

Barkisland CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107552
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	363725
Inspection dates	5–6 April 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Bardon

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	169
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Jonnie Craven
Headteacher	Mrs Susan Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	2 April 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, observed 8 teachers, held meetings with staff, members of the governing body and pupils and talked informally with parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including policies, the improvement plans, pupils' work and the school's records of pupils' progress and attainment. The inspectors also analysed the 74 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- How pupils' attainment in writing compares with that in reading and mathematics.
- How consistent teaching is across the school.
- Pupils' understanding and appreciation of cultures that are different from their own.
- The provision the school makes for pupils who have particular gifts or talents.
- How successfully leaders and managers have tackled the areas for improvement from the last inspection.

Information about the school

Barkisland is smaller than the average-sized primary school. An overwhelming majority of pupils are White British and all pupils speak English competently. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and the proportion with a statement for their special educational needs is average. The school has Healthy School status and has achieved the Active Mark and Basic Skills Quality Mark awards. Two new teachers have joined the school this academic year. A school managed before- and after-school club is available to pupils.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is a highly-effective school which provides its pupils with an outstanding quality of education. At the heart of the school's very positive ethos and stemming from the dynamic leadership and management of the headteacher and deputy headteacher lies a very strong 'can do' spirit. Pupils are inspired to learn and approach every new challenge with the same high level of enthusiasm and confidence. As a result their achievement is outstanding and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is high. Parents recognise the value of the school's work and are appreciative of the very positive manner in which staff engage with them.

High quality teaching, particularly in Reception and at the end of Key Stage 2, promotes a fast pace of learning and progress. On occasions, innovative lessons with challenging targets for all abilities are delivered with considerable expertise and flair and pupils make exceptional gains in their knowledge and understanding. Although pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is currently good, there have been times since the last inspection when it has slowed to satisfactory and then picked up again. These fluctuations are the result of variations in the quality of teaching and inconsistent building on the excellent start children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Pupils' personal development is exceptionally good in all respects and they mature into extremely sensible, considerate and responsible individuals with a full appreciation of the high quality care and support the school provides. The school's procedures for safeguarding are good and, with very few exceptions, parents and carers have full confidence in the school to keep their children safe. The governing body reviews policies and checks practices regularly. It is less rigorous in its monitoring of the site and areas in which improvements can be made are not always recognised quickly and clearly.

Since the last inspection, senior staff and governors have built upon the school's strengths very successfully. The areas for improvement identified in the last report have been tackled comprehensively. Pupils' attainment has been significantly above average throughout the period and continues to rise. Despite these successes there is no complacency. All aspects of the school's work are checked frequently and evaluated extremely thoroughly. Plans for improvement are sharply-focused and ambitious targets are set. Progress towards these targets is monitored closely by senior staff and governors and the information shared so that everyone is aware of the gains being made and where further efforts need to be applied. These factors combine to give the school outstanding capacity for improvement in the future.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Eliminate variations in pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 by:

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- ensuring that the quality of teaching is of a consistently high standard, similar to that in the rest of the school
- taking full account of the skills and abilities children gain in the Early Years Foundation Stage and building securely on the excellent start they have made.
- Increase the rigour of site-monitoring procedures so that areas in which improvements can be made are identified quickly and clearly.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils are highly enthusiastic learners who derive considerable enjoyment from all the school offers them. They participate fully in lessons, putting forward ideas sensibly and confidently and applying themselves conscientiously until all tasks have been completed to a high standard. Pupils of all ages pay very close attention to the teachers and take a great deal of pride in their work. They explain ways of working clearly and precisely, enjoy being challenged and think through solutions to problems with application and skill. Behaviour is exemplary and pupils work extremely well together in pairs or small groups, discussing what they are doing sensibly and sharing responsibilities amicably and productively.

Throughout the period since the last inspection attainment at the end of Year 6 has been well above average. Current assessment data and the quality of work pupils are producing in lessons shows that this high level of attainment is continuing. From a starting point on entry to school that is broadly as expected for their age, pupils are achieving extremely well. They explain themselves clearly and precisely when speaking to others and read with a high level of accuracy and understanding. Stories are written with imagination and flair and reports contain clear and detailed information. Many pupils solve mathematical problems confidently, using well developed skills to arrive at accurate and carefully reasoned answers. The needs of high ability pupils, including those with particularly gifts or talents, are met very well and they attain high standards in line with their capabilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive excellent support and make rapid progress similar to that of other pupils.

Pupils feel completely safe and secure in school and have an excellent understanding of what they need to guard against in their everyday lives. They understand fully why it is important to lead a healthy lifestyle, make sensible choices about what to eat at lunchtimes and readily engage in physical activities. Pupils of all ages get on extremely well together and need no prompting to help others when the need arises. They show a strong sense of responsibility, with members of the school council making very careful decisions so that everyone benefits. Pupils' mature and positive attitudes to school are reflected in high levels of attendance. Excellent basic skills, including competence in the use of modern technology plus the development of extensive inter-personal skills place pupils in a very strong position to succeed in the future. Pupils value their own culture and develop a strong appreciation of traditions and cultures that are different from their own. They are thoughtful and reflective, giving very careful consideration to positive human characteristics, such as those that make you a good friend.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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 at least good and often outstanding. Teachers make excellent use of assessments to identify and tackle areas that pupils are finding difficult and to plan lessons which build successfully on what they have learnt previously. The most-able, including those who are gifted or talented, are challenged well and the least-able given the support they need to maintain an excellent rate of progress. Most lessons have a fast and productive pace but very occasionally pupils' learning slows because teachers have talked for too long or have not provided them with enough information. In the most effective lessons teachers question pupils skilfully and challenge them to make decisions, apply what they already know and can do and think of their own solutions to problems. This promotes pupils' independence as learners extremely well. Teaching assistants provide very effective support for pupils and use their expertise, for example in information and communication technology (ICT), to considerable effect. Pupils' work is marked comprehensively and they are given a clear understanding of what they have done well and where improvements could be made.

The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of stimulating opportunities to learn and meets their needs extremely well. The school has adopted a themed approach to the curriculum in which different subjects are combined and taught holistically. Links between subjects are extremely well considered giving pupils' learning meaning and cohesion and adding much to their enjoyment of lessons. The curriculum provides excellent

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opportunities for pupils to develop high quality literacy and numeracy skills both in discrete lessons and when working in other subjects. Information and communication technology features prominently in lessons with teachers and pupils using it extremely well as an aid to teaching and learning. Regular visitors to school and visits to places of educational interest extend pupils' knowledge and understanding and broaden their horizons considerably. The school provides a diverse range of extra-curricular opportunities which are very well attended and much enjoyed.

An ethos of care is at the heart of the school and it is a warm and welcoming place to be. Pupils are confident that help is always at hand should they need it and those who completed the inspection questionnaire or spoke to inspectors were in complete agreement that adults in school care about them. The very high quality of pastoral support for all pupils is reflected in their excellent personal development. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable receive careful attention and the school utilises its well established links with different agencies to provide any additional help they may need. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is organised and managed extremely well. Those who need additional support are quickly identified and a range of strategies put in place, which enables them to make excellent progress. Systems for promoting pupils' attendance work very well and levels of attendance are consistently well above average. The well managed before- and after-school club provides pupils with a very positive start and end to the school day.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, with the conscientious support of the deputy headteacher, leads and manages the school with purpose and vision. Management responsibilities are distributed equitably amongst the staff and all play a full and active part in the school's development. A very strong team spirit prevails with all staff and governors working in unity to provide the best possible education for the pupils. Governors utilise their wide range of experience and expertise very effectively to support the school's work and challenge it to continue to improve. Strategies for safeguarding pupils' welfare are good. Policies are very well written and staff have a very thorough understanding of the procedures to be followed. Governors ensure current requirements are met but procedures for checking the security of the site are not as well organised as they could be. Systematic checks are made on the quality of teaching pupils are receiving, with regular staff training closely allied to the school's priorities for improvement. The school makes every effort to involve parents and carers in the life of the school and their children's learning and links between school and home are extremely productive. Extensive links with other schools and different organisations

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enhance pupils' learning and enable staff to share and develop their expertise. The school's contribution to community cohesion is good overall but considerably stronger at school and local levels than further afield. Equality of opportunity is promoted extremely well. Detailed and thorough checks are made on each pupil's progress to ensure they are achieving to the best of their abilities. The school is a highly inclusive community and close monitoring ensures no pupils are discriminated against.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities that are typical for their age. They thrive in the exciting and stimulating environment staff provide and make outstanding progress. By the end of Reception children are working securely within or beyond the expectations for their age and move into Year 1 exceptionally well prepared for the national curriculum. Teaching is of an extremely high standard. Staff have an excellent understanding of the needs of young learners and pay very close attention to children's care and welfare. As a result an extremely happy and purposeful atmosphere prevails. Children behave in an exemplary way towards each other and the staff and thoroughly enjoy being at school. All areas, both indoors and out are alive with pupils engaged in purposeful play, sharing their experiences with their friends and holding meaningful and lively discussions with staff. A group of children who were building a boat from wooden blocks joined their thoughts together to tell a colourful story about the pirates who occupied it. Teacher-led activities are equally stimulating, helping pupils to develop language and number skills in very meaningful and enjoyable ways. The Early Years Foundation Stage is led and managed extremely well. Areas for development are identified sharply and pursued rigorously. Children's progress is assessed continuously and the information used incisively to plan their future learning. Comprehensive 'Learning

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Journey' records are kept, providing very clear illustrations of the gains children are making.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

With very few exceptions parents and carers who returned the questionnaire and those who spoke to inspectors hold highly positive views of the school and are very happy with the quality of education their children receive. Typically they have commented on the school's 'caring and nurturing environment' and on the approachability and friendliness of staff, and described it as being at the 'heart of the village community'. A very small minority of parents and carers raised individual issues but these were not echoed by other parents and carers or evident during the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barkisland CofE VA Primary 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 74 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 169 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	54	73	18	24	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	56	76	16	22	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	47	64	25	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	47	64	25	34	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	54	73	18	24	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	42	57	29	39	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	49	66	23	31	0	0	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)	45	61	26	35	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	72	20	27	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	59	28	38	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	50	34	46	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	57	77	14	19	2	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	55	74	18	24	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	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.



7 April 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barkisland CofE VA Primary School, Halifax, HX4 0BD

Thank you very much for the very friendly greeting you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. Lots of you smiled and made us feel comfortable and welcome. We thoroughly enjoyed finding out about the work you do, and special thanks go to those who talked with us about the school.

Yours is an outstanding school and we understand fully why you enjoy it so much. There is a lovely atmosphere and we were very impressed by how hard you work in lessons. This shows an excellent attitude to learning and does you a great deal of credit. Your behaviour is excellent and you can be very proud of the way you grow into sensible, caring and responsible young people. Staff take extremely good care of you and I know they will be pleased that you feel able to go to them for help.

The progress you make is outstanding because you are taught extremely well and approach everything you are given to do with the same high level of enthusiasm, confidence and skill. We thoroughly enjoyed looking at your work because the things you had written were carefully put together and extremely interesting to read. Some of the calculations we saw you making in numeracy lessons were exceptionally good for your age. All of this puts you in a very strong position to do well in the future.

We discussed some things with your teachers which we felt would help the school become even better. While the progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 is good it varies over time and needs to be as even and as high as in the rest of the school. Governors make regular checks around the school to make sure everything is as it should be, but these need to be even better so that any problems that are arising can be quickly and clearly identified. Thank you once again for a very enjoyable two days and best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Keith Bardon

Lead inspector

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