

Barcroft Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	135081
Local Authority	Walsall
Inspection number	381802
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Marian Harker HMI

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	385
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter Hancox
Headteacher	Harjinder Bal
Date of previous school inspection	27 June 2007
School address	Barcroft Willenhall West Midlands WV13 1NA
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons involving 12 teachers and 2 higher level teaching assistants, and held meetings with parents and carers, groups of pupils, staff and representatives from the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, the school improvement plan and the safeguarding of pupils. They looked at pupils' work and analysed responses to 113 questionnaires from parents and carers, in addition to those completed by pupils.

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

- Inspectors evaluated the achievement of groups of pupils, particularly in writing, those who are higher ability and those identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- They looked at the effectiveness of the school in improving the provision for care, guidance and support for all its pupils and particularly those who may be vulnerable.
- The team assessed the effectiveness of monitoring and evaluation and school improvement planning in securing further improvement.

Information about the school

Barcroft is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is very high. The large majority of pupils are from White British families with the remainder from Asian, mixed backgrounds and Black British families. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average. Those identified have moderate learning difficulties, speech, language and communication needs, a physical disability or are on the autistic spectrum. The school is situated in an area of high deprivation. Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is made in the Nursery and Reception classes. The school has achieved a number of awards, including Investor in People, International School, Eco-Schools silver and Healthy Schools status. The governing body manages a breakfast and after-school club and wrap-around care for Nursery children. The school moved into a new building in September 2011.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Barcroft is a good school, which has consolidated and improved its performance since the previous inspection. Parents and carers are very positive about the school and say such things as, 'The staff could not do any more to make school such an enjoyable experience for my child.' All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire agreed that the school kept their children safe. The quality of care, guidance and support provided for pupils and their families is a strength. The school works closely with parents and carers and makes good use of external agencies to ensure that pupils with specific difficulties receive good quality support. Attendance is average, as a small proportion of parents and carers, despite the best efforts of the school to discourage them, choose to take holidays in term time.

Pupils make good progress throughout the school as a result of the good teaching they receive. Since the school was last inspected, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 has risen significantly. Results in writing have also recently improved but remain below those of reading and mathematics. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, they attain levels that are broadly in line with the national averages. The school's results are improving. Pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as their peers because of the good levels of attention paid to tailoring the curriculum to their needs. Teachers involve the pupils in interesting activities that encourage them to develop their curiosity about the world. Opportunities to challenge the more-able pupils in lessons are sometimes missed. Pupils' work is regularly marked with positive comments. In the best examples, pupils are given clear guidance on how well they are progressing towards their termly targets but this is not consistent across the school.

The headteacher provides good leadership and is ably supported by a dedicated senior team. Self-evaluation is accurate and procedures for monitoring and evaluating the school's work are secure. However, improvement planning does not identify specific and measurable milestones that will enable senior leaders and governors to check progress easily. Governors are committed to improving the school and are supportive. They have a satisfactory understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and they are beginning to shape the direction of the school. The school has tackled the areas for improvement identified in the last inspection well and has been particularly successful in improving reading at Key Stage 1 and the outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. These successes, alongside accurate self-evaluation and rising attainment, indicate that the school has good capacity to continue to improve into the future.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and accelerate progress in writing by:
 - providing pupils with feedback so they know how well they are progressing towards their targets
 - ensuring that higher-ability pupils are sufficiently challenged, so they can achieve as well as they can
 - moving pupils on to tasks sooner in lessons so that they have more time to complete their work and consolidate learning
 - ensuring that any errors in basic skills, such as letter formation and spelling, are quickly picked up in marking.
- Ensure that school improvement planning identifies appropriate measurable milestones, regular monitoring opportunities and clear lines of accountability to support senior staff and governors in their monitoring and evaluation.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The overwhelming majority of pupils report that they enjoy coming to school. Pupils get on very well together and take pride in telling visitors about their new school building. Pupils have many opportunities to contribute to the school community such as serving on the school council, eco-committee or making short programmes for the school radio station. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy but this is not always reflected in their choice of break time snacks. Pupils have a strong sense of tolerance and respect for each other's needs. Assemblies and special events, such as the annual carol service, provide opportunities for participation and self-reflection.

Children enter the Nursery class with skills below those expected for this age, particularly in their emotional development and speaking and listening skills. They make good progress as they move through the Early Years Foundation Stage as a result of good teaching. Rates of progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 have improved since the previous inspection. For example, pupils in Year 6 who took the national tests in English and mathematics in 2011 made better than expected progress from their starting points. However, rates of progress in writing are generally slower than in reading or mathematics. There are no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. The small minority of pupils not from White British families make similar progress to their peers.

Pupils apply themselves well in lessons, working happily together. In the large majority of lessons observed, pupils made good progress in their work due to good teaching. As a result, they achieve well. In Year 6, pupils were thoroughly engaged in learning about fractions and percentages in a briskly paced lesson. Relationships between pupils and adults are positive. Behaviour both in classrooms and around the school is good. Occasionally, pupils' concentration dips in lessons when teachers talk

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for too long. In some lessons observed, learning was slower when pupils did not have sufficient time to complete tasks or those of higher ability were not suitably challenged. Pupils’ good relationships with others, together with rising academic standards, help them to be well prepared for their future.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers use a good range of strategies to engage and motivate pupils, such as practical activities and real-life scenarios. In the best lessons observed, pupils were encouraged to work together and activities were closely matched to different abilities. Teachers routinely share the learning intentions of the lesson and as a result, pupils are clear about what they are going to learn. On occasion, teachers’ expectations of what higher-ability pupils can achieve in a lesson, particularly in writing, are too low. Support staff are caring and attentive and they make a positive contribution to pupils’ learning. Teachers use a good range of assessment strategies, such as questioning and partner work. Pupils’ work is regularly marked with positive comments and an indication if they have met the learning intention for the lesson. However, pupils are not routinely provided with information about how well they are progressing towards their termly targets. At times, errors in basic skills such as letter formation or spellings are not picked up in teachers’ marking and this contributes to the relative weaknesses in writing.

The curriculum is carefully designed to meet the needs and aspirations of Barcroft pupils. Lessons in the classroom are enhanced by well-chosen visits and residential

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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trips. For example, Year 5 pupils recently visited Llangollen to study industrial history and the development of trade. Extra-curricular activities are popular, especially film club and cookery club. Pupils report that they particularly enjoy participating in the school pantomime, performed by staff and pupils for parents and carers each year.

Pupils receive good quality support, care and guidance. One parent typically commented, 'Both of my children love school and they are very well looked after.' Staff know all the pupils as individuals and this is endorsed by the positive response in the very large majority of questionnaires completed by parents and carers and in the responses from pupils. Case studies provided by the school show successful outcomes for potentially vulnerable pupils as a result of timely and effective intervention and liaison with outside agencies. Pupils who attend the before- and after-school provision and the wrap-around care are well looked after.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher leads by example in setting out and sharing her vision. There is a strong sense of shared ownership in moving the school forward and improving outcomes for pupils. The school improvement plan accurately identifies areas for improvement, but these are not consistently linked to clear measurable outcomes or specific lines of accountability so that senior leaders and governors can track progress over time. Subject leaders and senior leaders undertake a range of monitoring and evaluation activities. These activities have been successful in bringing about improvements in teaching, assessment and pupils' achievement, but they are not always included in the school improvement plan.

The governing body is well organised and supportive. Governors visit the school regularly and use their expertise to benefit the pupils and fulfil their statutory duties. The governing body consults parents and carers regularly, particularly during the school's move to a new site. Good child protection procedures are at the centre of the school's safeguarding procedures. Four staff have received the designated child protection training at the higher level. The school has paid diligent attention to health and safety issues on the new school site. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. The school understands the needs of the local community well and provides regular opportunities for pupils to meet people from different backgrounds. Links with other communities within the United Kingdom and globally are at an early stage of development. Staff promote equality of opportunity well and a close eye is

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kept on the progress of different groups of pupils. Barcroft is a cohesive school community where any incidents of bullying or racism are rare.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Induction procedures, including home visits, are good and children settle quickly into school life. From starting points that are lower than expected for this age, children make good progress, particularly in early reading skills. This is due to good teaching and the introduction of a structured programme to teach phonics, the sounds that letters make. A calm, nurturing environment is evident in the Early Years Foundation Stage and well-known routines underpin the positive relationships. Behaviour is good and children feel safe and secure, showing trust in those around them. As a result, they make good progress in their learning and in their personal development. The new outdoor area is spacious and provides a good range of interesting activities to stimulate play and exploration. During the inspection, a group of children enjoyed practising their letter formation on the playground floor using soapy water. Learning-journey logs are well kept and provide helpful information and photographic evidence for parents and carers. Leaders and managers have created a warm, homely learning environment. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides strong leadership and ensures that there is close teamwork between all adults and a good focus on keeping children safe and secure.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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Taking into account:	2
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

The response rate from parents and carers to the Ofsted questionnaire was broadly average for primary schools. Parents and carers express very positive views about the school. They report that staff are approachable, dedicated and caring. Parents and carers expressed above average levels of satisfaction in all areas. They were particularly positive about how the school kept their children safe, the progress that they were making in their learning and their overall satisfaction with the school. Very few parents and carers expressed concerns. A few individual comments were made regarding homework, behaviour, information about progress and meeting individual needs. The inspection team investigated these concerns and found that behaviour in lessons and around the school was good and a suitable amount of homework was provided for pupils. The team also found that parents and carers were provided with regular information regarding how well their children were progressing and pupils made good progress in their learning as their individual needs were addressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barcroft 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 113 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 385 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	79	70	33	29	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	79	70	34	30	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	72	64	37	33	3	3	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	72	64	39	35	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	76	67	35	31	2	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	62	55	48	42	3	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	59	52	51	45	3	3	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)	65	58	39	35	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	67	59	44	39	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	62	55	45	40	2	2	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	59	52	46	41	3	3	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	62	55	41	36	7	6	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	73	65	37	33	3	3	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.



9 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barcroft Primary School, Willenhall, WV13 1NF

I am writing to thank you for the help you gave us when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking with those of you we met and visiting your lessons. We particularly enjoyed your lovely carol service at St Giles Church. You told us that you were happy and we see that this is the case in the helpful way you treat each other. We found that Barcroft Primary is a good school. Your teachers make lessons interesting and you try hard. You get on well together and know a lot about how to stay safe, particularly in your beautiful new school building.

We have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do a number of things to improve your school. Although your lessons are good, your teachers could make them even better. They need to make sure that you have plenty of opportunities to improve your writing and that you have enough time in lessons to finish all of your work. We have also asked that those of you who are more able are provided with more challenging work and that you are all given regular information about how well you are progressing towards your end-of-term targets. We have asked that plans the school has to improve further are written in a way that is helpful to all the staff and the governing body so they can check how well the school is doing.

You can help the school by making sure you attend as often as possible, continuing to work hard and remembering to bring healthy snacks to eat at break time.

Yours sincerely

Marian Harker
Her Majesty's Inspector

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