused relentlessly on raising the attainment of all groups of pupils by the time they leave the school. Attainment is now in line with, and in some cases above, national averages. This represents good achievement for pupils, many of whom join the school with skill levels which are well below typical age-related expectations. The use of assessment to identify potential underperformance and to plan in detail to meet pupils' future learning needs, which the last inspection identified as a weakness, is now a strength. Teachers very regularly assess pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics, and the school intervenes promptly if pupils' progress fails to match the challenging targets that have been set. Effective in-class support, one-to-one and small group sessions ensure that pupils, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make good progress.

The headteacher has acted firmly but sensitively to address aspects of weaker practice so that the quality of teaching throughout the school is now good. Teachers plan a range of activities to meet pupils' varying needs and interests. Pupils develop sound information and communication technology (ICT) skills by using the school's dedicated computer room. However, teachers do not routinely use ICT to enhance their lessons. Pupils' good behaviour contributes positively to their learning. They are attentive and respond well to their teachers, although they do not always find it easy to listen closely to one another or to express their ideas fluently and accurately. The school recognises that it needs to place greater emphasis on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. The school has focused successfully on improving pupils' reading as well as their writing. It has provided new, stimulating resources and is working closely with parents and carers to foster pupils' skills in and enjoyment of reading. Pupils' development of creative skills is a continuing strength and is reflected in the very high quality of art work in classrooms and around the school.

The school works well with a range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support they need to overcome any barriers they may face. Close partnership with the children's centre enables the school to quickly identify pupils' additional needs. The breakfast club provides a safe and stimulating environment for a growing number of pupils. Most parents and carers are happy with their children's experience of the school. One, whose comment was typical, said, 'My child has flourished at this school in many ways, not just educationally.' Levels of absence, including persistent absenteeism, had risen in recent years. This trend has been reversed, and attendance is now broadly in line with national averages. The school has carefully analysed patterns of non-attendance, and has succeeded in decreasing the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent.

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However, leaders recognise that more needs to be done to discourage unauthorised absence and to implement a broader range of incentives to encourage increased attendance.

The school has successfully addressed the weaknesses identified by the last inspection. School leaders have accurately evaluated the current quality of provision and, supported by the governing body, have put in place detailed plans to address areas for further development. Challenging targets have been agreed with staff, particularly in relation to raising pupils' attainment, and, increasingly, they are being met or exceeded. This indicates the school's good capacity for further, sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise overall levels of pupils' attainment to above average by
 - increasing the proportion of outstanding teaching
 - including more opportunities in lessons for pupils to benefit from the use of ICT
 - ensuring that all teachers focus strongly on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills.
- Reduce levels of unauthorised and persistent absence by implementing a wider range of actions to improve attendance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' attainment, as represented by their results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, has risen steadily over the last three years. Levels reached by both boys and girls in mathematics in 2010 were above the national average. Most groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils relate well to one another and to teachers and other adults. They enjoy lessons, and take part wholeheartedly in whole-class and small group discussions. They know and understand their targets. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as those who speak English as an additional language, are fully involved in lessons. This is because teachers and teaching assistants work closely together to plan activities for them which correspond to their interests and different stages of development.

Pupils feel safe in school and say that rare incidences of bullying are dealt with promptly and effectively. They show a good awareness of the importance of a healthy lifestyle through their high levels of participation in sporting activities and increasing willingness to walk or cycle to school. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community through their work as school councillors, buddies or dining hall monitors, and the money they raise for a range of charities, including a local hospice. Pupils are courteous and considerate, which they demonstrate, for example, by routinely holding doors open for one another. In assemblies, they take pride in others' achievements as well as in their own. They show a good understanding of the different cultures represented in the school and the wider world, as they celebrate a range of religious festivals and learn about different languages through the school's 'language of the half-term' programme. Pupils' experience of taking on responsibility and of working cooperatively, as well as the progress they make in their grasp of basic skills, ensures that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education and for their future working lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are expert in and enthusiastic about their subjects and have high expectations of pupils in terms of both work and behaviour. Most lessons are well organised and proceed at a good pace. Teachers use a range of questioning techniques effectively to check and to develop pupils' understanding. In a Year 6 lesson, pupils gained a good grasp of appropriate language to use in a job application letter because the teacher organised a series of enjoyable and well-structured activities, including group discussion and role play. Her questions prompted them to think hard about what they were doing and enabled them to develop their ideas. Teachers use ICT regularly but not always sufficiently imaginatively in their lessons. For example, they do not give pupils enough opportunities to use for themselves interactive whiteboards and other computer-based technology. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly. They give them written feedback which is detailed enough to ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve their work.

Teachers are increasingly using a topic-based approach in planning activities. This enables pupils to make productive links between different subjects, which helps them to develop their reading and writing skills. The curriculum is enhanced by a range of trips and visits, for example to art galleries and museums. Pupils enjoy taking part in a good variety of

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extra-curricular activities, including sporting activities organised by local secondary schools.

The school has good arrangements in place to ensure that pupils, including those who enrol at other than the normal times for admission, settle in quickly. The parent of a pupil who speaks English as an additional language spoke approvingly of the efforts staff had made to ensure her son received additional support and made new friends. The new rewards system is helping to increase pupils' motivation and engagement. Staff work effectively together and with outside professionals and agencies to ensure that potentially vulnerable pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, make at least as much progress as their peers. Parents and carers confirm that teachers are approachable and respond quickly and effectively to any concerns they may have.

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?

Leaders at all levels are passionate about improving outcomes for pupils. The new headteacher has quickly established appropriate priorities for action. Staff are united in supporting her objectives and in helping to put them into effect. Middle leaders are good role models as teachers and are taking increasing responsibility for the quality of provision in their areas. Senior staff closely monitor the quality of teaching and assessment, as well as the progress of individuals and groups of pupils, and intervene promptly to bring about improvement when necessary. They are highly visible around the school and have good relationships with pupils, and with parents and carers. The governing body includes a good range of expertise. Governors are knowledgeable about the school, and are effective in challenging school leaders, for example with regard to targets, and in setting the school's strategic direction. The school's promotion of equality of opportunity is good. It enables pupils with different abilities and from a wide variety of backgrounds to achieve well, relate very well to one another, and learn to value each other's traditions. There is no evidence of any discrimination or racist behaviour. The school meets all requirements with regard to the promotion of community cohesion. Leaders have established strong relationships with the local community, as well as with different groups of parents and carers. They ensure that pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures in the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world. Pupils do not currently have opportunities to learn from direct links with schools in different regions or countries. The school has good arrangements for safeguarding children, including child protection policies and procedures, and risk assessments which are regularly reviewed and updated. The quality of outcomes for pupils, as well as leaders' careful management of the school's resources, indicates that it achieves good value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
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

Children's attainment by the time they complete the Early Years Foundation Stage is below, although broadly in line with, age-related expectations. This indicates that they make good progress from their starting points, which are generally well below those found nationally when they join the Nursery or Reception class. Children develop good social skills through cooperative play and learn to link sounds and letters as they practise writing. They enjoy, for example, taking part in the 'Big Scribble' and writing 'thank you' letters to visitors. Children begin to learn to develop good eating habits because they are given healthy snacks including fresh fruit, as well as plenty of opportunities for physical exercise. Staff carefully observe and regularly assess children's learning and development, which enables them to plan activities that are closely matched to their needs. They provide children with a good range of activities, and encourage their growing independence by giving them choices with regard to what they will do. Opportunities for outdoor learning and play are currently more restricted following the recent completion of building work. Staff work well together as a team, with parents and carers, and with outside professionals. Leaders ensure that new members of staff are well informed about, and quickly adapt to, the setting's routines so that they can provide good continuity in meeting children's needs.

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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

Inspectors' judgements endorse the views of parents and carers. All of those who responded to the questionnaire say their children enjoy school and a very large majority are happy with their children's experience at the school. An overwhelming majority believe that the school keeps their children safe. Most parents and carers agree that teaching is good, and that their children are making sufficient progress and are well prepared for the future. A very large majority of parents and carers believe that the school is well led and managed, and that it takes account of their suggestions and concerns, and helps them to support their children's learning. Most believe that it helps their children to have a healthy lifestyle, and are pleased with the quality and frequency of communication from the school, including concerning their children's progress. A very small minority do not believe that the school deals effectively with poor behaviour, or that it meets their children's particular needs. A few parents and carers expressed concern about specific issues, including the quality of school meals. Inspectors discussed these concerns with school leaders.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bessemer Grange 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 281 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	44	59	30	41	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	45	61	27	36	0	0	1	1
My school informs me about my child's progress	36	49	32	43	3	4	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	47	31	42	5	7	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	34	46	37	50	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	38	51	30	41	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	38	42	57	3	4	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)	20	27	40	54	2	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	27	36	37	50	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	41	35	47	3	4	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	35	39	53	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	32	43	37	50	3	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	45	61	25	34	3	4	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 2009 to 31 August 2010 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 2009/10 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.



31 January 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bessemer Grange Primary School, London SE5 8HP

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave the inspection team when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you and listening to what you had to say.

Bessemer Grange is a good school. You say you enjoy lessons and that you feel safe there. You understand how important it is to have a healthy lifestyle. You behave sensibly in class and around the school, and you are courteous and kind to one another. You get on well together and you respect and value different traditions. You are well prepared for the next stage of your education. A few of you need to improve your attendance. You learn a lot about people's lifestyles in other parts of the United Kingdom and elsewhere in the world. We were very impressed by the excellent art work which many of you produce

◆ well done!

You participate well in lessons, and all of you make good progress in reaching the levels expected of you. Teachers give you a good range of things to do in lessons. They make sure you know your targets and how to improve your work. You enjoy taking part in a good range of out-of-school clubs as well as trips and visits. Adults look after you well and keep you safe.

The headteacher and all the staff, as well as the governing body, are working hard to make the school even better. To help them do this, we have asked them to do the following things.

- Give you more chances to use information and communication technology in lessons and help you to develop your speaking and listening skills.
- Make sure everyone understands how important it is to come to school regularly.

We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robin Gaff

Lead inspector

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