

# Bonnygate Primary School

Arisdale Avenue, South Ockendon, Essex RM15 5BA

## Inspection dates

17–18 May 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher has created a new leadership team to help her raise standards. This has proved extremely effective and the school has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- Governors are well informed and ambitious for the school, and their strategic leadership has played an important part in the school's development.
- The senior leadership team is meticulous when checking on how well pupils are progressing. This attention to detail has a clear impact on classroom practice so that standards have risen.
- Leaders and managers at all levels are clear about their responsibilities, and determined to do their best to help all pupils succeed.
- The school spends additional money wisely for disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- Safeguarding is effective. Records are carefully maintained and pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe, including when using the internet.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have clear expectations about what pupils can achieve, although there is a lack of consistency in the level of challenge given, especially to the most able pupils.
- Pupils make good progress in all subjects and leave the school ready for a successful start at secondary school. Nevertheless, some pupils could do even better, particularly the most able pupils, so that more pupils attain the highest level.
- Pupils behave well in their classrooms and around the school. They are polite and sociable. They enjoy sharing ideas in lessons and work collaboratively with their classmates.
- Senior leaders have introduced a range of procedures to promote regular attendance. Nevertheless, absence rates are still too high and too many pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils, are persistently absent.
- Results submitted to Ofsted's Parent View website showed that some parents were dissatisfied with the way leaders and managers communicate with them.
- The early years foundation stage is good. Staff provide a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment. Children are encouraged to be imaginative in their play and learning takes account of children's own interests.

## Full report

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

- Improve outcomes so that more pupils achieve at the highest level in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - ensuring that teachers provide work which challenges all pupils, especially the most able, to think hard throughout the lesson.
- Improve attendance, particularly for those disadvantaged pupils who are persistently absent.
- Improve leadership and management by:
  - helping parents, especially those who feel disengaged, to become more involved in the school community.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Since her appointment, the headteacher has worked energetically in order to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching. As a result, outcomes have improved, pupils have made more consistent progress, and the quality of work pupils are expected to produce has improved considerably.
- Staff and governors speak enthusiastically about the many ways in which the school has improved. The headteacher has created a new model for her leadership team and this has enabled teachers and middle leaders to receive coaching and mentoring which has helped to improve their effectiveness.
- Senior leaders check carefully on how well pupils are learning, by undertaking a detailed analysis of assessment information and by gathering a wide range of evidence about progress. The headteacher has made many improvements to teaching in the light of these findings. For example, dedicated time at the start of lessons allows pupils to review the written feedback from teachers.
- The management of teachers' performance is carried out robustly. Individualised coaching and mentoring programmes, including the use of video technology, are used to support teachers and this has made an important difference to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school.
- Staff value the professional development that the school and the local authority provide, and senior leaders are not afraid to hold teachers to account for their performance.
- Senior leaders do not find it easy to recruit or retain staff because of the economic conditions in the area. Some parents have expressed concern about this. Nevertheless, leaders have introduced a wide range of measures designed to retain staff and, as a result, the situation has stabilised.
- Leaders maintain high expectations about the quality of staff they recruit and this has led to improvements in teaching. The headteacher's drive to recruit and train high-quality, well-qualified learning support assistants has made a positive difference to the good progress pupils are now making.
- Senior leaders have not only been focusing on improving standards in English and mathematics, but in all subjects. The quality of handwriting in all subjects has improved considerably since the previous inspection. Science is also a strength of the school.
- School leaders develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth well. The school's cultural champion ensures that pupils experience a broad range of artistic, historical and musical opportunities. These include working with the Royal Ballet Company on the 'Chance to Dance' programme, storytelling workshops, and visits to places such as travelling by train to the Tower of London and visiting Coalhouse Fort. Year 6 pupils experience a residential visit early in the autumn term which encourages teamwork and risk-taking in a safe environment.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is broad and balanced and equips pupils well for

the next stages of education. Pupils enjoy their daily mile of healthy exercise and they love using the open-air gym equipment. Additionally, the school's science garden and sensory garden provide further opportunities for meaningful learning to take place out of doors.

- Assemblies and lessons also help pupils to learn about British values. The school holds the Bronze Diversity Award in recognition of leaders' work to prevent extremism and to promote pupils' understanding of equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Leaders use the physical education sports funding well. They have engaged a specialist sports coach to teach in the school, to organise sports clubs and to support teachers' professional development. Year 4 pupils recently took part in a short skiing course at a local indoor slope and pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 enjoyed ballet lessons from members of the Royal Ballet Company. Leaders also employ a swimming teacher to enable pupils in Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 to have swimming lessons at a local secondary school.
- School leaders use the pupil premium funding creatively to support eligible pupils during whole-class teaching, small group work and one-to-one support. Leaders have also used the funding to arrange aspiration-raising visits to King's College, London and Selwyn College, Cambridge, supplemented by six weeks of tutorials by university personnel. Topics studied included higher-level mathematics such as Pythagoras' theorem and were available to a range of pupils including the most able disadvantaged. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make good progress in their learning.
- The leadership of support and learning and the use of funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are good. A particular feature of leaders' work in this area is the strong provision organised for pupils with speech and language difficulties. A specialist teacher provides high-quality support for these pupils on a regular basis. Parents of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are kept well informed about their learning and development. As a result, pupils make good progress across the curriculum.
- Senior leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Senior leaders' planning for school improvement is effective and they have correctly identified the most important priorities for improvement. Leaders carefully monitor the impact of actions taken.
- School staff tackle any issues of discrimination well. This promotes equality of opportunity and contributes to a harmonious and friendly school.
- While some parents comment positively about the work of leaders, other do not. 72% of the 57 responses on Ofsted's Parent View website at the time of the inspection either disagreed or strongly disagreed that the school is well led and managed. 67% of respondents said they would not recommend the school to another parent.
- Particular concerns raised with inspectors included site security and communications with senior leaders. Inspectors found no evidence to support worries about site security. Inspectors also confirmed that leaders have developed a large number of initiatives to keep parents informed. These include weekly newsletters, family homework projects, half-termly parent drop-in sessions, invitations to attend class assemblies, parent packs of English and mathematics resources, easy access to class teachers and an updated school website. Nevertheless, senior leaders acknowledge the need to do more in order to improve communications with those parents who do not

feel as involved as they would like.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have played a key role in the improvement of the school. They have supported and challenged senior leaders to bring about much-needed improvements to teaching in order to improve outcomes for pupils. Membership of the governing body includes a number of highly experienced professionals who hold senior roles in teaching, learning and educational leadership in the borough. Governance is undoubtedly a strength of the school.
- Governors hold senior leaders to account for the progress pupils make. They take a detailed, focused and methodical approach to information about outcomes for pupils. Governors challenge staff performance through an effective performance management system.
- Governors are well aware of the particular challenges facing the school, including the recruitment and retention of teaching staff and some challenging social and economic factors.
- Governors' meetings are carefully recorded and documents provide robust evidence of the decisions governors have taken to improve teaching. Where appropriate, additional professional advice has been taken to inform governors' actions, especially when governors have needed to take difficult decisions about personnel or safeguarding. This has included seeking advice from the local authority's designated officer.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Checks on the suitability of staff are appropriate. Staff receive suitable, regular training. They know what to do if they have any concern about a pupil's welfare or safety.
- A safeguarding team, comprised of senior leaders, meets regularly to monitor safeguarding arrangements, including site security, and to review the welfare of individual pupils. Leaders are resolute in the way they support and monitor pupils who are deemed to be at risk of harm. Leaders act swiftly to provide support for such pupils, bringing in outside agencies when needed.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe in the school environment and on educational visits. Risks that different activities may present are identified and staff are clear about the measures they must take to minimise risk.
- Safeguarding records are well organised and securely maintained.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Good**

- Teachers make good use of dedicated time, usually at the start of lessons, to ensure that pupils learn from their mistakes and think carefully about how they can improve their own work. Pupils confirm that they appreciate time to act on the feedback they receive. Teachers mark pupils' work in line with school policy.
- Science is a strength of the school. The quality and quantity of work in science books

show that pupils are making good progress and are learning to develop a broad range of scientific skills. Pupils also plan and carry out their own scientific investigations and record their findings accurately.

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in English and mathematics, as well as in other subjects, have improved considerably since the last inspection. As a result, standards are good across the curriculum. Nevertheless, opportunities to offer more challenging work, especially to the most able pupils, are not always taken.
- Writing opportunities are carefully planned in English and in other subjects. Pupils apply their literacy skills by writing in depth across the curriculum. Each topic begins with pupils thinking and writing about what they would like to learn about.
- In mathematics, teachers provide a good balance of work which includes calculations and arithmetic as well as reasoning and problem-solving activities. This allows pupils to consolidate and deepen their understanding.
- Teachers provide effective learning opportunities and questions that closely match the needs of most pupils. For example, in a Year 6 class, a teacher's effective planning enabled groups of pupils to explore the use of tension in a literacy text, asking pupils to explain, 'Why do some scenes appear more tense than others?' However, some opportunities are missed to deepen pupils' understanding because more challenging work is not consistently provided, particularly for the most able pupils.
- Teachers have good knowledge about the subjects they teach. They make most lessons interesting and engaging and they ensure that pupils have a clear understanding about what they are expected to learn in each lesson. However, some less-able pupils occasionally struggle to copy down their learning objectives when these are too lengthy.
- Classroom support staff make a positive contribution to lessons, particularly for those pupils who need additional support in their learning. Support staff work in partnership with teachers, using appropriate teaching resources and asking questions effectively to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills.
- Phonics teaching is well structured and carefully planned. Pupils who read to inspectors demonstrated a secure grasp of phonics knowledge and they applied these skills well in order to decode new words.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff and governors are successful in ensuring that the school provides a safe and nurturing environment in which pupils can flourish and enjoy their learning. As a result, pupils are friendly, cooperative, sociable and polite in lessons and around the school.
- The school council is involved in many aspects of school life. The school councillors in each class take their responsibilities seriously and take pride in their achievements. They present their own weekly award in assembly, explaining in detail why they have chosen the winning class, perhaps in recognition of keeping the classroom tidy or

producing some particularly high-quality work that week.

- In their classrooms, pupils have the self-assurance to put forward their point of view, and to debate with others politely but confidently. Inspectors also saw work which resulted from pupils imagining what it was like to be a historical character, or someone very different from themselves. A notable example was in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were describing their emotions from the point of view of a character from the narrative poem, 'The Highwayman'.
- Pupils know how to stay safe in and out of school, including when using the internet. Pupils confidently told inspectors about e-safety and were keen to share their understanding. For example, pupils explained to inspectors the importance of keeping personal details safe online and keeping passwords secure. Teachers promote e-safety on a regular basis.
- Parents who responded to the school's own recent questionnaire agreed that staff give personal development and welfare a high priority. Also, one parent, writing a comment on Ofsted's Parent View website, commented, 'The school has a good community spirit,' and another parent told inspectors, 'My child feels safe here and enjoys coming to school.'

## **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Teachers, learning support staff and leaders all share high expectations about pupils' behaviour. Pupils collaborate well together in lessons, sharing ideas, discussing their work and completing tasks cooperatively. Pupils are generally polite and kind to one another and courteous to adults.
- The school is an orderly environment and pupils walk calmly and sensibly around the school, entering and leaving lessons, the playground and assembly with due regard for school rules.
- Leaders and staff know the pupils well and individualised plans are in place to support those pupils with identified behavioural needs. Pupils understand the rules and rewards systems thoroughly and they know how they are expected to behave at school.
- While most pupils behave well during most lessons, some do occasionally become inattentive. These incidents of low-level misbehaviour, while infrequent, generally result either from a lack of understanding about their work or from an activity that is insufficiently challenging.
- Senior leaders act quickly and appropriately to address any incidents of bullying, derogatory language or racist comments. They keep detailed information about pupils' behaviour, and their well-timed interventions regarding poor behaviour minimise any disruption.
- Senior leaders use a wide range of strategies to promote attendance, including careful tracking of absence, weekly attendance awards and firm sanctions to address lateness and reduce unauthorised absence. Nevertheless, pupils' attendance is below average and some groups, especially disadvantaged pupils, have high levels of persistent absence.
- The attendance officer is proactive in offering support to families where attendance is an issue, but, despite these initiatives, attendance has not improved quickly enough.

The school's own figures show that absence rates, including persistent absence, are still above average. For example, in the latest set of published figures from 2016, 5.0% of pupils were absent compared with 3.9% nationally and of these, 12.5% were persistent absentees compared with 8.8% nationally.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Since the previous inspection in April 2015, outcomes for pupils have improved considerably. In the most recently published school performance tables, progress in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 at Bonnygate Primary School was above average when compared with other primary schools in England. Progress in reading was broadly in line with the national average.
- The standards reached by pupils at the end of Year 6 in national tests last year were in line with the expected level in reading, well above in writing and slightly above in mathematics. In grammar, punctuation and spelling, 88% met the expected standard, compared with 72% nationally.
- However, in reading, writing and in mathematics, the proportion of Year 6 pupils attaining the highest standards possible was well below national averages. In reading, only 3% of pupils at Bonnygate achieved at the highest level compared with 19% nationally, in writing it was 6% compared with 15% nationally and in mathematics it was 9% compared with 17% nationally. Senior leaders and governors all recognise that this needs to improve because more pupils at this school are capable of reaching this higher standard.
- At the end of Year 2 in 2016, a similar picture emerged. The proportion of pupils meeting national expectations was well above average but very few pupils managed to achieve at the highest level possible.
- The proportion of pupils in Year 1 who met the expected level in their phonics screening check was in line with the national average.
- According to the school's own tracking system, and supported by evidence seen in workbooks, most pupils currently in the school are now making good or better progress. Nevertheless, some pupils are still trying to catch up in some year groups. Senior leaders and governors are well aware of this and plans are in place, including employing additional teachers for some subjects, to ensure that by the time they leave the school, these pupils will have caught up.
- Recent test results, together with inspection evidence, show that the large number of disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, in the school are making progress in line with other pupils nationally. There is good evidence that the school has successfully used the pupil premium grant to help pupils overcome any barriers to learning that they have faced.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, starting in the early years, where staff quickly identify their additional needs and how these can best be met. The school's inclusion leader carefully measures the impact of intervention programmes, ensuring that pupils make good progress.
- Outcomes in subjects other than English and mathematics are also good. Pupils' work



in their topic and science books is also detailed and well presented.

- All groups of pupils, including the most able, make good progress. However, some are capable of doing even better. Pupils are not given enough opportunities to engage in really challenging and thought-provoking work throughout their lessons. Senior leaders are rightly ambitious to improve outcomes even further. They have identified that expecting even more from all pupils, especially the most able, is one way they plan to accomplish this.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- Provision in the early years, which includes Nursery and Reception classes, is well organised and meets children's needs effectively. Children in the Nursery class and in Reception benefit from a stimulating, well-resourced learning environment. The atmosphere is warm and welcoming. Children make good progress from their starting points and leave well equipped for Year 1.
- Teachers plan a range of interesting opportunities that enable children to learn well and initiate their own learning based around their particular interests, using an approach called 'early excellence'. For example, the topic on mini-beasts took account of children's ideas about what they would like to know, including, 'Why do ladybirds have spots?' and 'What do caterpillars eat?'
- Staff questioning, especially in Reception, helps children to learn and think more deeply. For example, when working with a group investigating how to grow cress, the teacher asked, 'Do you think it would grow without any sunlight?' and 'What would happen if the seeds don't get any water?' Children working out the sequence of a story about dinosaurs were asked, 'What do you think the story was about?' and 'What happened next?' to develop their understanding.
- The use of questioning to deepen understanding is not used so effectively in the Nursery.
- Children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of pupils reaching a good level of development has increased over the last three years and is consistently above the national average, including in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2016, 78% of children achieved a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year, compared with 69% nationally.
- Staff manage children's behaviour very effectively. The warm manner in which staff engage with children helps children to feel secure. Expectations and routines are well established, children are attentive to adults' instructions and children behave sensibly as they learn and explore. Children know how to keep themselves safe in a tidy, well-organised environment.
- The early years leader has appropriately high expectations for individual children's achievement. An effective, carefully planned assessment and tracking system helps staff ensure that work is planned to meet children's needs and they make good progress.
- Electronic records of children's learning include detailed and informative evaluations of each child's progress in every area of learning and development. These are carefully annotated and supported by careful observations, recorded by teachers and learning

support staff, and form a comprehensive record of progress and achievement.

- The early years leader makes sure that children are safe, both indoors and outside. Staff carry out regular checks on all aspects of the provision to ensure that any risk is quickly identified and addressed.

## School details

Unique reference number	114968
Local authority	Thurrock
Inspection number	10031373

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	435
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Spencer Carter
Headteacher	Sarah McHugh
Telephone number	01708 853316
Website	<a href="http://www.bonnygateprimary.co.uk">www.bonnygateprimary.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@bonnygateprimary.thurrock.sch.uk">admin@bonnygateprimary.thurrock.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	28–29 April 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a larger than average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are White British. A smaller than average proportion are from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is slightly below the national figure, but the proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has been receiving support and challenge from Thurrock Local Authority.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 23 lessons. A number of these lessons were visited jointly with the senior leaders. Inspectors also made some short visits to lessons as part of learning walks throughout the school.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. They met a group of pupils to gain their views of the school as well as speaking to pupils and parents informally.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime, in assembly, at the start of the school day and in lessons.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed; minutes of governors' meetings; records of governors' and the local authority's monitoring visits; the school's self-evaluation information and the school's improvement plans.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the two assistant headteachers, the inclusion leader, subject leaders and the early years leader. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body including the chair, and with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector spoke on the phone to two parents.
- Inspectors took account of the 57 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, the 14 staff questionnaire responses, the 58 pupil questionnaire responses, and the school's own recent parent questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Nick Rudman, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nathan Lowe	Ofsted Inspector
Sally Nutman	Ofsted Inspector

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