

Barton CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	110829
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	378184
Inspection dates	28–29 May 2012
Lead inspector	Alison Cartlidge

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Martin
Headteacher	Sue Carpenter
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by four teachers. The inspector took account of the responses to the online Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at questionnaires from 42 parents and carers, 12 members of staff and 54 pupils. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and pupils. The inspector heard pupils read, and looked at pupils' books, information on their progress, safeguarding information and other documents relating to planning and self-evaluation.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are White British, with a few coming from other heritages. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The school has an above average proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those who are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs. There is a playschool on the premises: this is privately run and is inspected separately. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress. The school has received the Eco Silver Award and the International School Award.

There have been several long-term staffing absences since the last inspection and changes to staffing, including to the senior leadership team. During the inspection, Years 5 and 6 were attending 'Activity week' and were not observed.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key findings

- This is a satisfactory school that is improving quickly following a dip in pupils' progress soon after the last inspection. It is not yet good because teaching and achievement are inconsistent. Leaders are aware of strengths and weaknesses in provision, but have not ensured that subject leaders help to tackle dips as soon as they arise. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- Achievement for most groups of pupils, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage, is satisfactory and improving. The teaching of phonics (sounds and letters) is supporting pupils' reading well. However, pupils do not always use this knowledge to help with their spelling. Progress in mathematics is inconsistent because pupils are not all competent in mental mathematics and more-able pupils do not always produce work that demonstrates their capabilities in science. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
- Teaching is satisfactory, including in the Early Years Foundation Stage, with examples of good teaching in all year groups. Teaching is improving rapidly because teachers provide motivating activities matched to pupils' different needs. However, there are occasions when learning is too slow because teachers do not expect enough from the pupils or involve and engage them fully in class discussions.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the curriculum, enabling pupils to feel safe, behave well, develop good attitudes towards learning and to be keen to succeed.
- The leadership of teaching through the management of performance is satisfactory. Senior leaders, including the governing body, understand what the school needs to do next and are demonstrating the capacity to improve in the

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way that they have raised attainment at Key Stage 1 and have improved teachers' marking. Senior leaders monitor teaching carefully and provide staff with clear guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase progress in writing, mathematics and science by July 2013, by:
 - ensuring that pupils use their knowledge of phonics to support their spelling and improve the consistency of their handwriting
 - making sure that pupils are fully involved in mental mathematics activities so that they can calculate quickly
 - challenging more-able pupils to work at the level of which they are capable in science.
- By January 2013, ensure teachers consistently have high enough expectations for all pupils and involve and engage them fully in class discussions.
- By January 2013, develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater involvement in identifying and tackling dips in progress as soon as they occur.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Attainment on entry varies, but most children start school in the Early Years Foundation Stage working within the levels expected for their age. They make at least satisfactory progress in the Reception class, and attainment on entry to Year 1 is broadly average. Children develop good communication, language and literacy skills. For example, children were able to describe the feelings of their characters when taking part in a 'dinosaur adventure'.

At Key Stage 1, pupils' progress is good, leading to above average attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 in the last two years. At Key Stage 2, progress is satisfactory but it is improving. Attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6 in writing, mathematics and science, and is above average in reading. Pupils make good progress in learning phonics and this is having a positive impact on reading across the school. For example, in Years 1 and 2, lower attaining pupils show their confidence by making positive comments such as 'I'm really getting on well' and 'I always sound it out and I don't guess now'. Progress is slower in writing, mathematics and science, especially at Key Stage 2. Pupils do not always remember their phonics when spelling words and their handwriting is not formed well. For example, pupils do not make use of their knowledge of spelling patterns when spelling words such as 'could', 'would' and 'should'. In mental mathematics sessions, not all pupils make speedy calculations and more-able pupils produce similar science work to other pupils and are not expected to extend their skills

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enough.

While the vast majority of parents and carers believe that their children achieve well, inspection findings confirm that pupils' achievement is satisfactory because learning and progress vary between lessons and year groups. For example, in a productive literacy lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils extended their poems well using metaphors and similes. In contrast, where learning is slower, pupils are not given sufficiently challenging tasks or expected to join in fully in class discussions.

Recent improvements have enabled the school to quickly identify the needs of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and these pupils are making at least satisfactory progress. The school is successfully narrowing any gaps between groups of pupils with afternoon intervention groups that are closely matched to the specific needs of various groups of pupils.

Quality of teaching

Most parents and carers and their children believe that teaching is good, although a small minority would like their children to be given greater challenge. Inspection findings show that teaching is improving. While there are examples of good teaching in all classes, it is not yet consistently good across all year groups. In the Early Years Foundation Stage, members of staff support small groups of children well and enable them to develop their speech and independence. For example, members of staff listen carefully to children's ideas, demonstrating the importance of listening and speaking, and children communicate with each other well when creating stories in the role play area. At times, progress slows when children are working in a large group with an adult, because the activities do not always give them enough opportunity to take part and, consequently, do not hold their attention fully.

Teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, detailed planning enables teachers to meet pupils' different needs well, and time is used well to teach particular ability groups while others are working independently. For example, in a mathematics lesson, more-able pupils completed work about number bonds to 100 and 1000 while the teacher supported other pupils with doubling to 20. All teachers plan interesting activities and support reading well. For example, in Years 1 and 2, pupils joined in fluently when reading the class-generated story about 'Fizzy Cole the fairy', because the teacher provided a good role model and support. Marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how to improve, especially in English. Behaviour is managed well and questioning is used effectively to promote learning. When teaching is satisfactory, it is because teachers do not challenge the pupils to produce work of a high enough standard or do not involve them all in class discussions.

Teaching assistants provide valuable support for different groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Intervention groups are particularly effective because support has recently become more clearly focused. The teaching of reading is good and teachers provide clear guidance through marking,

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especially in English.

The planned curriculum supports pupils' personal development well, and displays are attractive and celebrate diversity. Consequently, teaching has a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are strong relationships between members of staff and the pupils, supporting the development of good social skills. Teachers' expectations and management of behaviour are clear and consistent.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents, carers and pupils are positive about behaviour at the school and do not have concerns about bullying. Pupils feel safe and are confident that occasional incidences of unacceptable behaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively by all members of staff. Pupils say that they feel free from all kinds of bullying, including racism and cyber-bullying, and typically say that, 'It's not really bullying, but some children can be unkind.' They feel that they can talk to their teacher if they have any worries. There have been no exclusions since the last inspection.

Pupils have good attitudes towards learning. In lessons, pupils work sensibly and provide each other with encouragement. They are enthusiastic and make comments such as, 'Teachers make it interesting for you' and, 'We get to write stories and our imaginations can run free.' Pupils are keen to preserve the environment through gardening club and the eco committee, demonstrating why they have the Eco Silver Award. Pupils are good at taking part in assessing their work and that of others. For example, in Years 3 and 4, pupils provided helpful comments when sharing their poems about what they would keep in their 'Magic Book'.

Pupils are polite and respectful and are considerate towards one another. For example, older pupils help the younger ones and discuss issues about relationships so that they can support each other socially and emotionally. Rates of attendance are above average and pupils arrive promptly at the start of lessons, prepared to learn straightaway.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders, including members of the governing body, demonstrate that they have the capacity to improve the school through the successful steps they have already taken to improve pupils' achievement at Key Stage 1. Any remaining gaps in progress between groups of pupils are closing quickly. Areas identified for development by the previous inspection, such as teachers' marking and enlivening the curriculum, have been tackled successfully despite the difficulties caused by long-term staffing absences. Recent initiatives, particularly in teaching reading and phonics, are having a positive effect on pupils' progress in literacy, which is improving swiftly.

Performance management and professional development are moving teaching

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forward well. With more stable staffing and fewer absences, teaching is now at least satisfactory or better across the school. Information on pupils' progress is shared and appropriate action is being taken to improve the school further. While areas of weakness are being dealt with, the new subject leaders are not yet involved in ensuring that dips in attainment and progress are tackled as soon as they arise.

Equal opportunities are promoted and discrimination tackled competently. Pupils from different backgrounds are equally well supported and included in school life. The school is taking the right steps to eliminate any unevenness in learning and progress between groups by providing further training and support as required. The school has established good relationships with most parents and carers. Many parents and carers make positive comments such as, 'It's just like a family', 'A loving environment' and, 'Lessons are really creative.'

The school's safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Pupils feel safe in school, and all parents and carers who shared their views agree that this is the case. The curriculum is broad and balanced, and ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. For example, pupils in Years 5 and 6 showed respect in their careful pictures depicting aboriginal art. In collective worship, pupils are interested in learning about beliefs and celebrations such as the relevance of Trinity Sunday to Christians. The school has established strong links with other schools in Britain and internationally and, as a result, have received the International School award.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

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

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

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

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

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

Common terminology used by inspectors

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

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



30 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barton CofE VA Primary School, Barton, CB23 7BD

I enjoyed coming to inspect your friendly school, talking with you about your work and hearing some of you read. Thank you for being so helpful during my visit. I found that your school provides you with a satisfactory education.

These are the best things about your school.

- You are making good progress in learning to read.
- You all learn quickly in Years 1 and 2.
- You enjoy school and I agree with you that your teachers are kind and caring and work hard to make lessons interesting.
- Members of staff are good at teaching you all about how to behave sensibly and, as a result, you behave well.
- The headteacher, other leaders and the governing body know what needs to be done to make the school even better.

To help it improve, I have asked your school to make sure that teachers:

- help you to learn more quickly in writing, mathematics and science
- have high enough expectations for what you should achieve and involve and engage you all in class discussions.

I have also asked the teachers who look after subjects to check more quickly that you are all doing as well as you should so that help can be provided straight away when needed.

You can help your teachers by remembering your phonics when spelling words and always trying your best with your handwriting.

Thank you once again for telling me about your school and letting me see your work.

Yours sincerely

Alison Cartlidge
Lead inspector

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