

Barwell Church of England Junior School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	120113
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	379955
Inspection dates	26–27 June 2012
Lead inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	220
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Charles Broadhurst
Headteacher	Brenda Davies
Date of previous school inspection	4 July 2007
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Age group	7–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

David Speakman

Additional Inspector

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson

Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 13 lessons taught by nine teachers, spending nine and a half hours directly observing pupils' learning in class. Both inspectors observed some lessons jointly with the headteacher. They heard pupils read and scrutinised pupils' work in workbooks and on display. Meetings were held with members of the governing body, staff and pupils. Inspectors scrutinised the school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including improvement plans and self-evaluation, as well as assessment data from monitoring pupils' progress. Questionnaire responses from 63 parents and carers, 107 pupils and 29 members of staff were analysed.

Information about the school

This is an average-sized junior school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is similar to the national average. A few pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The very large majority are White British. Very few speak English as an additional language and very few are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is about average. A notable but small minority of pupils join the school partway through the year, or in different year groups. The school has attained Full International Schools Award, the International Inclusion Quality Mark, Artsmark Gold Level, Basic Skills Quality Mark, and Healthy School's status, Eco Schools Bronze Award, Sport Activemark and the Charter Standard for football. The school was the midlands regional winner for Church School of the Year, 2011. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

The school runs a breakfast club each morning for up to 20 pupils. There is a children's centre on site, Barwell Children's Centre. The school is responsible for its upkeep and the local authority for its management. It is subject to a separate inspection.

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

Key findings

- This is an outstanding school. Excellent teaching and an innovative curriculum enable pupils to achieve excellent gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding, as well as outstanding personal qualities.
- Achievement is outstanding for all groups of pupils in all years. Overall standards at the end of Year 6 have been consistently above the national average since 2008. They have been above average in reading and mathematics, but have been broadly average in writing. There was a weakness in spelling, with pupils not using their knowledge of letters and sounds well enough to spell accurately. Since the introduction of a new curriculum, standards have risen significantly and are now also above average in writing.
- Teaching is outstanding and has a considerable impact on pupils' progress. Teachers bring learning to life and make it exceptionally meaningful and enjoyable. They use assessment data exceptionally well to match work accurately to the wide range of pupils' needs, whilst challenging them so they move on rapidly in their learning. However the teaching and marking of spelling is not universally effective.
- Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and at other times around the school. Pupils show determination to succeed and have exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are safe in the school and show a very strong awareness of how to stay safe.
- Robust leadership by the headteacher and the senior leadership team have ensured that the school has improved upon its good overall effectiveness at the previous inspection. Self-evaluation is highly effective and focuses on provision and its impact on the progress that pupils are making in their learning. Commitment amongst the staff to deliver a stimulating curriculum, that supports excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, while still making exceptional gains in their learning, is very strong.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the significant recent improvement in attainment in writing is sustained by:
 - ensuring that all pupils apply their knowledge of letters and sounds to improve their spelling
 - further embed the whole-school approach to the teaching and marking of spelling.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Pupils make excellent progress from their broadly average starting points and achieve overall standards that are consistently above the national average. Inspection evidence supports the views of almost all parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire, that their children are making good progress.

Until 2011, attainment in writing was broadly average. With the introduction of a new curriculum, which provides pupils with numerous opportunities to write in different styles, in meaningful contexts, attainment in writing has improved significantly this year and is now above the national average. Accuracy in spelling remains an issue, for some. Pupils do not always sufficiently apply their knowledge of letter combinations and the sounds they make to spelling words. In all other respects, the quality of writing is good. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to construct sentences correctly and use punctuation well. Because they are highly engaged, they write expressively, often with vivid description. When writing a newspaper report about the arrival of an alien creature in the area, Year 3 pupils used vivid descriptions such as, 'the atmosphere was as cold as the coldest day of the year.' The frequent use of similes and metaphors brings their writing to life. Much of the writing develops pupils' ideas at length and is well structured. Handwriting is neat and easy to read and pupils take a pride in presenting their work in a tidy and well organised way.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills are good. They are confident speakers and express themselves clearly. In discussion, the image of a ghost immediately engaged Year 6 pupils in animated discussion. One child described it as 'a soul that never got to the light'. Listening skills are good; pupils listen politely and carefully to each other and the teachers and understand what is being asked of them.

Attainment in reading is consistently above the national average. Despite some pupils having limited strategies based on letters and sounds for reading unfamiliar words, pupils have good word recognition and most pupils read fluently and accurately. They understand what they read and are able to retell stories accurately. Older pupils are skilled at using reference books and easily locate information.

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Pupils use their well-developed numeracy skills exceptionally well to help them investigate mathematics and solve problems. Year 6 pupils are skilled in mental calculations. In their investigations into complex number sequences, they confidently dealt with a wide range of calculations mentally. They recognised patterns in number and appreciated how sequences are seen in nature. They are competent in using a good range of higher level mathematics skills such as hypothesising, trialling and refining their work; these are skills typical of mathematics done by much older pupils. Pupils in Year 5 are skilled in talking about mathematics to their work partners and more often work things out for themselves without being told the answers. Pupils are not afraid of making mistakes, but learn from them.

Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make excellent progress due to the focused support they receive in class. This is effectively closing the gap in the attainment levels reached by these pupils and the national average. Their needs are exceptionally well met and through regular monitoring of their progress and changing targets as needed. Additionally, pupils are fully included in all class activities and other pupils appreciate their contribution. The few pupils who speak English as an additional language receive support that is well focused on their particular needs. Pupils who are late entrants to the school very quickly settle and become as effective learners as those who joined at the beginning of Year 3. These two groups make the same excellent progress as other pupils.

Quality of teaching

Inspection findings confirm the views of most parents and carers that their children are taught well. The majority of the teaching seen during the inspection was outstanding and the rest was good. Pupils enjoy school and say, 'Teachers are enthusiastic and fun, and we learn a lot.'

Teachers plan activities that are highly effective in engaging pupils. Teaching is often inspirational. Year 3 pupils were enthralled by the exceptionally well-produced video diary of their two teachers meeting and greeting 'Vack', an alien visitor to Earth. Outstanding teaching such as this makes learning highly enjoyable and pupils' excitement encourages them to produce their very best. Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Good achievement is rewarded and praised so pupils place a high value on doing well. Behaviour is consistently managed exceptionally well by all teachers, resulting in outstanding behaviour in lessons.

Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. In Year 6 mathematics lessons, where teaching was consistently outstanding, pupils' curiosity was awakened through a very interesting presentation on aspects of mathematical history and examples of where mathematics, such as spirals they have constructed, can be found in science and nature. Teachers are skilled at integrating literacy into a cross-curricular topic approach. Across the school, teachers interpret the newly developed curriculum very well to provide interesting and stimulating ways of developing writing skills, for

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example. However, occasionally the teaching and marking of spelling is not as effective as other aspects of teaching Literacy. Some teachers miss opportunities to link the development of spelling into pupil's knowledge of letters and sounds. Some teachers do not always ensure that any corrections made in their marking are followed through by pupils. Teachers use a range of techniques to interest and involve pupils, such as investigation, discussion, problem-solving and role-play. They are skilled at asking leading questions. Rather than give answers, teachers ask targeted questions so pupils think over a problem and arrive at their own conclusions. Pupils are given daily opportunities to read and reading and researching texts forms an important part of their cross-curricular work.

Teachers use assessment information very effectively to plan activities that match accurately the learning needs of pupils at all levels of attainment. Many are open-ended so pupils follow the lines of enquiry at their own levels and are encouraged to be self-challenging: Year 4 pupils evaluated the quality of a television news presentation on recent flooding, challenging others effectively. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are fully included. Liaison with the infant school means that pupils are identified early and support provided promptly. Interventions are closely monitored by the class teachers and teaching assistants so there is continuity of provision.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers generally think highly of the school but a few expressed some concern about behaviour and occasional disruption to lessons. Inspectors looked at behaviour in class, on the playground and during the school day. They scrutinised records of behaviour, racism, bullying and accidents. They sought the views of children through questionnaire and discussion. None of these sources provided any cause for concern.

Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school. Pupils' highly positive attitudes to learning make a significant contribution to excellent achievement. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils feel very safe in school. They say that bullying and other forms of harassment are extremely rare and that 'it's dealt with very well'. Pupils are aware of the different forms bullying can take. Pupils respect others, whatever their background, ability or disability. Excellent levels of pastoral support ensure that there is sensitive support for vulnerable pupils and families. At the breakfast club, pupils begin their day in a well-organised and well-resourced environment. The club provides breakfast and opportunities for pupils to join in activities and interact with each other.

Leadership and management

The headteacher and senior leadership team work exceptionally well together in a drive constantly to improve provision and raise standards. At the time of its previous inspection, the school was judged as good. Since then, key areas of provision have improved and standards have risen. Consequently, the school provides excellent

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value for money and has an outstanding capacity to improve further.

Teaching and its impact on pupils' progress are rigorously monitored by the senior leadership team and subject leaders through robust performance management. This has led to improved teaching and progress since the previous inspection. Teachers are given challenging targets for the performance of their pupils and are held to account during termly pupils' progress reviews.

The governing body has a clear understanding of the school's effectiveness. Governors are fully involved in the life of the school, and in shaping the way forward. They seek and use the views of parents and carers. They meet all statutory duties in relation to safeguarding. Arrangements for keeping children safe are very well managed. Leaders ensure the safe recruitment of staff and full checks are made on any adult working with pupils. Staff are vigilant about safety and make detailed risk assessments on all activities.

The curriculum is designed to provide pupils with rich opportunities to develop their communication, language, numeracy and personal skills by planning activities that are set in real and meaningful contexts and appeal to their interests. It prepares them exceptionally well for the next stages of their education. The focus on enquiry and the wide range of cultural activities is highly effective in promoting pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Equality is promoted exceptionally well and there is no discrimination of any kind. Staff celebrate diversity and value all pupils' contributions. This ensures that all pupils have equality of opportunity to succeed.

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.



28 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barwell Church of England Junior School, Leicester, LE9 8DS

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school. We found you to be friendly, polite and ready to help. We really enjoyed talking with you about your school. We were particularly impressed by the way in which you showed you were ready and keen to learn and the way in which many of you wanted to share your work with us.

Barwell Juniors is an outstanding school. You make excellent progress and achieve high standards, but your spelling is not as good as it should be. You told us that you enjoy school and learning and this was also clear from the questionnaires some of you filled in. The results were very positive. Your parents and carers rightly told us that you are happy and feel safe. Your behaviour is excellent and you have very positive attitudes that help you in your learning. Your teachers make lessons interesting for you. We can see why you find learning fun, judging from your reactions when those of you in Year 3 watched your teachers' video diary about meeting your visitor from space. We found Year 4's views about your visit to the gurdwara very interesting.

We have asked your headteacher and staff to take some action to make sure that the recent improvement in writing continues, particularly with reference to your spelling. We have asked them to:

- make sure that you all use your knowledge of letters and the sounds they make when spelling unfamiliar or difficult words
- improve the way they teach you spelling and how some teachers mark the spellings in your written work.

You can help by making sure that you continue to concentrate really well in your lessons and learn from your spelling mistakes. We hope that you continue to enjoy school and learning.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman
Lead inspector

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