

Barnham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124688
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	359745
Inspection dates	7–8 July 2011
Reporting inspector	Nick Butt

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	93
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Heathershaw
Headteacher	Simon Rance
Date of previous school inspection	28 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspection team observed 12 lessons or part-lessons taught by four teachers, a higher-level teaching assistant and a sports coach. Inspectors held meetings informally with parents and carers on the playground, and with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a selection of documentation, including planning, evidence of monitoring records, the school's lesson observations, and analyses of pupils' work and other assessment information. The inspection team scrutinised inspection questionnaires returned by 51 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 successful has the school been in improving progress in mathematics?
- What impact has the new marking policy had on pupils' understanding of what they have to do to improve?
- To what extent has the school improved under its new headteacher?

Information about the school

Barnham is smaller than most primary schools. The headteacher joined the school in a temporary capacity in September 2010 and his appointment was made permanent in April 2011. Through parental choice, the school draws two thirds of its pupils from the town of Thetford, across the Norfolk border. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small number from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school has gained national Healthy Schools status and the Activemark award.

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

3

Main findings

Barnham is a satisfactory school. Following a period of uncertainty, during which it had several acting headteachers, the new permanent headteacher has brought stability and given momentum to school improvement. Staff, parents and carers and the governing body have welcomed the changes he has introduced, and point to improvements in teaching, pupils' progress and a renewed sense of direction. One parent, speaking for many, said, 'My child is very happy at this school; there is a lovely, caring 'family' atmosphere and great enthusiasm for learning.'

Attainment varies in the small year groups, but there is an upward trend over time, and it is broadly average by the time pupils leave. Children in the Reception class make good progress because of effective provision that makes them excited about learning. Elsewhere in the school, pupils' achievement is satisfactory, but an increasing number of pupils are doing well. This is particularly the case in reading and writing, where a focus on learning the sounds that letters make has given pupils in Key Stage 1 greater confidence in forming words. However, across the school, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects. Pupils' progress in mathematics is a little behind that in English. This is because the school has only recently started to focus on developing their mental strategies for using and applying mathematics and solving problems. Teachers have benefited from training to increase their subject knowledge, but it is too early to see the full effects of this in accelerated progress for pupils.

Good relationships between adults and pupils create a purposeful climate for learning, and pupils are enthusiastic about taking an active role in lessons. At times, work does not fully match pupils' needs and abilities, which slows the pace of progress. Assessment has improved, with the introduction of a new and accessible tracking system, so that teachers know how pupils are doing, and can intervene if they are at risk of falling behind. The new marking policy has brought some consistency to informing pupils about what they do well and how they could improve. However, there is still a degree of unevenness within and between classes, such as in the marking of topic work.

Pupils say they feel safe at school, a view strongly supported by parents and carers. They have a good understanding of healthy choices, take plenty of exercise and grow and sell their own vegetables from their African 'keyhole garden'. Their behaviour is good around the school and in lessons, and their enjoyment is reflected in above-average attendance. Through assemblies and the curriculum, pupils develop good spiritual awareness, and their moral and social development is particularly strong. While pupils have good opportunities to learn about different cultures through the curriculum, they have less direct experience of people from faiths and backgrounds different from their own. In promoting community cohesion, the school has undertaken an audit of its activities, but is at an early stage of implementing the actions arising from it.

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Regular monitoring and a rigorous approach to school improvement give leaders and managers an accurate view of strengths and areas to develop. The headteacher has done much in a relatively short time to convey his vision to the school community and to win their support and respect. It is too soon to see the full impact of the changes he has introduced this year, but these positive features underpin a satisfactory capacity for further improvement.

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 attainment and improve progress in mathematics by:
 - fully implementing the new strategies for improving pupils' mental mathematics
 - supporting teachers in applying their increased subject knowledge to help accelerate pupils' progress
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to participate in solving problems.
- Improve teaching so that all of it is at least good by:
 - planning work that precisely matches pupils' needs and abilities
 - raising expectations of pupils' writing in all curriculum subjects, so that they have more opportunities to write at length
 - ensuring the new marking policy is applied consistently in all subjects so that all pupils know how to improve.
- Develop the school's promotion of curriculum cohesion further by:
 - implementing the actions arising out of its audit
 - building on the work to establish links that give pupils direct experience of other cultures and backgrounds to their own.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

There are no significant variations in the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals. Progress was generally satisfactory in the lessons observed and in the work seen in books. Increasingly, when the teaching is focused and planning well matched to pupils' abilities, pupils make good progress. This was observed in a Year 1 lesson, as pupils deducted single and two-digit numbers from multiples of ten. The more-able could take numbers away from 30, and enjoyed using a number square to assist them. Too often, however, pupils are given work that is not pitched at exactly the right level, which does not sufficiently challenge the more-able, or support the less-able. An example of this was observed when pupils were attempting to measure angles using a protractor. For some the task was too difficult, and others found their work relatively easy as they were not asked to find more complex angles.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. Better procedures introduced by the headteacher this year mean they are identified more quickly, and their progress is monitored closely. They do well when given specific interventions,

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but their progress slows sometimes in mainstream classes if the work is not pitched to their ability levels. Teaching assistants provide valuable support and are deployed effectively.

Pupils get on well together and do not consider bullying a concern. One pupil said, 'We have loads of friends and no-one's lonely.' Pupils say they would turn to an adult if they had a worry. While there are some opportunities for pupils to contribute to the school community, for example as house team councillors or play leaders, there are a limited number of leadership roles they can take on. They visit the church for special assemblies and occasions, such as to witness a Christening ceremony, but, for the most part, the community comes to them for open days, grandparent lunches or the school fete. They develop team-building skills on a short residential visit.

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	2
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?

Teaching engages and interests pupils, and staff involve them well in lessons. They enjoy anything practical, such as creating paintings in the style of the artist Andy Warhol. In the past, not all teachers were confident in teaching mathematics and too much reliance was placed on a commercial scheme. The new headteacher has provided training for staff and introduced calculation guidance, as well as strategies to teach mental mathematics correctly. This is having the effect of raising expectations of what pupils can do and achieve, although it is too soon to see most pupils' progress move from satisfactory to

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good. Marking has improved, and there is more consistency, especially in how pupils are praised and guided in English and mathematics books. However, marking of other subjects varies, with insufficient points for development regarding topic work.

The curriculum has undergone a major overhaul this year, with greater enrichment provided for pupils in terms of more clubs being offered, and more trips to places of interest, such as Framlingham Castle and the Science Museum. This has increased their enjoyment of the curriculum and contributed well to their personal development. Imaginative sessions in French language and culture and good quality sports coaching further enrich their experiences. Pupils have been encouraged to undertake more independent research, producing interesting projects on the history of household goods. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length across a range of different subjects.

There is good pastoral care for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Pupils are known as individuals and given targeted support in small group sessions where needed, although at times, the work planned in mainstream classes is too difficult for some pupils. Satisfactory transition arrangements prepare pupils for transfer to middle school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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 headteacher has made a considerable impact since his arrival, and given the school clear leadership and a shared vision focused on rapid improvement. Much has already been achieved, especially in terms of winning the support of parents and carers and giving clear leadership to staff. Subject leaders have focused on developing their roles this year and are taking more responsibility for monitoring pupils' progress and attainment. The governing body's effectiveness is satisfactory, and its members support the school well, visiting regularly to monitor its work. The governing body is focusing more on key areas for improvement, and using helpful evaluative questions in the school development plan to hold leaders to account. While its members are starting to think ahead, their strategic role is less developed.

The relationship with parents and carers is particularly strong. When meeting inspectors and in the questionnaires, parents and carers spoke highly of changes the new headteacher has introduced. A typical comment was, 'The leadership has made a significant positive difference.' Parents and carers also feel well informed, through the distribution of helpful documents giving guidance about how to support their children at home in reading and mathematics. The school promotes equality of opportunity

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satisfactorily. It ensures that all pupils, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable, are included in all activities, but some inconsistencies in the provision lead to variations in pupils' progress, especially in mathematics.

The school's safeguarding arrangements are effective. Exceptionally good action plans support health-and-safety audits, and risk assessments are of a high quality. Staff are well trained and careful records are kept of measures to support pupils. The promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. The school has carried out a comprehensive audit of its activities, the resulting action plan is being implemented, and the school is reaching out to its local community. Links with pupils from different cultures and backgrounds in the United Kingdom and abroad are at an early stage of development.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	3
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

Children's attainment on entry to the Reception class varies from year to year, but is usually below what is expected for their age in language and communication, and in personal and social development. Children make good progress because the teaching is exciting and the learning environment is exceptionally rich. Children loved watching chicks hatch from eggs, and have kept the hens so that they can collect their eggs. They have enjoyed 'visiting' a different country each week as part of a travel topic, including cooking and sampling the local fare, such as tortilla and fajitas in Mexico and onion bhajis and samosas in India. Their Indian sojourn has also given them the opportunity to build a model of the Taj Mahal out of sugar lumps.

Children's learning is enhanced by planning that takes account of their interests and aspirations, such as making shields and flags as 'knights' and turning their classroom into a castle under siege. A highlight was throwing 'diseased cows' at the defenders. Adults use questioning well to help move children on in their learning. While children have plenty

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of opportunities to choose activities for themselves, and resources are freely available to them both inside the classroom and outdoors, there is sometimes too much adult-led activity. Staff assess children's progress thoroughly and record their achievements in attractive 'learning journeys'. They have high expectations of what children can do and achieve, for example writing in whole sentences. The leader of the Early Years Foundation Stage has built a strong team around her, who work effectively together, and with parents and carers, in supporting children's learning.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

A large proportion of parents and carers returned questionnaires. They are very happy about almost all aspects of the school's work, and are particularly impressed with the stability brought to the school by the new headteacher and his accessibility to them. A few parents and carers expressed individual concerns about mixed-age classes and how rewards are allocated to pupils. Inspectors investigated these concerns and concluded that teachers generally organise mixed-age classes well, although sometimes the work is not pitched at exactly the right level for all pupils. Records are kept of the rewards allocated to ensure there is a fair spread across classes.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barnham Church of England Voluntary Controlled 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 51 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 93 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	43	84	7	14	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	47	92	4	8	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	22	43	27	53	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	24	47	26	51	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	65	18	35	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	27	53	23	45	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	34	67	14	27	3	6	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)	28	55	19	37	2	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	61	20	39	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	61	18	35	1	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	45	26	51	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	80	10	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	75	13	25	0	0	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 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 2010/11 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.



11 July 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Thetford, IP24 2NG

We enjoyed visiting your school, and thank you for sharing your views with us and for making us so welcome. You told us that you feel safe at school and take plenty of exercise. We found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education, but that it has improved this year especially. Here are some of the strengths we found.

You behave well and take care of one another.

You have a good understanding of how to keep healthy.

Your attendance is good.

You enjoy taking part in assemblies and make good use of opportunities to think quietly.

You have more clubs and visits to enjoy this year.

The youngest children make a good start at school.

We have asked your teachers to help you to do even better in mathematics by giving you plenty of opportunities to use your mental skills and solve problems. We have asked them to make sure that the work you are given challenges you, but is not too difficult. We have asked your teachers to show you how you can improve your topic work especially, and to encourage you to write at length. We have also asked them to give you more opportunities to meet children from backgrounds that are different from your own.

Thank you once again for helping us. You can all help by telling your teachers what you enjoy learning, and letting them know if you are finding the work too hard. Our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Nick Butt

Lead inspector

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