

Bengeo Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	117361
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	379401
Inspection dates	28–29 February 2012
Lead inspector	Brian Netto

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	471
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Libby Mountford
Headteacher	Deborah Purrett
Date of previous school inspection	9 July 2007
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Brian Netto	Additional inspector
Bimla Thakur	Additional inspector
Alan Jarvis	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors carried out observations of 17 lessons or part lessons taught by 14 teachers. Four of the lessons were jointly observed by a member of the school's leadership team. Discussions were held with senior and middle leaders, staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation and planning documents, external evaluations of the school's work, policy documents and pupils' work. They analysed 284 questionnaires sent in by parents and carers, questionnaires completed by a sample of pupils in Key Stage 2, and 39 completed by staff.

Information about the school

Bengo Primary School is a larger than average-sized school. A majority of the pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average, but increasing. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school meets the current floor standards, the minimum expectations for attainment and progress set by the government. Since the last inspection, the school has expanded so there is now flexible funded provision for Nursery pupils as well as the established play group, breakfast club and after-school club; all of these are privately run. The school has received a number of awards including Quality in Study Support.

The headteacher was appointed in September 2010.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- Bengo Primary School is a good school. It is rapidly improving and has a number of strong features. Relationships with parents and carers are highly productive and this ensures that they make a regular and effective contribution to the school. The pupils, parents and carers as well as the staff are overwhelmingly positive about the strengths of the school. The school is not outstanding as recent improvements in the quality of teaching have not yet had time to impact on achievement.
- Achievement is now good. Pupils across the school achieve above national averages and make good progress, and pupils in Key Stage 2 now make good progress in writing following a dip in performance in 2011. Progress for all groups, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is good.
- The majority of teaching is ensuring the good progress of all groups of pupils including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. However, some inconsistencies remain in the teaching of writing and in its provision across the curriculum and this is why there is inconsistency in the progress made.
- The school is a harmonious and cohesive community, and consequently pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils show considerable respect and care for each other, and have very positive attitudes to learning.
- The school has made significant improvements since the appointment of the headteacher in September 2010. Her drive and ambition have underpinned all the positive developments made, so that attendance is now above average, the management of the quality of teaching is rigorous and, as a result, achievement is improving. Some of the changes have not had time to make a full impact on other aspects of the school.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

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- By June 2013, raise attainment and accelerate progress in writing at Key Stage 2 so that progress matches that in reading, by:
 - ensuring consistency in the quality of the teaching of writing by sharing good practice, so that all pupils make sustained and rapid progress
 - ensuring consistency in the pace of teaching and learning and the use of questions by teachers and other adults, so that all pupils develop greater independence
 - increasing opportunities for extended writing across the curriculum.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage at the broadly expected starting points for their age and make good progress. Achievement has been consistently good over time because adults make effective use of accurate assessments to identify those who need additional support to reach the expected levels across all areas, including early reading skills, and successfully boost their learning.

Pupils of all abilities make good progress through the rest of the school. Work in books indicates that pupils are making good progress over time. Although there was a dip in attainment across the school in writing in 2011, this has been successfully addressed; current data show that attainment is now above average in all areas, including writing, although attainment in writing remains below the levels achieved in reading and mathematics. This is because of inconsistencies in the teaching of writing. Reading attainment is significantly above average by the end of Key Stage 1, and this is also the case at the end of Year 6. Inspection evidence, including listening to readers, scrutiny of reading records, and observations of guided reading, showed the high standards achieved. Pupils make good use of their well-developed skills to recognise letters and their sounds, and effectively blend them to identify new words. There was also evidence of effective links with parents having a strong impact on progress in reading. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their starting points. This is because they receive timely and well-targeted support. Teaching assistants provide good support to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to develop their confidence and self-esteem. The large majority of parents and carers agree that their children make good progress.

Pupils are typically very engaged with their learning, active when talking with their partners and attentive during class discussions. This contributes strongly to their good progress. During the inspection, Year 3 pupils were seen developing their language skills whilst trying to classify shapes using a Venn diagram, deciding on similarities and differences in shapes. Year 6 pupils showed confidence in using mathematical language when investigating probability, and were able to apply newly learnt words in different contexts.

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Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say that their children are taught well and evidence from inspection confirms this view. Much has been done to ensure that teaching approaches are consistently effective in all years and results in pupils making good progress. Pupils say they enjoy their lessons and teachers give them work which is challenging and fun. The classrooms are well organised and rich in resources, and teachers create an environment in which all pupils are encouraged to succeed. As a consequence, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Typically teaching is well planned, ensures a good pace to the learning and activities are well pitched to the learning needs of all groups of pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed to good effect to ensure that pupils who need additional support make good progress in their learning. Typical of the most effective teaching seen was that in Year 2 when pupils were learning about right angles. The teacher took great care to show the pupils right angles and other angles from various viewpoints and gave them a variety of tasks to help develop their understanding further. In another good example, Year 5 pupils developed an understanding of synonyms, in a lesson which demanded high challenge, a brisk pace, and encouraged pupils to use a wide variety of resources as they responded with empathy in writing poetry. Although teaching is good, a few inconsistencies remain. These are in the pace of learning, in the time given for independent work, and in the sharpness of questioning. This limits the progress for some pupils, particularly in writing.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, a judicious balance between indoor and outdoor activities, a strong focus on children making positive choices in their learning, and a timely focus on letters and sounds are features of the effective teaching. Adults know children very well and the close observations they make of what children have achieved are used very effectively to tailor learning to the needs of each child.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is good. Incidents of bullying or racism are rare, and pupils report that they feel very safe, and that any incidents are minor, mainly to do with verbal teasing, and are dealt with quickly and fairly by the school. Parents and carers strongly agree that the school keeps their children safe. The school's inclusive ethos promotes a culture where pupils show considerable respect and care for each other, and appreciate each other's differences; as one pupil said, 'It's not what you are on the outside but what you are on the inside'. The good relationships between adults and pupils have a positive impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well looked after, and this ensures that they also make good progress in their learning and personal development. As one pupil said 'The great thing about this school is that it lets me be me'.

Attendance is above average and improving.

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Leadership and management

The drive and determination of the headteacher and deputy headteacher have contributed significantly to recent school improvement. This view was echoed in many of the comments made by parents and carers such as 'She is an inspiration to both staff and pupils', and 'We are so happy with the fabulous head who's made very positive changes and improvements'. New strategies for improving the quality of teaching, based on a model of peer support and mentoring and using performance management, have helped to address areas of weakness. For example, the quality of marking has improved significantly across the school, and this has helped pupils to understand their targets and what they need to do to improve. Data are used effectively by teachers and phase leaders to help track and support individual needs. Staff morale is high, and there is a strong sense of shared vision, as illustrated in the highly positive staff response to the survey. The school has expanded, responding to the needs of the local community in the provision for families around the clock, and this has been recognised in the Quality in Study Support Award. Governors play a strategic role in school improvement, notably through the various initiatives to engage parents. As a consequence, parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school, and play a full role in supporting its activities, for example through the Parents' Forum and Parent Partnership Committee. A majority of parents and carers responded to the Ofsted survey. Many took the opportunity to comment on the school. The vast majority are supportive, and although some offered critical comments these were mostly constructive. This comment by one parent reflected the views of the majority, 'I am really impressed by the new initiatives that the school uses to keep learning fresh, e.g. talk partners, buddy reading, Big Writing to name a few'. The positive impact of recent changes demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for continuous improvement. Governors and staff ensure that all safeguarding requirements are met.

The school benefits from a rich learning environment, and full use is made of the extensive outdoor area. Pupils enjoy the climbing frames in the playground that they helped to design, the picnic area at lunchtime, the Jubilee Garden environmental area, and the forest area at the back of the field for nature walks and science investigations. Bengo School is at the heart of the local community and is highly valued by the parent body.

The curriculum is broad with a strong focus on creativity. It is enriched by a diverse range of extra-curricular activities, and by a good programme of visits and visitors to the school. Opportunities to improve writing have increased with the introduction of a number of recent initiatives such as 'Big Writing' where pupils focus on writing in different styles and contexts. However, there needs to be more opportunity for pupils to practise writing skills across the curriculum.

The curriculum, assemblies, many popular clubs and visitors to the school make a strong contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These ensure that pupils learn in a cohesive community, have a well-developed

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sense of right and wrong and appreciate other cultures and ways of life different from their own. They also ensure that learning is underpinned by a strong commitment to equality of opportunity and to tackling discrimination.

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	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



1 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bengoe Primary School, Hertford, SG14 3DX

Thank you for your warm welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed being told about all the good things going on at your school, and how you liked going there. We were very impressed by the way you took part in lessons and always tried your best. I enjoyed being shown around by some of the older pupils, who were clearly proud of the school's environs, and were delighted to show me the Jubilee Garden, the climbing frames in the playground and the other special features of the school. You agreed that this helps to make your community happy and cohesive.

We would like to tell you about what we found out. Yours is a good school, and it has some real strengths. For example, your parents and carers are happy with the school, and take a full part in its activities. You told us that you feel safe in school because teachers and other adults look after you and help you to understand how to keep safe. You behave well. Most of you make good progress in English and mathematics.

Your headteacher and the staff are keen to make the school even better. Although you make good progress in writing, we have asked your teachers to continue to make writing fun and engaging, give you more opportunities to develop your writing skills in all of your subjects, and help you to work independently more often. We were pleased to see that your attendance has improved, and we trust that you will continue to behave well. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Brian Netto
Lead inspector

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