

# Sir John Barrow School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112232
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	357071
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Byrne

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	293
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Sharon Anderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Gillian Cooke
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 February 2007
<b>School address</b>	Argyle Street Ulverston Cumbria LA12 0BD
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. During the inspection 16 lessons were observed, taught by 11 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a variety of school documentation. This included the procedures for maintaining safeguarding and child protection, the data held by the school plotting the progress of pupils across the school, the school development plan, information about governance, documents relating to the management of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and also to community cohesion. The team analysed the questionnaires returned by 91 parents and carers and also those supplied by pupils and staff.

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

- The rate of progress of all groups of pupils to determine whether or not it is good enough.
- The quality of leadership and management in creating clear teamwork that includes shared aspirations and expectations.
- The effectiveness of the care, guidance and support in supporting all pupils, and in particular those who are vulnerable.
- The quality of engagement of parents and carers in the school to establish whether or not they feel that the merger has been successful.

## Information about the school

This is an above average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average and the proportion identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The school has gained Healthy School status and received International School status (Level 2).

Since the last inspection, when it was a junior school, the school has been expanded to accommodate pupils from a local infant school, which was closed. The merger into a primary school was completed in September 2009. The number in each year group more than doubles in Key Stage 2 as pupils join Year 3 from two other infant schools in the town.

**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?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly and has a number of good features. Good leadership and management by the headteacher and members of the governing body has steered the school through a complex merger and created a clear identity for the primary school. The 'SJB' identity underpins an ethos that values everyone and believes that all can succeed. Pupils make good progress in their personal development, and academic achievement is satisfactory. Parents and carers are very positive about the provision and care within the school and praise the quality of leadership provided by the headteacher during the disruptions.

Progress is accelerating as the new teaching team gels and the new accommodation is utilised. Better use of assessment and positive developments to the curriculum are strengthening the impact of teaching. Much work has been done to engage pupils in evaluating their own work and giving them pointers for improvement, but its impact is not consistently good in all classes. Good quality care and guidance enables pupils with emotional and behavioural challenges to participate successfully in school life. Progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 has been good in recent years, whilst in Key Stage 2, it has been satisfactory. A lack of challenge for more-able pupils has held back attainment overall. By the end of Year 6, standards are broadly average with strengths in reading but a relative weakness in writing. Recent initiatives to improve writing by extending opportunities for writing across the curriculum are beginning to impact positively. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. By the time pupils leave the school, the large majority behave well, have good attitudes, form good relationships and have empathy with people different from themselves. They have a good awareness of how to live safe and healthy lives.

The disruption caused by the merger has been minimised by the strong but caring leadership of the headteacher and governing body. A very clear vision is shared by all staff and there is an acceptance that satisfactory academic attainment is not good enough. Significant improvements to the systems for assessing and tracking pupils' progress have strengthened the leaders' understanding of how well the school is doing but the information is not used well enough to make sure that progress in all classes is as good as it could be. The school evaluates its strengths and weaknesses accurately. The good outcomes of the initiatives to improve progress, coupled with the skilled management of the merger demonstrate the school's good capacity to improve in future.

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

- Raise attainment and improve achievement further by:

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- devising and implementing strategies to challenge and extend the learning of more-able pupils in lessons
  - embedding and extending opportunities for pupils to write in a wide variety of contexts
  - improving the use of assessment so that all pupils have a clear picture about how to improve their work.
- Enable leaders to make better use of assessment data to identify groups and classes where progress is not consistent, so that steps are taken to make it consistently good or better.
  - Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enjoy lessons and thrive on opportunities to participate in their own learning. They develop the confidence to make decisions and find things out for themselves. In one Key Stage 2 class, pupils responded with great enjoyment and confidence whilst exploring the properties of different fabrics in relation to road safety at night. Pupils work hard in lessons and get along well together. They take pride in their work, although some pupils, mostly boys, are not keen on writing.

Children's starting points on entry to school in the Early Years Foundation Stage are lower than those typically found for children of this age, but the influx into Key Stage 2 of pupils from local infant schools balances this out and attainment on entry to Year 3 is broadly average. Given this picture, achievement is currently satisfactory, but improvements to teaching and to the curriculum mean that pupils enjoy learning. In 2010, the unvalidated national test results showed attainment in Year 6 to be average, but progress from Year 2 had improved. Progress in lessons is mostly good but not consistently so. More reliable assessment systems, recently introduced, are contributing to the setting of more challenging targets for attainment in future. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is typically average, although it dipped in 2010. Pupils are currently attaining in line with expectations for their age, with a higher proportion set to exceed expectations this year. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from good adult support and make good progress towards their personal and behavioural targets.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, which contributes to good behaviour and warm relationships with others. Pupils benefit from a number of effective strategies to educate them about staying safe and healthy. As a result, they talk knowledgeably about the importance of exercise and a balanced diet. The pupils' voice is highly valued by staff and school councillors talk with pride about how they are helping to improve the school. Being playground lunchtime helpers, adds to pupils' ability to take responsibility for others. Links with schools and communities elsewhere, for example, in Coventry and Mauritius, give pupils a good perspective of the lives of people different from themselves. Given the average attainment and good personal development, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> 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?

Pupils benefit from a dedicated teaching and support team who have raised their performance considerably as a result of a more settled school and in response to higher expectations from senior leaders. Staff know that attainment can be better and have established a range of action plans to bring this about. Effective initiatives have been implemented to give individually tailored support to pupils who find aspects of English and mathematics difficult and to help pupils who are falling behind. The needs of the more-able are recognised, but not consistently planned for in all lessons. Teachers often use stimulating, role play techniques to fire pupils' imaginations and the good use of information and communication technology often enhances learning and engages pupils. An increased focus on assessment is enhancing teachers' knowledge of pupils' academic achievement. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own performance, but they are not always involved enough in monitoring their own progress so that they understand how to improve.

The curriculum is effectively planned to enable pupils to build up their skills of learning and increasingly it reflects the pupils' interests. Initiatives to raise attainment in reading, writing and mathematics are having a positive impact on progress but are yet to be transmitted into higher attainment at the end of Year 6. A wide range of educational visits, including residential stays, broaden pupils' experiences. Visitors, such as an actor depicting

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a character from the Second World War, add excitement and meaning to some lessons. Pupils eagerly attend an excellent range of extra-curricular clubs and activities.

The school is very caring and employs a variety of strategies to successfully support pupils with emotional and behavioural challenges. A counsellor makes a positive contribution to working with pupils and families so that barriers to learning are reduced. Skilled teaching assistants provide well for the personal and emotional development of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, as well as helping them to improve academically. The school has effective systems to induct pupils to school at the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage. Care is also taken to apply strategies to ease the transition of pupils arriving in Year 3 and moving on at the end of Year 6.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The headteacher, supported by a new and effective leadership team has created a strong staff team which has enabled a smooth transition from the junior to the primary school. The confidence of staff and the morale of pupils are strong and a good range of strategies are being effectively managed to raise attainment. The inclusion of all, regardless of ability or special educational needs, reflects the school's good commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and to fighting discrimination. For example, good strategies are in place to raise the aspirations of girls and the school is considering ways of raising the attainment of the more-able pupils which it has recognised as an area for development. Performance management underpins staff development, backed by a well organised school improvement plan.

Governance is good. Members of the governing body support the school well and willingly get involved with staff, pupils and parents and carers. They are increasingly keeping an eye on the indicators for the school, for example, the assessment data and targets. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, including securing good provision for safeguarding and the school takes great care to ensure that pupils are safe and secure at all times. Effective strategies promote community cohesion within the locality, the wider United Kingdom, and globally. Parents and carers feel very much part of the school. An open door policy welcomes everyone and better attention to homework is increasing opportunities for parents and carers to help their children learn at home.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good leadership and management have created a safe, secure and inspiring environment for children. The new accommodation has been very well organised and set up to meet children's needs. Both indoor and outdoor provision is of a good quality. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from good teaching. This enables children to make good progress across nursery and reception. A higher than typical proportion of children starts the Early Years Foundation Stage with low levels of development for their age, particularly in their spoken language, emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world. Their good progress and achievement is due to the teaching team knowing each child very well so that the individual needs of each child are met. Despite the good progress, attainment by the start of Year 1 is typically below average.

A caring environment welcomes children into the Nursery class. An experienced teaching team provides a variety of well planned activities, which harness children's interests. Good attention is given to encouraging children to play together and to speak and share their thoughts and ideas. In the Reception class, expectations are suitably high and children make good progress. For both groups of children, the teaching assistants make a valuable contribution, enabling children to receive focused adult support at times and taking advantage of carefully planned play situations. Effective links with home, including good information about the children's progress in the learning journals, give parents and carers a good insight into their children's development.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

Around a third of parents and carers returned their questionnaires. The vast majority of parents and carers support the school and feel that it has settled down quickly after the merger with the local infant school. A number of positive comments were made about the effectiveness of the headteacher and also praised the quality of care provided. A few expressed some concerns about the behaviour of some pupils and one or two felt that their children could make better progress. The inspectors endorse the positive views of parents and carers. Progress is currently satisfactory, although improving, but behaviour is good and any incidents are managed well by the staff.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Sir John Barrow 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 91 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 293 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	67	74	22	24	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	63	69	28	31	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	61	67	28	31	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	62	33	36	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	61	67	29	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	56	62	29	32	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	48	53	39	43	1	1	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)	43	47	42	46	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	54	59	36	40	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	52	36	40	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	46	51	38	42	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	64	30	33	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	67	74	23	25	1	1	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## 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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.**



24 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Sir John Barrow School, Ulverston, LA12 0BD**

Thank you for being so helpful to me and the team of inspectors during our recent visit to your school. Your school has come through a lot recently and whilst it is satisfactory, it is improving and has many good features. You told us that you feel safe and that bullying is very rare. You enjoy school because teachers work hard to make learning interesting. You benefit from lots of clubs and visitors into and visits out of school. We were impressed by how those of you who find school difficult are supported so that you can benefit from all that goes on.

Whilst your attainment is average overall, there is scope for improvement. We have asked that harder work is given to those of you who find work easier and for all of you to have more opportunities to write. Many of you have a good understanding of how well you are doing and how to get better, but this is not the case for all of you. We have asked the school to seek ways of helping all of you to be more closely involved in your assessment so that you have an even clearer picture of how to get better.

Your headteacher is doing a good job. This has meant that despite all the changes required to accommodate the infants, you have continued to learn. Your progress is now getting better as the teachers and yourselves settle into the new primary school. We were impressed by how you care for others and understand the lives of people different to yourselves. As a result of lots of good work by your teachers and other adults, you all have a good understanding of how to live safe and healthy lives. These qualities should help you to live happy lives.

I wish you all the very best for your future.

Yours sincerely

David Byrne

Lead inspector

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