

Barn Croft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131057
Local Authority	Waltham Forest
Inspection number	362679
Inspection dates	29–30 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Robert Lovett HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	256
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Faisal Pirbhai
Headteacher	Frances Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	17 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and one additional inspector. Inspectors observed 11 teachers in 12 lessons in addition to intervention and other groups. Meetings were held with representatives from the school council, the Chair of the Governing Body, subject and senior leaders, and representatives of the local authority. Inspectors observed the schools work, and looked at safeguarding procedures, analyses of how well the school is doing, pupils progress data, improvement planning and work in pupils books. While no parental questionnaires were sent out for the inspection, inspectors looked at the schools analysis of 155 parent and carer questionnaires. These used the Ofsted model and were collected in February 2011. Inspectors also spoke informally to parents and carers.

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

The success of the school in addressing previous weaknesses, including pupils attainment and progress, the quality of teaching, and bullying.

The impact of strategies to raise standards in writing.

The quality of the schools leadership and its impact on the schools capacity to improve.

Information about the school

Barn Croft is an average-sized primary school with a 20 place full time equivalent nursery which operates morning and afternoon sessions. Pupils represent a wide range of cultures and ethnic groups. Just over half of pupils speak English as an additional language and, of these, about 40% are at the early stages of language acquisition. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The local area is less advantaged than most, and more pupils join and leave the school during the school year than is usual. When the school was last inspected, it was judged to require special measures because it was failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and lacked the capacity to improve.

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

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school has improved in a number of ways since it was last inspected and its overall effectiveness is now satisfactory. At the heart of its improvement lies the school motto Hand in Hand to Success. The school's ethos is one of care, mutual respect and the ambition to improve. Teachers and others who work in the school are committed to helping all pupils achieve as much as they can. The whole-school community has worked together to ensure that previous inadequacies have been overcome, and in some cases have become strengths.

In 2009, the school's leadership and management were judged to be inadequate. Leadership and management are now good. Their evaluation of how well the school is doing is accurate and rigorous. Senior leaders have worked with energy and commitment to improve pupils' progress and raise standards. They have been instrumental in revitalising subject leadership, and improving teaching and learning. Attainment has improved and is now broadly average, and pupils make satisfactory progress.

Those pupils who speak English as an additional language settle quickly and make satisfactory and often good progress. Teaching has improved and there is no inadequate teaching. However, the quality of teaching is inconsistent both between and within classes, resulting in uneven progress. In some classes, some subjects are taught more effectively than others, so that there is a significant difference in how well pupils achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. In others, achievement is consistently satisfactory and in others, consistently good. Intervention groups to support individuals and groups of pupils whose progress has slowed have proved successful, but these are no substitute for high-quality teaching in all lessons. While most lesson planning is clear and detailed, planning for some key skills such as speaking and listening is sometimes inadequate. Strategies to improve the quality of writing are beginning to bear fruit. Extended pieces of work across a range of subjects are now the norm. Work is of increasingly good quality, well marked and often very well presented. While the curriculum is appropriately broad and balanced, the school will use some of the extra time made available through its restructuring to extend creative aspects of pupils' work.

Barn Croft is a calm and happy school where new pupils are made to feel welcome and their individual needs are quickly identified and increasingly well met. Children joining the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly into school routines. Pupils are friendly and polite, and behave well. They feel safe and secure, and say that bullying and poor behaviour are rare and are quickly dealt with. Because of improved communication and engagement with parents and carers, attendance has risen and is now close to average. However, there remain too many persistent absentees who lose too much time.

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The governing body holds the school to account well. Along with senior leaders, it has a good understanding of the schools strengths and weaknesses, and what it needs to do to raise attainment further. Because of this, and because of its track record of raising pupils achievement, the school has a good capacity to continue to improve.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - ensuring existing strengths in teaching are identified and used more effectively to bring about greater consistency in outcomes within and between classes
 - improve planning for speaking and listening
 - embedding the new timetables to better promote a more creative approach to the curriculum
 - managing the move from intervention teaching to high-quality teaching and learning in all classes.
- Raise attendance by further reducing the number of pupils who are persistent absentees.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Achievement is improving, particularly in Years 3 to 6. In the most recent national tests, pupils in Year 6 made progress which was similar to other pupils nationally. They made the best progress in mathematics. Attainment was broadly average in English and mathematics in Year 6. The schools detailed pupil tracking data indicate the school is well placed to meet its challenging targets for Year 6 pupils in 2011. The proportion of pupils likely to reach the nationally expected Level 4 is set to rise further, although fewer are likely to attain the higher Level 5 in mathematics.

In lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress and, because of their positive attitudes, enthusiasm for learning and the high expectations of teachers, progress was often good. In a good English lesson, pupils worked with sustained concentration. Because time limits were explicit and frequently referred to, the pace of writing was brisk and pupils clear understanding of the success criteria they needed to achieve resulted in good progress. Where pupils make satisfactory progress, it takes too long for them to settle to their work and resources such as whiteboards, pens and pencils are not readily accessible.

Pupils say they feel safe and secure. They insist that the poor behaviour and bullying reported at the time of the last inspection are a thing of the past. This view fits well with inspection judgements. Behaviour is good and is particularly good in lessons. The development of pupils moral and social development is a strength. Personal responsibility and a sense of citizenship are nurtured well through the peer mentor system, where Year 6 pupils act as advisers, helpers and role models for younger pupils and through the work of the school council. Pupils say this is a friendly school where they enjoy their lessons and get along well with everyone. The learning mentor and other adults have been very

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effective in helping pupils and their families overcome difficulties, so that pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are doing well.

While pupils sound grasp of basic skills means that their preparation for the next stage of their lives is satisfactory, their positive attitudes and well-developed team- working skills provide a good foundation for future improvement.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

How effective is the provision?

The quality of teaching is improving strongly. None is less than satisfactory, much is good and some is outstanding. The best teaching is characterised by good subject knowledge. Teachers use appropriate subject-specific vocabulary and correct and guide pupils choice of words. There is good pace of learning and resources are well organised and readily available. In consequence, pupils move quickly from one learning activity to another and little time is wasted. The teaching of letters and sounds (phonics) is good. There is good pace in all parts of lessons, there is a good sense of fun, and pupils are well supported and encouraged. Strategies to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are effective and as a result they make similar progress to others. Where teaching is satisfactory, the pace of learning is not brisk enough and the incorrect use of subject language by pupils is not corrected.

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Day-to-day marking and the informal assessment of pupils progress during lessons have improved significantly. Almost all marking is good and some is outstanding. The best marking tells pupils how well they are doing but also what they need to do to improve. These ongoing targets are then monitored and referred back to in future marking. More formal target setting against National Curriculum levels is consistent across all classes. Pupils spoken to know their targets and what they need to do to achieve them. Their progress is regularly monitored and recorded, and new targets set. Pupils progress meetings, where the achievement of individual pupils is monitored and discussed, are proving a powerful tool in raising attainment. These meetings are very well informed by the schools rigorous tracking of pupils progress. The one-to-one targeted support aimed at pupils whose progress may have slowed has proved very effective at revitalising their learning and boosting achievement.

The curriculum is well planned to meet pupils learning needs, and has been particularly effective in improving pupils literacy skills. The use of core skills, particularly writing, is increasingly planned for across the curriculum. Learning outside of the normal school day makes a good contribution to the curriculum. There are a number of clubs and other activities such as football, badminton, art and singing. Pupils say they greatly enjoy the wide range of visits to places such as the science museum, Stratford Theatre and The Sun Trap environmental centre to support their learning. High-quality displays in classrooms and shared areas are used well to celebrate achievement, exemplify high standards and provide extra guidance and motivation.

While care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall, there are some significant strengths in relation to support for pupils who may be vulnerable and the welcoming nature of the learning environment. It is satisfactory because there remain too many pupils who are persistent absentees.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The senior leaders, very effectively led by the partnership between the headteacher and deputy headteacher, have been instrumental in bringing about school improvement and raising standards. The key to improvement has been what the school describes as follow through; a rigorous focus on making sure that agreed actions have been carried out, and accurate monitoring of their impact. This view is endorsed by parents and carers, most of whom believe the school is well led and managed. Subject leadership has improved and is now good. Subject leaders and other middle managers have a good focus on raising standards, and carefully monitor the progress of pupils. They know where pupils are doing

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best and least well, and are beginning to hold colleagues to account. Target setting is rigorous and is based on accurate assessments of how well pupils are doing. Self-evaluation is equally accurate and robust, and results in a shared vision for improvement.

The governing body is very well informed about the day-to-day life of the school. It is active and supportive, and has developed an unrelenting focus on outcomes. It holds the school rigorously to account for how well it is doing, particularly in respect of pupils progress and attainment. It meets its statutory responsibilities well. Safeguarding arrangements are good. All requirements in respect of checks for adults who work with children are in place and the recording of this information is clear and concise. Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe in different situations, such as when online or when travelling in cars or on the underground. All staff training is up-to-date and new members of staff are acquainted with the schools safeguarding procedures as a matter of course. The school site is safe, clean and well cared for.

The school works well with parents and carers, and has turned a former weakness into a strength. The weekly Barn Croft Bulletin provides an overview of whats going on and is appreciated by parents and carers. Class assemblies, where pupils share their work, are well attended. Local parents and carers with young children value the weekly toy library session highly. Parents and carers say that staff are readily accessible, welcoming and friendly. Partnerships are strong. The school has worked effectively with representatives of the local authority and other schools to address weaknesses and improve provision. Recent work with the Metropolitan Police resulted in Year 6 pupils finding out more about how to stay safe, the role of the police and the nature of modern citizenship.

Targeted actions have resulted in all groups of pupils making broadly similar progress. The schools ethos promotes equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination well, but current provision for more-able pupils sometimes limits their progress and not all do as well as they could. The school is a very cohesive community where all are welcome and valued. Links with the local community are satisfactory and developing well. Pupils enjoy visits to local places of interest and talking to local people such as allotment holders. Pupils understanding of communities and places which are further away is less well developed.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good transition arrangements allow children to quickly feel safe and comfortable when they join the Nursery. During their time in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children build good relationships with each other and the adults they work with. Children play together and behave well. They enjoy the range of activities teachers plan for them, such as producing colourful palm-prints, learning about the properties of materials through playing with sand or water, and producing sounds from the percussion instruments attached to the fence. There are appropriate opportunities for children to learn and play together both indoors and out. Recent improvements in provision, such as the large equipment in the adventure trail, encourage children to keep healthy and develop their coordination.

From starting points which are often well below what one would expect for their age, most children make steady progress in the areas of learning, although by the beginning of Year 1, outcomes for many remain below average. Planning is a strength, with good opportunities to develop children's speaking and listening skills. However, opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills, both indoors and out, are limited. Adults support children's learning well and track their progress carefully, although there are insufficient opportunities for children to work independently and assume responsibility for their learning. Children who speak English as an additional language often make good progress because their individual needs are recognised and they receive good support.

The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage is rightly focused on ensuring children are better prepared to begin Year 1 and the direct teaching of communication skills, such as early reading and phonics, is good. Policies and practice to promote equality and eliminate discrimination are consistently applied, and reflect the inclusive ethos of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for monitoring inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

The schools analysis of its own questionnaire indicates that most parents and carers believe their child is making good progress and that teaching is good. Inspectors judge that, while teaching is improving and much is now good or better, it is satisfactory overall, which results in broadly average progress for pupils. Parents and carers believe that their children are kept safe at school and inspectors reached a similar conclusion, judging that safeguarding procedures are good. Most parents and carers say that behaviour is good and inspectors also judge that behaviour is good. This is because expectations are clear and consistent, and pupils enjoy their lessons. Parents and carers spoken to on the playground say that Barn Croft is an improving school. Inspectors agree with this view.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



1 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barn Croft Primary School, Walthamstow E17 8SB

Thank you for making my colleague and me so welcome when we inspected your school. And thank you for making me feel so welcome on my visits over the last 18 months or so. I have spoken to many of you during my visits and the things you said helped me to get to know your school better. Particular thanks to the school council who have given up part of their lunchtimes to tell me how things are going.

Those responsible for leading and managing the school are doing a good job of helping it improve. The areas of weakness from the last inspection have been remedied. Teaching is now satisfactory, many lessons are good and some are outstanding. Standards are rising so that they are now close to those we expect, and you are making more progress. You told me you are proud of the way your school has improved. You have positive attitudes to learning and I can see that you enjoy your lessons. As one said, We work hard but its enjoyable. You told me that behaviour has improved and that bullying is rare, and this certainly reflects what I have seen.

This was the fourth time I have visited your school and I can see that Barn Croft Primary School has improved a lot. However, both the school and I believe you can all do even better. Here are some of the ways I am asking the school to improve.

Ensure that standards continue to rise.

Improve attendance by encouraging the small number of pupils who have a lot of time off to attend more frequently.

All of you can help the school continue to improve by always working hard and missing as little school time as possible.

Because yours is now a satisfactory and improving school, I will not make another monitoring inspection. I wish you all every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Robert Lovett

Her Majestys Inspector

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