

# Bessemer Grange Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	130918
<b>Local Authority</b>	Southwark
<b>Inspection number</b>	315657
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thrussell

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	290
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Ms Ariela Cravitz
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Jane Giles (Acting)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2003
<b>School address</b>	Dylways London SE5 8HP
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 7274 2520
<b>Fax number</b>	020 7924 0858

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	13–14 May 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	315657

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Bessemer Grange is a larger than average primary school. It serves a socially and culturally diverse community. Just over two thirds of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, the remainder being from White British heritage. The main groups represented are Black African, British or Caribbean. A higher than average proportion has a home language other than English. Almost a half of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. These pupils have a variety of specific needs including social and behavioural, and speech, language and communication difficulties. The school makes special provision for pupils with physical difficulties or disabilities. A higher than average proportion of pupils leave or join the school beyond the normal starting points. There has been a very high turnover of staff in recent years and the headteacher and deputy are in acting roles. The school has Healthy Schools, Activemark, Artsmark gold, and Investors in People awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Bessemer Grange is a satisfactory school. The recent disruptions to staffing have particularly affected the leadership and management of the school and the pupils' progress, particularly in Key Stage 2. Some parents have expressed concern about this. Nevertheless, the acting headteacher, very well supported by her seconded deputy, has taken decisive and effective action to stem underachievement. She has united the staff in a drive to move the school forward, ensured that pupils' personal development is good, they continue to be very well cared for, and have a very well enriched curriculum. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, particularly the range of sports on offer through links with a local secondary school. Pupils are proud of the attractive displays around the school, which celebrate their successes and show their good creative skills, especially in art and design. The school works very hard to include fully a number of pupils with social and behavioural needs. Good links with outside agencies and the work of the school's inclusion team provide much needed security and stability for this group. Although behaviour in and around school is generally good and well managed, the behaviour of a minority of pupils, nevertheless, occasionally interrupts the learning of others.

Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school from well below average starting points in Year 1. At the end of Year 2, standards overall are well below average in reading, writing and mathematics. Previously, the achievement of Year 6 pupils, given their starting points in Year 3, was broadly satisfactory, but in 2007 it was inadequate, and standards fell. The school has taken effective action, particularly in English and mathematics to address this. More rigorous assessment and tracking procedures enable the school to quickly identify those pupils who are not doing well enough, and to provide additional support, which has helped to fill gaps in pupils' learning. This has quickly increased the number of pupils now working at or beyond the levels expected for their age. Older pupils, although now making satisfactory progress, have been left with a legacy of underachievement. Standards, particularly at the end of Year 6, remain too low.

The introduction across the school of structured programmes to develop and improve literacy skills, based on careful assessment, is proving successful. Assessments in science are helping to identify pupils' current levels of ability and to plan appropriate levels of challenge. Nevertheless, the school recognises that fuller use still needs to be made of assessment information to identify what pupils need to learn next, and to raise teachers' expectations of what pupils could achieve. The systematic monitoring of lessons along with support and professional development, is bringing about improvements to teaching and learning, which are helping to raise achievement.

Subject leaders are beginning to take an active management role in monitoring their subjects, and have identified appropriate areas for improvement. However, they are not all sufficiently skilled to drive their subjects forward and promote improved progress for pupils. Given the school's success in redressing recent underachievement, it has a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Children enter the Nursery with skills that are well below those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress overall, but good progress in personal, social and emotional, and

physical and creative development. As a result, by the end of Reception, the majority of children are working securely within these areas, and are developing their independence. In communication, language and literacy and mathematical development, the levels achieved are well below those expected for children of this age. Management is satisfactory and new initiatives are in place to raise children's achievement; an analysis of recent data indicates that this is rising and becoming closer to national expectations. A new assessment system is starting to help staff track children's progress more effectively, but it is at an early stage and is not yet used fully enough to identify what children need to learn next in order to maintain steady progress. Resources are used well in both the indoor and outdoor areas. The school has run several courses for parents to encourage them to be more fully involved in their children's education.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Raise achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science.
- Ensure that assessment information is used fully when planning what pupils need to learn next, so that all are able to make the best progress possible.
- Develop the roles and responsibilities of subject leaders.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

A recent decline in progress, particularly across Key Stage 2, has largely been halted through the school's concerted actions. In 2007, achievement and standards fell at the end of Year 6. Standards in English and mathematics were well below average, and extremely low in science. Pupils currently in Year 6, despite now making satisfactory, and at times good progress, are not likely to attain the standards that could be expected of them, given their below average starting points in Year 3. However, additional support is enabling pupils to make up considerable lost ground. The school's initiatives are helping to ensure that the different groups of pupils represented in the school, those with particular learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and both boys and girls, make broadly similar progress.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils are proud of their school and see it as a happy place. They show enjoyment in their lessons, work well alone and in groups, and enthusiastically join in discussions. Attendance is satisfactory and careful checks are made on any absenteeism. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of being safe and healthy. They have a good understanding of other faiths and cultures, in their own community and beyond, and a sympathetic understanding of the needs of others. Their views are valued and the work of the recently revised school council is respected. Councillors are proud of their drive to reduce litter in school. 'We look after the environment', said one. A wide range of responsibilities are accepted with pride and older pupils undertake important roles such as peer mediators. Their good social skills, enjoyment of learning and the sound progress they make mean they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers have good relationships with their classes so that pupils are generally keen to learn. Lessons are well prepared and managed. Introductions to lessons are thorough, but occasionally too much time is spent on these. Consequently, pupils lose a little concentration and become restless, and the time for them to work on their different tasks is limited. Good questioning helps teachers to gauge pupils' understanding, but this oral approach to learning is not always extended to involve the active participation of teaching assistants. Planning does not always take account of the range of ability within classes, so that work at times is either too easy for some or not sufficiently challenging for others, so restricting progress.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is now meeting the needs and interests of pupils well. Carefully planning for the introduction of the new national strategies for literacy and numeracy has ensured the sound development of basic skills. Pupils' information and communication technology skills are developed well, and used effectively to enhance learning opportunities in other subjects. However, the use of literacy and numeracy in other subjects and the linking of subjects across the curriculum, to make learning more interesting, is only just developing. Exciting new initiatives such as 'Success For All' and 'Big Writing' are already having a positive effect on improving achievement in English. Creative writing, spelling and grammar are improving because pupils are encouraged to be responsible for their own work, to mark and assess it. Creative skills are strongly encouraged through a range of enterprising projects both in school and in the wider community. Music, dance, drama and physical development are promoted well through the extension of learning beyond the classroom. Valuable enrichment to pupils learning experiences comes from a varied programme of after school clubs, visits and visitors to school.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The care and safety of pupils is given a high priority by all staff. One parent commented that, 'The staff at the school really seem to care about the children'. The programmes of support and guidance provided for pupils who have English as a second language and those pupils who have a range of learning difficulties and disabilities are good. Support systems are flexible and extensive in order to meet a wide range of needs. A significant number of pupils leave and join the school at different times, adding further complexity to the planning of support; the school manages this well. Targets in literacy and numeracy are used effectively in all classes to show pupils what they need to learn next. They feel that targets are helpful to them. Teachers mark regularly but there are inconsistencies between classes in identifying clearly for pupils how they can improve their work and so make better progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The acting headteacher has brought unity and a clarity of purpose to the school. In a complementary partnership with the acting deputy head she has accurately evaluated the school's effectiveness. A range of appropriately chosen initiatives have been successfully implemented. The quality of teaching and learning is carefully monitored and pupils' progress is tracked with increasing precision. The school improvement plan has been updated in light of identified areas for improvement. However, whilst the development points are assessed accurately they are not sharply prioritised, and the ways to measure their success are too broad. Managers of subjects, some very new to their role, are developing their skills and confidence under the guidance of the headteacher. Governors are knowledgeable because they receive good information and are actively involved in the life of the school. They have a clear understanding of the school's areas for development and a loyal appreciation of its strengths, especially the school's inclusive ethos.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------

### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bessemer Grange Primary School, London, SE5 8HP

I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, very polite and helpful. You spoke very enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things you take part in. Bessemer Grange is a satisfactory school.

We liked these things the most.

- The school supports you well when you have problems or find learning difficult.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and very well looked after.
- You have a very good range of clubs to choose from and go on lots of visits.
- You know the importance of eating the right things and staying fit and healthy.
- You do lots of impressive art work.
- Your headteacher and deputy do a good job and are helping the school to improve.

We have asked the school to work particularly on the following things.

- Standards in English, mathematics and science are too low. You must all work as hard as you can to improve them.
- The school checks and records very carefully how well you are doing in lessons. It must use this information to plan what each of you needs to learn next, so that the work is just right for each one of you and helps you to make the best progress possible.
- The teachers who are responsible for different subjects must carefully check how you are being taught and how well each one of you is doing. This will help to make all of your lessons both challenging and enjoyable, and ensure that you all do as well as you can.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours sincerely

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector