

Barncroft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	136078
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	385883
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2012
Lead inspector	John Laver

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	344
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jacky Stevens
Headteacher	Elizabeth Blake
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Introduction

Inspection team

John Laver

Additional inspector

Marianne Phillips

Additional inspector

Linda Rowley

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors spent almost 11 hours observing teaching, visiting 24 lessons, and also observing some intervention sessions for small groups of pupils extracted from their usual lessons. In all, 15 teachers were observed. In addition, discussions were held with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body, the senior leadership team and other staff members. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at information about pupils' performance and progress, the school improvement plan, school policies and planning documents, and local authority reports. In addition, questionnaires from 49 parents and carers, 92 pupils and 22 staff were analysed.

Information about the school

The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is well above average, accounting for about half the number of pupils in some classes. The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes. This is a new school, which has been in existence for one year, having been formed out of two other local schools, and having moved into new premises only one month ago. The school operates a breakfast club.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	3
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school. The school is very successful in promoting pupils' welfare and is a very nurturing community. A typical parental response was, 'The school has been through thick and thin to help my child.' The school is not better than satisfactory because there are weaknesses in pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in writing.
- Children make a good start to their schooling in Reception, where they are taught well and make good progress. Progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, including for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, is satisfactory. In writing, some boys in particular still underachieve. Attainment by the end of Year 6 is below average, although improving.
- Teaching is typically satisfactory. Inspectors observed some lessons in which teachers demonstrated effective questioning skills and encouraged good learning by setting active tasks for pupils. However, the impact of teaching on learning and progress is uneven. There are a few occasions when teachers do not always provide enough challenge for more-able pupils, do not always deploy support staff effectively in lessons, do not always manage behaviour effectively, or do not always give pupils enough information on how to improve their work. On these occasions, learning is more restricted.
- Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although occasionally challenging. Pupils feel safe in school, and attendance has improved, so it is now above average. The school is very inclusive, providing intensive support for the many pupils who have learning difficulties or come from circumstances which make them vulnerable.
- The senior leadership team monitors and manages teaching systematically and is developing the role of leaders and managers lower down the school. There are good links with external agencies and with most parents and carers. Measures to address weaker areas of performance, such as in writing, are not yet embedded enough to rectify all inconsistencies.
- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress, especially in writing, so that a higher proportion of pupils leave school in July 2013 with at least average standards, by raising expectations, particularly of what more able pupils can achieve.
- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it always closely meets the needs of all pupils, by:
 - ensuring that pupils always get the appropriate match of work to enable them to do the best of which they are capable
 - managing behaviour more consistently so that all pupils are motivated to learn effectively
 - making better use of assessment in the classroom, including marking of work and the use of pupils' targets, so pupils know more precisely how they can improve their work
 - making sure that all support staff are always fully engaged in helping pupils to learn effectively in the classroom.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children join Reception with considerably lower skills and abilities than expected for their age. They quickly develop a range of personal and social skills. Children enthusiastically practise their emerging skills in reading, writing and numeracy. Levels of skill and knowledge are still below average at the end of Reception, particularly for boys, but children make rapid progress from their original starting points. Higher up the school, pupils learn well when there is good teaching. This was very evident in an English lesson about how to write a haiku poem. The teacher's brisk approach, imaginative use of resources and skilful questioning noticeably enthused all pupils, stimulated their imaginations and developed their language skills well. However, progress overall throughout Years 1 to 6 is uneven, particularly in developing language for communication and thinking, and in writing skills. Attainment in reading is broadly average by the end of Year 2. It is below average in Year 6, where many pupils have learning difficulties. Attainment is higher in mathematics, and progress in mathematics is good. Many pupils show confidence in applying number skills to solving problems. Pupils with disabilities and those who have special educational needs are very well supported in intervention sessions, where they make good progress. The quality of support they receive in classes is more variable, leading to overall satisfactory progress for these pupils, similar to that of their peers. There is evidence of improved progress since the previous year's test results: the gap in achievement between those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils is narrowing. However, boys still make slower progress than girls in writing. The school's strategies to address this, for example by encouraging boys to write more about subjects which interest them, are beginning to

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show positive results, but not yet consistently. The school has increased the involvement of parents and carers in pupils' learning, for example through curriculum workshops. Most parents and carers think that their children make good progress. Not all pupils themselves are convinced of this, and the inspection, supported by the school's own evidence, showed that overall progress and achievement are satisfactory rather than good. This results particularly from inconsistencies in teaching and the level of challenge for more-able pupils, who are not always given the opportunity to achieve as well as they could.

Quality of teaching

Teaching is typically good in Reception, where staff make effective use of the new facilities to develop children's natural curiosity. Children were observed happily engaged in activities such as playing with sand, making paper planes, singing *Jelly on the plate*, complete with actions, and 'swimming' around the room in order to imagine life under the sea. Occasionally, staff miss opportunities to build on children's prior learning, but they successfully help incoming children to settle quickly into established routines.

Teachers provide positive opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness. This was seen, for example, in older pupils' thoughtful poetry about the meaning of Easter. Inspectors observed some good teaching of sounds and letters (phonics), for example in a lesson for younger pupils who were keen to talk in groups about the letter combinations they were learning. Teachers plan the curriculum conscientiously, both for core subjects like English and the topics, which link and promote a range of relevant skills and knowledge. However, the resulting tasks are not always matched closely enough to pupils' abilities. More-able pupils were occasionally observed doing repetitive tasks, for example in mathematics, which did not move their learning on quickly enough and left them with little to do when they had finished. Teachers sometimes mark pupils' work well, with informative comments, but there are too many examples of generalised comments which give insufficient guidance on how to improve the work. Some pupils commented on this. Pupils' targets are sometimes too general to be really helpful to their learning. Several pupils, staff, parents and carers acknowledged that in a few lessons, behaviour is not always managed effectively by teachers. Support staff sometimes provide valuable help for individuals or groups of pupils in lessons, but at other times they are not proactive enough in assisting teachers. Although most parents and carers believe that their children are well taught, and inspectors did observe some good teaching, this was not typically the case during the inspection and has not been so over time.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The majority of pupils, parents and carers believe that behaviour is good, but several others expressed concerns, as did some staff, about behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors judged that behaviour is satisfactory: it is often better, but occasionally there is challenging behaviour in lessons, not always managed

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effectively, and this adversely affects learning in a few instances. The detailed behaviour policy is not applied consistently by all staff, although there is evidence that behaviour has improved. The school works hard in assemblies and in lessons to teach pupils to manage their own behaviour, and this is reinforced through the school's work with families. Pupils understand the different types of bullying, for example talking to inspectors about their awareness of issues like cyber-bullying. They are confident that the school deals effectively with misbehaviour or bullying, and school records support this. Most pupils enjoy coming to school, and this is reflected in above average attendance. The work of staff and the home-school link worker have been pivotal in supporting individuals, getting them to school and assisting those parents and carers who traditionally have found it difficult to engage with the school. The breakfast club is well attended and gives pupils an enjoyable and healthy start to the school day. Pupils enjoy the good range of sports and other enrichment activities. The school is a haven for the many pupils whose circumstances could make them vulnerable, and staff have created a safe and caring environment for all pupils.

Leadership and management

The headteacher has an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is reflected in strategic planning which focuses on appropriate priorities for improvement. The leadership has carried out the challenging task of moulding one school out of two very diverse previous schools in such a short time, with the added complication of moving to a new site a month before the inspection. Not all staff are totally convinced about all the changes, but they recognise the need to keep the school on its path of improvement. The leadership's monitoring of teaching is more systematic and rigorous than when the school first opened, although the role of subject leaders is still developing. An effective system is now in place for assessing and tracking pupils' progress and providing appropriate support for pupils. The governing body is active and has a grasp of how to move the school forward. There is good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The curriculum increasingly meets the interests of most pupils, particularly through the introduction of topics such as *Window on the world*. Some more-able pupils get opportunities to extend their learning, for example in mathematics, by regular visits to a local secondary school and involvement in the children's university. However, the curriculum does not fully meet the learning needs of more-able pupils, due to the inconsistencies of pace and challenge in lessons. Pupils enjoy opportunities such as swimming, learning to play the ukulele and trips to sites like Fishbourne Roman villa. These are part of the leadership's provision for promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, reinforced also in assemblies. The school recognises the desirability of establishing links outside the local area in order to give pupils more awareness of other faiths and cultures. The leadership maintains strong links with extended services. These, along with developing links with families, contribute to excellent welfare provision, although the links have had a more limited impact on improving pupils' learning. Discrimination is not tolerated, and pupils realise that they are all valued. Child protection and safeguarding arrangements meet statutory

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requirements. Most parents and carers believe that the school is well led. The inspection judges that leadership and management are currently satisfactory, because some of the new systems are not yet fully embedded. Strategies to improve performance in key areas such as writing, for example by engaging boys in writing projects which interest them, are not yet ensuring good achievement. However, the work already done to create an inclusive, vibrant school, providing very good care and also beginning some improvements in academic performance, shows that the school does have the capacity for further improvement.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

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

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

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

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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



24 March 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barncroft Primary School, Havant PO9 3AG

Thank you for welcoming us into your new school when we visited you recently. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing you in lessons and around the school. You go to a satisfactory school. These are some of the things we found.

- Your school looks after you all very well. We agree with you that it is a safe place. Your attendance at school is above average and you told us about the lessons and the activities such as clubs and visits that you enjoy.
- You make satisfactory progress, but some of you should do better in your writing. Teaching is satisfactory but sometimes the adults in the classroom could give you more help, and teachers do not always make sure that you get the level of work best suited to your needs. Teachers do not always give you enough information about how to improve your work.
- Behaviour is satisfactory. Most of you want to learn, but some of you do not always behave as well as you should, and this does not help your learning.
- The leadership and all staff work hard to improve the school.

This is what we have asked the school to do.

- Make sure that you always get the right work to help you do better in writing.
- Help teachers to improve your work by making sure it is always what you need, especially for those who find learning easier, to achieve your best, and making sure that you always behave well in lessons, get more information on how to improve your work, and get all the adults, not just the teachers, to help you learn well in lessons.

All of you can help achieve all this by working hard and always concentrating in class.

Yours sincerely

John Laver
Lead inspector

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