

Barnton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131681
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	395450
Inspection dates	13–14 June 2012
Lead inspector	Judith Straw

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	278
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	George Loughlin
Headteacher	Annette Williams
Date of previous school inspection	24 January 2007
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Introduction

Inspection team

Judith Straw
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Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 21 lessons taught by 14 teachers. They also made brief visits to shorter sessions led by teaching assistants and specialist teachers and heard children read. The inspectors held meetings with groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They spoke informally to parents and carers on the telephone and met others at family assemblies. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at the school's self-evaluation evidence, the school improvement plan, safeguarding documentation and records of external monitoring of the school. They analysed questionnaires returned by 115 parents and carers, as well as those completed by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

Barnton is a larger than average size primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is average, as is the proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional language. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. This is partly because the school has Primary Resource Provision for children with moderate and severe learning difficulties.

Since the previous inspection in 2007 there has been a new headteacher, numbers have increased significantly and the proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs has doubled. Pupil mobility has increased so that more pupils than is usual join and leave the school throughout the year.

The school meets the current floor targets set by the governments' expectations for attainment and progress. It holds numerous awards in recognition of the quality of its work. Among others, these include Investors in People, Inclusion and Basic Skills Quality Marks, the Activemark, Artsmark gold, National Healthy School status and, most recently, the North West Family Learning Quality Mark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because the quality of teaching and the monitoring of the school’s work are not consistently effective. This is a highly inclusive school in which most pupils thrive, whatever their ability.
- Achievement is good. From typically below average starting points in the Reception class, children make good progress through the school so that by the time they leave in Year 6 their attainment is above average. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good and sometimes outstanding progress because of the high level of additional care and support they receive for their learning.
- Teaching is good with some which is outstanding. The best teaching features very good planning which is perfectly matched to the learning needs of individual pupils. Most lessons provide challenging and stimulating activities which make learning fascinating and enjoyable. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to accelerate the learning of the most able pupils. The use of individual targets is not always effective enough because the pupils struggle to understand the language used.
- Pupils’ behaviour is excellent and pupils are almost unanimous in saying that they feel safe and well looked after. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to their school and are consulted on a wide range of issues. Attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- Leadership and management are good, with particular strengths in the leadership of the headteacher and senior leadership team in managing provision. In response to a dip in standards in 2011, senior leaders implemented rigorous professional development and pupil support. Inspection evidence shows that attainment has risen swiftly to above average and progress is accelerating across the school. The involvement of subject leaders in monitoring the work of the school is at an earlier stage of development and is less effective.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - making sure that pupils of all abilities, and especially higher-attaining pupils, are challenged throughout the lesson, including during the introduction
 - simplifying the use of individual targets and removing jargon so that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve.
- Increase the effectiveness of monitoring the work of the school by further developing the skills of middle leaders in accurately evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and skills that are below, and sometimes well below, expectations for their age. Children settle quickly in the bright, stimulating environment and respond readily to the adults around them. During the inspection children in the two Reception classes were learning about multicultural London and basing their learning around the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and the forthcoming Olympic games. Some were 'managing' a tourist ticket office, providing guided tours of London, others were writing postcards home and, outdoors, a fine model of Buckingham palace was under construction, complete with the Red Arrows fly-past. These and many other activities totally engaged the children's attention. Children of all abilities make good progress and by the time they enter Year 1 most have caught up to reach average expectations for their age.

A previous decline in pupils' attainment in Key Stage 1 has been reversed. Pupils joined staff recently in a 'working party' to look at ways of enhancing reading within school and, as a result, cosy new reading areas have been established and many new library books have been purchased. Pupils' reading skills are increasing so that most read confidently for their age and are well supported by practising at school and at home. The attainment of pupils in Years 1 and 2 is now above average in reading, writing and mathematics. The previous gap in the attainment of boys and girls, especially in writing, is closing rapidly. Pupils' calculation skills are often good and many pupils say they particularly enjoy mathematics.

Progress in Key Stage 2 accelerates further so that attainment has returned to above average by the end of Year 6, after a dip in 2011. Overall standards are above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils of all abilities achieve well. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs receive well-targeted and expert support enabling them to make similar good progress. Some pupils in the Primary Resource Provision make excellent progress relative to their starting points. The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language and the pupils known to be eligible to free school meals all make better progress than similar pupils nationally. The positive attitude of pupils towards their learning is evident in many lessons. For example, in an outstanding Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils were engrossed in solving problems of various levels of challenge, working independently and supporting each other in groups almost without the need of the teacher's input. Almost all the parents and carers who responded to the

inspection questionnaire and all those spoken to during the inspection believe their children make good progress. Inspection evidence confirms this.

Quality of teaching

Good teaching is evident across the school. Excellent team work among adults in the Early Years Foundation Stage creates a happy climate for learning, especially in the beautifully designed and well-equipped outdoor learning area where children enjoy the full range of activities. Expert questioning and on-going assessment help to take children's learning further and to identify their next steps clearly.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well in lessons, resulting in excellent behaviour and very friendly relationships between pupils and adults. Lessons are well organised with a wide variety of activities and making full use of skilled and well-briefed teaching assistants and high quality resources. Well-framed questions make pupils think hard and they know they will be asked to explain their answers fully. Where teaching is strongest high challenge is provided throughout the lesson so that pupils make excellent progress. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 mixed class mathematics lesson pupils were actively involved in gathering data from sporting activities in the playground and then creating bar charts and other graphs to display their research accurately. Sometimes, however, opportunities are missed. For example, not all pupils need to listen to the same, sometimes quite lengthy introductions to lessons; some could begin work at once on more challenging tasks. Good assessment and tracking systems provide a very clear view of pupils' progress. Marking is regular and helpful and explains to pupils what they need to do to improve. However, the individual targets set for pupils in class are couched in educational jargon so that not all pupils, especially the younger ones, know precisely what they mean.

Teaching is excellent in the Primary Resource Provision unit where small groups of pupils spend part of each day. Children with very significant learning difficulties are engaged with real purpose and involvement. No small step in learning is missed. Across the wider school disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are consistently well supported in their learning. Teachers use the curriculum with flair and imagination to capture pupils' interests and thus accelerate progress. The extensive and beautiful school grounds, including the pond, allotment areas, chicken runs and performance areas are used very effectively to enhance learning. Parents and carers are unanimous in their view that teaching is good and this is endorsed by inspection evidence.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' behaviour around school is typically exemplary. The school's systematic and well-considered approach to behaviour management ensures that any misdemeanours are dealt with promptly. Pupils who may have fallen short of the high expectations for good behaviour spend a little time in the 'Thinking room', reflecting on their behaviour. Over time, fewer and fewer pupils have needed to do this. Pupils are intensely proud of their school and are considerate towards others. Older pupils train as peer mentors and support others in helping to negotiate the small disputes that can occur at play times. Pupils are aware of the different kinds of bullying but are adamant that there is no bullying or racism and are confident that should any occur it would quickly be sorted out by adults. Pupils are developing into well-informed young citizens, proud to take on responsibilities in working with staff to improve the school further. Their work in improving the environment has been recognised by the Green Flag award. They regularly enjoy taking part in sporting and public

speaking competitions and make a strong contribution to school life through the School and Eco Councils and lunchtime clubs. Assemblies are celebratory and spiritual, whether applauding pupils' achievements or singing harmoniously together. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning, often taking responsibility for their own work. As a result, attendance is consistently well above average and rising. Pupils are right to be entirely confident that they are safe in school and their parents and carers agree.

Leadership and management

Senior leaders and the governing body know their school well and are determined to make it outstanding. Having successfully addressed the under-performance of pupils in Year 6 in 2011, the focus is now on maximising the performance of all pupils to achieve their full potential. The school's self-evaluation is robust and honest. Rigorous monitoring from senior leaders and strong professional development have raised the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment. Middle leaders are fully involved in implementing improvements but their skills are less well developed in accurately measuring the impact of initiatives that have been put in place. This is now a focus for development. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good because of careful planning, effective teamwork and clear expectations. The commitment of the school to providing highly effective provision for pupils who need additional support is excellent. The success of what has been achieved so far illustrates the good capacity of the school to improve further.

The curriculum provides a rich and rewarding range of experiences to support learning and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All pupils from Year 1 go on residential trips, and older pupils have the opportunity to visit France and Belgium. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs promote understanding of different cultures and bring a global dimension to the curriculum.

The governing body is committed to its role of safeguarding pupils and arrangements are thorough and effective. The governing body is involved in school life and regularly challenge the school to do even better. All leaders are committed to tackling discrimination and ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities to make a success of their time at school. The school uses a wide range of partnerships to bring extra expertise to support pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable and to provide challenge and support for pupils with particular gifts and talents. As a result of the latter initiative, some pupils currently in Year 6 are working well above expectations in mathematics because of the partnership with local secondary schools and the employment of a specialist mathematics teacher in school. Many parents and carers commented positively on the high level of support they and their children receive from the school.

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.



15 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnton Community Primary School, Northwich, CW8 4QL

Thank you for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We would especially like to thank the many pupils who spoke to us and read so well. You were thoughtful and interesting and made us see why you are so proud of your school. You all feel safe and your behaviour is excellent. Your attendance is very good because you enjoy coming to school and really want to learn. Children in the Reception classes settle quickly and soon begin to learn well because there are lots of interesting things for them to do.

Yours is a good school because you are well taught and make good progress. Teachers plan interesting lessons and use the lovely outdoor grounds to make your learning very active and fun. The school is well lead by adults who are totally committed to making sure that you have the best start in life.

To make your school even better we have asked the teachers to make sure that each one of you is challenged to do the best you can right from the start of every lesson. We have also asked teachers to change the wording of some of your targets so that you can more easily understand what you need to do to improve. In addition, we have asked that subject leaders do more checking to make sure that their new ideas are really helping you to achieve better. You can play your part by continuing to attend as well as you do, behave as well as you do and working hard in all your subjects.

We wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Judith Straw
Lead Inspector

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