

Barrow Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124690
Local Authority	Suffolk
Inspection number	380959
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Blackmore

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	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Viv Hughes
Headteacher	Alison Earl
Date of previous school inspection	22 February 2007
School address	Colethorpe Lane Bury St Edmunds IP29 5AU
Telephone number	01284 810223
Fax number	01284 811977
Email address	admin@barrow.suffolk.sch.uk

Age group	4–9
Inspection date(s)	19–20 October 2011
Inspection number	380959

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2011



Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors observed nine lessons taught by five teachers. Meetings were held with members of the leadership team, curriculum leaders, members of the governing body and the school's eco-council. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at the school's action plan, documents and policies detailing how pupils are kept safe, the school's tracking data to see how well pupils are doing and analyses of pupils' attainment. Inspectors scrutinised 54 completed questionnaires from parents and carers together with 12 from staff and 40 from pupils.

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

- How fast is the progress made by boys in literacy?
- What are the reasons for any variation in pupils' progress and attainment across different year groups, especially in mathematics?
- What impact have the actions taken by school leaders, including the governing body, had on improving provision and raising standards?

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. The numbers in each cohort vary significantly from year-to-year and are sometimes low. Almost all pupils are White British and no pupils speak English as an additional language. There are lower than average proportions of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has achieved national Healthy School status and the Eco-Schools 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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school. The key factor in the school's success is the continuous drive to move the school forward by senior staff and members of the governing body who set very high expectations. This, in turn, is shared by staff who are united in ensuring that all children get off to an excellent start in their learning and do as well as they can throughout the school within an exciting and inclusive learning environment. Pupils achieve exceptionally well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, because of excellent teaching and a very well-planned curriculum. Each year pupils enter the school with varying skills and abilities that are generally in line with those expected for their age. By the end of Year 4, attainment is well above national expectations. Until recently, girls reached higher levels of attainment than boys in reading and writing. A range of strategies have been implemented, including the frequent and effective use of texts that interest boys, and has successfully redressed this difference so that the gap has significantly narrowed. Boys are now attaining only marginally below girls in literacy skills. Reading and writing are a particular strength because teachers are very good at teaching basic literacy skills and encouraging pupils to read and talk at every opportunity. However, pupils do not always have sufficient opportunities to write at length. The quality of pupils' mathematics has improved significantly and attainment is as high as in other subjects. This is because teachers provide numerous opportunities to solve problems and explore a range of strategies to investigate number.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. They think deeply about people in the world suffering hardship and reflect on important issues with great maturity. For example, when asked to consider what should be included in an assembly prayer pupils responded with thoughtful suggestions of 'friends, family and our world'. They have a very strong sense of right and wrong and develop their social skills particularly well. They play an outstanding role in helping others in school and the local community. For example, they sang in the local shop and for senior citizens at a nearby residence. Pupils say they feel very safe and like coming to school because everyone is caring and friendly, and are confident that adults will help them if they have any concerns. This was echoed by a parent who said, 'my daughter always enjoys coming to school'.

Teaching is outstanding and pupils are highly motivated and engaged. Assessment and routines are extremely thorough and ensure pupils know exactly what is expected of them. Lessons are often practical. Challenging activities are very well

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

planned and pupils have excellent opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other, deepening their understanding across all subjects.

The headteacher leads the school very well with high expectations of all members of the school community. Her commitment to developing pupils' personal as well as their academic skills is a key reason for the school's success and popularity with parents and carers. The school has a very accurate picture of the areas it needs to develop next because the quality of its self-evaluation is very good. The monitoring system is frequent, clearly timetabled and designed so that leaders at all levels thoroughly investigate any dip in progress by an individual or group of pupils. This, coupled with leaders and managers that are continually developed to perform at the highest level, ensures that the school has an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the standard of boys' literacy skills further by:
 - consolidating the use of texts that interest boys across all subjects
 - providing more opportunities to create extended pieces of writing.

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

Pupils engage consistently well in lessons and different groups find the resources chosen for them extremely interesting. For example, the 'Five Minute Maths' approach with quick fire questions for pupils has particularly sharpened mathematical skills. Pupils consistently apply their literacy skills across different subjects and read and write in many innovative ways. In an excellent Year 3 lesson, pupils took delight in writing a 'Metal menu', having read the *Iron Man* by Ted Hughes, because the teacher showed a 'picnic' of spoons, spanners and cooking utensils. As a result one pupil said, 'Wow, that is a picnic!' and another suggested the Iron Man try 'burned bolts and nails for an amazingly tempting topping'. Throughout the school pupils were observed working hard and focusing well on their work. Although some pupils display challenging behaviours at times, behaviour overall is very good because the school has excellent strategies for ensuring the learning environment is very purposeful and positive. Pupils are enthusiastic learners, who listen very carefully, are keen to please and work well alongside each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully included in lessons and receive high quality guidance to support specific aspects of their learning so that these groups' needs are met outstandingly well.

Pupils are highly knowledgeable about other cultures through trips, visitors and through their links with other countries. The school has strong links with children in Cambodia and has raised money to provide bicycles so they can get to school. Pupils also have a very keen awareness of the needs of others in their school community and treat each other, staff and visitors with kindness and respect. They take part in a wide range of sports, are very keen to keep fit and know exactly what is involved in

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

eating healthily and taking care of themselves. Pupils thoroughly enjoy their school life. They are enthusiastic about their learning and like coming to school, recording good levels of attendance. Their high levels of attainment in basic skills and their strong understanding of the world of work, indicate they are extremely well prepared for the future.

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	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make learning highly enjoyable by giving pupils many practical activities and opportunities to discuss their work with their ‘talking partner’ and support staff. These discussions are highly focused whether learning new ideas or using familiar ideas in unfamiliar contexts. Teachers show a very good knowledge of subjects and explain new work clearly. They adeptly pull different concepts together so that misconceptions are quickly dealt with. Year 2 pupils who were writing riddles also had their knowledge of punctuation expertly developed by the teacher as she used a shared riddle to highlight common mistakes that the pupils had made in previous work. Teachers use praise well to help build pupils’ confidence and reward them when they do their very best. The pace of learning is very brisk and learning is checked frequently to ensure no pupil’s progress slows. Marking is consistently helpful so pupils know how to improve their work to ensure very swift progress. Pupils are fully engaged in their learning because the well-planned activities ignite their interest.

The curriculum throughout the school is vibrant and appealing and forms an exciting

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

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

backdrop to the excellent teaching. Both teaching and the curriculum demonstrate features that ensure all pupils are fully engaged in their learning. Themed days such as 'Robotics Day' provide terrific motivation for pupils in the full range of subjects. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development very well through exceptionally effective personal, social and health education, and there is a good focus on using visits to widen pupils' experiences and bring learning to life. Trips to the nearby Broom's Barn and further afield to Colchester Zoo help pupils rapidly to develop scientific, moral and ethical knowledge and understanding. The school's strong emphasis on promoting pupils' emotional well-being results in them feeling secure and parents and carers agree that children are looked after particularly well. All staff know pupils throughout the school in great depth, drawing extremely well on a range of outside partnerships to enhance provision to meet these needs and to support pupils and their families. Staff always make themselves available for pupils and make timely interventions if any individual or group of pupils needs support. Pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable benefit from sensitive support both from the school and from outside professionals. Pastoral guidance and care are excellent features of the provision and well reflected in the good attendance rates and the highly positive attitudes of pupils. Good systems ensure that pupils are kept safe.

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 sets high standards and is respected by pupils and staff and has created a school where pupils feel highly valued. The headteacher manages change at a sensible pace and her priorities to improve the school are ambitious and clear. She evaluates the quality of teaching and learning regularly and teachers find this helpful. Excellent subject leadership plays a crucial part in this process to ensure consistency in, for example, teachers' use of assessment. The effectiveness of the governing body is outstanding. Governors know the school and are very clear about its strengths and areas requiring further development. They provide a high level of challenge and use their own professional expertise well to support the school. They promote community cohesion very successfully through action plans that reflect the consultation that has taken place with families regarding the needs of the community. The school has worked very successfully to involve families from a wide range of backgrounds in the life of the school. This has helped eradicate discrimination and supports the excellent provision for equality of opportunity, so that some previous gaps in achievement between groups have been eliminated or

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

are rapidly closing. Outstanding partnerships with other schools and a range of outside agencies support the high quality of pupils’ personal development, as well as their high level of achievement. Partnership with parents and carers is very effective. Parents and carers feed back on a range of issues including induction procedures and achievement reports. Safeguarding is good and the school is extremely quick to respond to issues that arise. In the curriculum, very good attention is paid to keeping safe, so pupils feel extremely secure in school.

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	1
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	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Very close and productive links with pre-school settings and parents and carers ensure children settle quickly into school routines and feel very secure. The Reception teacher and teaching assistants support children exceptionally well and offer high levels of care so that children feel safe and are confident and happy. They encourage children to take turns, to behave well and be very polite to one another. This success in developing personal qualities is developed further through the activities planned by staff. For example, the Sukkah (a Jewish shelter for saying ‘thank you’ to God) in the classroom provides an excellent opportunity to practise social skills and learn about Judaism. Adults provide many opportunities for speaking and listening and there is a good balance of activities led by adults and selected by children themselves. Adults model language well and plan stimulating activities that progressively develop and extend children’s skills. The outdoor areas are used particularly well and children are just as likely to be found learning outside as they are in the classrooms. The quality of the leadership and management is outstanding. The leader ensures assessment is regular, of high quality and informs future plans, so that activities meet children’s needs by fully incorporating their interests.

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

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

Most parents and carers who returned a questionnaire are extremely positive about all aspects of the school’s provision. They value particularly that their children are safe and happy in school, teaching is good and that they feel they are helped to support their child’s learning. A few respondents to the questionnaire had concerns about some aspects of provision. In particular, about a tenth mentioned the extent to which their children are prepared for the future and how effectively the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors found that the pupils are very effectively prepared for the future and that the school uses strategies successfully to ensure very good behaviour overall. Case studies show that pupils with behavioural difficulties are given tailored support to help them improve.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barrow 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 54 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 121 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	76	10	19	2	4	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	36	67	17	31	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	27	50	23	43	4	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	52	20	37	1	2	3	6
The teaching is good at this school	34	63	15	28	4	7	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	34	63	18	33	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	61	16	30	2	4	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)	29	54	18	33	4	7	1	2
The school meets my child’s particular needs	33	61	15	28	3	6	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	43	24	44	5	9	2	4
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	48	23	43	2	4	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	31	57	17	31	4	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	35	65	14	26	4	7	1	2

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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 08 April 2011 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barrow Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Bury St Edmunds IP29 5AU

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We agree with you that yours is an outstanding school. There are so many really exciting things happening in your school. We were impressed with your positive attitudes and the way you work and play together so well. Many of you told us that you really liked your teachers. We saw this in the way you responded to what they asked you to do. You are making excellent progress and reach standards much higher than most children of your age. This is because teachers make learning interesting, challenging and fun. The adults take really good care of you and want the very best for you. There are lots of exciting things for you to do including learning French and going on trips to places such as Duxford air museum to help you learn. The people that lead and manage your school are doing an excellent job.

The one thing we have asked the adults to do to make the school even better is to make sure boys reach slightly higher standards in reading and writing.

You can help too by continuing to work hard and trying your best

Yours sincerely

Richard Blackmore
Lead inspector

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.**