

Barrow Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112626
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378523
Inspection dates	20–21 October 2011
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Nigel Ashley
Headteacher	David Smith (Consultant Head)
Date of previous school inspection	4 March 2009
School address	Station Road Chesterfield S43 2PG
Telephone number	01246 472494
Fax number	01246 477822
Email address	Headteacher@barrowhill.derbyshire.sch.uk

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors saw six lessons and observed three teachers. Meetings were held with the consultant headteacher, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including local authority monitoring, evaluation and assessment records, policy documents, the school's improvement plans, teachers' lesson planning and samples of pupils' work. A wide range of documents and records was scrutinised in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors took into account the responses in questionnaires returned by 13 parents and carers, 20 pupils and seven members of staff.

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

- Has there been any improvement in pupils' progress and standards?
- What effect have leaders and managers had on improving the impact of teaching on learning?
- How well structured is the development of core skills in literacy and numeracy, and in particular writing, within the cross curricular and 'hands on' approach to learning?

Information about the school

This is a small primary school. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one class, those in Years 1, 2 and 3 in another and Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught in a third class. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. There are no pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is average. The school has been awarded the Active Mark and has gained Health Promoting School status.

The school is under the leadership of a consultant headteacher for the current term. A new headteacher has been appointed and will join the school at the beginning of the Spring Term 2012.

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?

4

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

4

Main findings

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement.

Attainment, particularly in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6, is low and has been for several years, with little indication of any improvement. Although the school does track pupils' progress, it does not do so with sufficient regularity and too little is done with this information to address any underperformance through well-targeted support. Consequently pupils do not make enough progress. Pupils' workbooks show that there is too little difference in the level and quality of work for pupils of different ages in the same class.

The quality of education is inadequate. Teaching fails to have sufficient impact on learning to secure improvement and raise attainment. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are too low, including individual targets. This is particularly so for those pupils capable of higher attainment. Teachers sometimes talk for too long, which slows the pace of learning and leaves pupils with insufficient time to practise and consolidate new learning. The curriculum is not matched to pupils' needs. It fails to build progressively on what they already know, understand and can do. One pupil spoke about repeating work that had been completed successfully last year. Although there are links between different subjects such as literacy and topic work, there is no whole-school strategy built into the curriculum that guides teachers when planning opportunities to develop pupils' basic skills, such as writing and problem solving, in other subjects.

Nevertheless, current leadership is having some impact. There is awareness that improvement is needed. New behaviour management strategies, clearly understood by pupils and consistently applied by staff, have had a positive impact on behaviour, which is good in lessons, around the school and outside at break times. Pupils enjoy school and feel safe. They have a good awareness of healthy lifestyles, as shown by the Health Promoting School status and the Active Mark. These areas of success in the school's work are supported by the satisfactory care, guidance and support for pupils.

The school's capacity for sustained improvement is inadequate. Leaders and managers are aware of the widespread underachievement, but have failed to secure

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improvement over a considerable period of time. Evaluation of school performance has been weak and has failed to identify the causes of inadequate progress. Leaders have only recently identified key weaknesses in order to draw up effective plans for improving attainment. As a result, pupils' achievement has fallen progressively and the school gives poor value for money. School leaders, including members of the governing body, have not held teachers to account for the lack of progress. Governors have an unjustifiably optimistic view so are not challenging the school enough to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in English and mathematics to at least national averages by:
 - regularly monitoring the performance of individual pupils
 - using assessment information to identify where pupils are making insufficient progress
 - providing support for these pupils to ensure their progress improves and is at least good
 - setting achievable but aspirational targets for each individual pupil and closely monitoring their progress towards them.

- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good so that it has a greater impact on pupils' learning by:
 - providing a greater level of challenge for each pupil
 - increasing the pace of lessons to accelerate the speed at which pupils learn
 - improving marking so that it informs pupils how to improve their work
 - providing more opportunity for pupils to practise and consolidate new learning
 - making sure that tasks build progressively on what pupils already know
 - ensuring that any repetition of work is kept to a minimum and used for consolidation or revision purposes only.

- Improve leadership and management, in particular the monitoring and evaluation by senior leaders and the governing body, by:
 - giving all governors a greater understanding of the school's performance
 - ensuring governors work closely with the senior leaders to evaluate what the school is doing well and where it needs to improve
 - using this evaluation to draw up effective plans for improvement
 - ensuring that monitoring of lessons focuses on the impact that teaching is having on learning
 - using assessment and tracking data more effectively to hold teachers to account for the performance of the pupils in their class through regular pupil performance reviews.

- Improve curriculum planning so that pupils' learning progresses systematically

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as they move through the mixed-age classes by:

- ensuring that work is planned carefully to provide all pupils in each class with tasks at an appropriate level for their age and ability
- planning structured opportunities for pupils to practise core skills, particularly reading with understanding, writing for different purposes and problem solving
- providing better guidance for teachers when planning lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**4**

Attainment at the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics has remained well below the national average for some years and show little sign of improvement. In 2011, teacher assessments show that attainment at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics improved significantly but was still below the national average. Pupils are not developing the skills and knowledge they will need during the next stage of their education or in later life. Nevertheless, pupils are keen to learn and settle quickly at the beginning of lessons. They work hard at the tasks they are given but show little self-confidence in their ability to achieve. Pupils show considerable pleasure when they are successful, but too often need to be told they have completed a task well as they do not readily recognise success. Pupils enjoy a practical approach to learning, such as evaluating their own performance in a filmed presentation on rain forests. However, their vocabulary is very limited and they often fail to express their thoughts clearly and accurately or without reverting to slang words. Many are hesitant when giving extended answers or making comments. The recent improvements in pupils' attitudes to school and the improved learning culture, reported by the consultant headteacher and confirmed through inspection evidence, are the result of a number of new initiatives.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar, limited progress. Because of the low attainment generally, most pupils receiving focused support lack independent learning skills. Teaching assistants work closely with these pupils and support them satisfactorily. However, because initially pupils often find a great deal of difficulty in understanding, adults sometimes give them answers rather than letting them work things out. This limits the depth of understanding and pupils forget prior learning too easily. Pupils capable of higher attainment do not make the progress of which they are capable: they feel they are not being pushed.

The school council meets every two weeks to discuss relevant issues and makes a satisfactory contribution to school life. Pupils enjoyed being 'reading buddies' and 'playground buddies' in the past, but these opportunities are not available at present. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, but moral development is good, as shown by pupils' understanding of the need for good behaviour.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	4
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	4
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	4
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

Teaching fails to ensure that pupils make enough progress and, for a number of reasons, is inadequate. Teachers do not use assessment well enough to ensure that pupils, for example of those different ages in the same class, are constantly challenged to make the progress of which they are capable. The range of ability is considerable in both of the primary classes because of the wide age range and the different abilities in each year group. Pupils are too often given the same task regardless of age and ability. As a result, the finished work shows too little difference in standard between, for example, Year 1 pupils and Year 3 pupils in the same class. Progress is poor, particularly for the older pupils and more able in each class. Teachers’ expectations of what pupils are capable of are too low.

Strategies to help pupils improve their performance are not sufficiently well targeted. Although there is a successful focus on improving handwriting, even among older pupils, their spelling is weak, sentence structure is inaccurate and basic punctuation, such as using capital letters and full stops, is not used properly. Marking of work fails to correct such basic mistakes, with very little advice on how to move onto the next steps or improve.

There are plans to improve the curriculum, but these have yet to be implemented. The curriculum is not planned well enough to provide pupils of different ages with a progressive development of skills. It does not provide a structure through which pupils of different ages in the same class are given learning opportunities that are appropriate to their age and stage of development. There are no after-school clubs at present to add value to pupils’ learning experiences.

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

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Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The circumstances of a significant number of pupils make them potentially vulnerable. The special needs coordinator manages support for this group of pupils well. Support packages devised in collaboration with professional agencies, ensure that they can participate in all the school offers. From some very difficult circumstances, pupils appear to be happy in school and feel safe.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	4
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	4
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	4
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

There has been significant disruption to leadership and management of the school in recent months. Since the arrival of the consultant headteacher at the beginning of this term, a number of initiatives have been planned, in consultation and agreement with the incoming headteacher. Some, such as the use of target and progress records in pupils' books have been implemented and are showing early signs of improvement. Other initiatives, such as improving core skills through cross-curricular planning are ready for implementation in the near future. At this stage, therefore, leadership and management are judged as having insufficient impact. However, importantly, staffing issues have been resolved. Leadership and management of teaching and learning have failed to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Staff say that too little monitoring has taken place until this term and teachers have not had the opportunity to improve their practice through a critical appraisal of their work. Nevertheless, staff questionnaires indicate a willingness to develop and improve, a feature that is confirmed by the consultant headteacher.

Governance is inadequate because it has not succeeded in encouraging improvement through challenging the school and holding staff to account for pupils' poor performance. The Chair of the Governing Body is fully committed to the school but both this inspection, and a recent local authority review, found insufficient involvement of other governors. Roles and responsibilities linked to monitoring are not firmly established. Governors do not have a rounded understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have an over-optimistic view of the school and its capacity to improve.

Equality of opportunity is inadequate. The school is inclusive, supporting pupils from a wide range of difficult circumstances and challenging any type of discrimination. However, the oldest pupils in each class, and those capable of coping with harder

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work, do not receive the chance to achieve their full potential. There has been no improvement in the outcomes and experience of different groups. Safeguarding is satisfactory: the school meets all statutory requirements. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school has audited this provision and has an action plan to build on what it does well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	4
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	4
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	4
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	4
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	4
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	4

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are low when compared to those expected for their age. They make satisfactory progress but attainment is below average at the end of the Reception Year, especially in reading, calculating, their knowledge and understanding of the world and in their emotional development. They do well in social development and in counting. Children enjoy and engage enthusiastically in learning opportunities.

Teaching overall is satisfactory. It is good for children when they are working in focused groups, such as a physical development session for the Reception Year children. Teachers provide interesting activities that help children to learn. There is an appropriate balance between teacher-led activities and those that children choose for themselves, and between indoor activities and learning outside. Children’s activities are monitored by staff so that each child has a balanced learning diet each day. Effective induction procedures support a smooth start for children into the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff are deployed efficiently. For example, the nursery nurse worked with nursery children whilst the teacher taught a physical development session, helping the Reception Year children make good

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progress. However, opportunities are missed to improve children’s literacy and numeracy skills while they are working across other areas.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

Most parents and carers who responded expressed positive views about what the school is doing for their children. Some were concerned about progress, the quality of teaching, information on their children’s progress and being supported to help their children’s learning. For example, one parent wrote that she is concerned about mixed-age classes and the provision of sufficiently challenging work. Inspectors cannot investigate individual cases but looked carefully at these areas of concern. Parents and carers are rightly worried about their children’s progress and the levels of challenge provided. The consultant headteacher has plans to develop further links with parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barrow Hill 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 13 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	11	85	2	15	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	9	69	4	31	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	8	62	2	15	3	23	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	6	46	5	38	2	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	6	46	4	31	2	15	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	8	62	2	15	2	15	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	7	54	5	38	1	8	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)	4	31	6	46	1	8	1	8
The school meets my child’s particular needs	5	38	7	54	1	8	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	4	31	6	46	2	15	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	5	38	6	46	1	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	5	38	6	46	1	8	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	6	46	6	46	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	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.



24 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barrow Hill Primary School, Chesterfield, S43 2PG

Thank you for welcoming us to your school when we visited recently. We were pleased that you were polite and courteous towards us. Adults look after you and make sure you feel safe. You have a good understanding of how to stay fit and healthy. We found your behaviour was good. You all get on well together.

You told us that you enjoyed coming to school, but that the work was sometimes too easy. We agree. The tasks you are given are often too easy for you, or you have done the work before. You are not getting a good enough education because you do not make enough progress in English and mathematics. Your school has not improved for a number of years now. The people in charge are aware that there are problems. There have been some changes in staffing, and there are more to come.

Your new headteacher has some good plans to improve things, but he has only been with you for a very short time and has not had the chance to make a difference yet. We have decided that your school needs more help and support to improve quickly so we are placing it in what we call 'special measures'.

We have asked the people leading and managing your school to:

- help you achieve the standards in English and mathematics expected for your age
- improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and has a greater impact on your learning
- increase the understanding of those leading and managing your school, including governors, of what needs to be done to make sure it improves
- improve the curriculum so that you learn new things as you move through the mixed-age classes and tasks are challenging and appropriate for your age.

We are confident that you will play your part in helping the school to improve by continuing to work hard and behave well.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman
Lead inspector

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