

Barlow CofE Primary School

Millcross Lane, Barlow, Dronfield, S18 7TA

Inspection dates 13–14 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Teaching is not yet consistently good in all classes to ensure that pupils make good progress year on year, especially in writing.
- Information about what pupils know is not used well enough to set work at the right level for pupils' different abilities.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils and some pupils do not take enough pride in presenting their work.
- Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to apply their writing skills in different subjects.
- The marking of pupils' work does not consistently help pupils to improve their work.
- The high levels recorded on the school's tracking of pupils' assessments are not reflected in pupils' ongoing work in their books.
- Leaders including the governing body do not have an accurate view of the school's effectiveness because the checks that are carried out on teaching do not focus enough on the achievement of pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Children get a good start to school life in the Reception class. Good teaching ensures children make good progress.
- The teaching of reading is good throughout the school.
- Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy school and their attendance is above average.
- Pupils consider the feelings of others sensitively and build up their self-esteem and confidence extremely well.
- Parents correctly think their children are kept safe in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons. Three lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector also observed some group-reading activities and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, a representative of the local authority, staff and pupils.
- A wide range of school documents were analysed including the school's own data concerning pupils' current achievement, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- The inspector took into account the views of 21 responses to the online Parent View questionnaire and also considered the 10 questionnaires returned by staff.

Inspection team

Lois Furness, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- In this much-smaller-than-average primary school, almost all pupils are White British. There are no pupils at an early stage of learning English.
- A well-below-average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. In this school, it provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- No pupils are educated through alternative provision away from the school site.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action, school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There are four classes. One class for Reception-aged children, one for pupils in Years 1 and 2, one for pupils in Years 3 and 4 and one for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- During the autumn term, the substantive headteacher was on long-term absence from school. The local authority commissioned a deputy headteacher from another school to become acting headteacher until the start of the spring term when the substantive headteacher returned.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure all teaching is good or better and improve pupils' progress in writing, especially that of boys, by:
 - ensuring teachers always set work that is at the right level of difficulty for all groups of pupils
 - raising teachers' expectations with regard to the quality of pupils' work and how much they are able to achieve
 - providing pupils with regular opportunities to practise their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills in subjects such as science, history and geography
 - extending the good marking practice in English to other subjects
 - agreeing precise targets with staff for improving their teaching skills and providing any necessary training to help them achieve these performance targets.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - fine-tuning the school's self-evaluation by concentrating more precisely on the impact of teaching on pupils' learning and progress in lessons and in their written work
 - ensuring the school's assessment information provides an accurate reflection of the standards pupils' achieve and their progress over time
 - making sure the information given to governors enables them to support and challenge the school's work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Children enter the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. They make good progress in the Reception class but progress slows as they move through the school and requires improvement. This slower progress is because assessment information is not used consistently well enough to plan work that ensures all groups of pupils learn as fast as they can.
- At the end the end of Year 2, attainment has been broadly average in reading and mathematics over the last three years but below average in writing. At the end of Year 6, attainment in national tests has fluctuated. It was well above average in English and mathematics in 2011, but was below average in 2012. As in Year 2, writing is the weaker aspect of English, and current assessment information shows that boys are not attaining as highly as girls in this subject.
- Throughout the school, the best progress is made in reading. Most pupils enjoy reading and achieve well. The effective teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is making sure that younger pupils are improving their early reading skills and, by the end of Year 6, pupils' current attainment in reading is above age-related expectations.
- The school's tracking system suggests that attainment in all year groups is at least at age-related expectations in writing and mathematics and progress is good. However, the sampling of pupils' work throughout the school shows that these assessment data provide an inaccurate view of how all pupils typically perform day by day.
- Progress in subjects such as history, geography and science varies according to the quality of teaching. Work in pupils' books shows that pupils have too few opportunities to apply their writing skills in these subjects, and basic grammar, punctuation and spelling mistakes are sometimes left uncorrected.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress similar to that of their classmates. This is also the case for pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding. At times, the progress of groups of pupils improves when they receive additional support. However, leaders do not check carefully to confirm whether or not the additional support is accelerating the progress of pupils eligible for pupil premium. There were not enough pupils known to be eligible for free school meals in 2012 to comment on their attainment without identifying them.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it does not ensure that pupils' achievement over time is good enough. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of how much progress pupils can make in lessons. There is variability in the amount of work that teachers expect pupils to produce and also in the quality of presentation that they expect in pupils' books.
- Teachers do not consistently use the information about the attainment of their class to set work that is not too hard yet challenging enough to move pupils on quickly to the next level. In writing, especially, too often all pupils regardless of ability are learning the same things.
- Behaviour is managed well in classes and relationships are good. Pupils enjoy their lessons and concentrate carefully when the quality of teaching is good. In assemblies and many lessons, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported effectively. Pupils have frequent opportunities to hold short discussions with one another. These help deepen their

understanding and develop well their speaking and listening skills.

- In the Reception class, staff plan exciting activities for children to enjoy both indoors and outside. They make good progress, especially in their personal and social development and in their early reading. Children enjoy using their developing knowledge of letters and sounds to help them read new words.
- In the best lessons, teaching is fast-paced and teachers display good subject knowledge. In a good literacy lesson for pupils in Years 5 and 6, pupils were set the task of improving a piece of writing. The teacher set and maintained a brisk pace throughout the lesson, changed activities frequently to maintain pupils' interest and made good links to previous learning.
- The support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is appropriately planned. However, the support is not always as effective as it could be. Sometimes, the adults assisting pupils do too much for them, restricting independence and limiting their learning.
- The marking of the pupils' writing, and the feedback that teachers give pupils, are good in their literacy books. There are examples of older pupils responding positively to their teachers' comments. However, this is not consistent and pupils' writing in other subjects is not marked or commented on to the same degree. In some cases, basic errors and mistakes are not rectified.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- During the inspection, pupils' behaviour around school was invariably good and pupils said that behaviour was always like this. Behaviour is good rather than outstanding because when work is too easy or too hard for them, pupils lose concentration and interest in their work. Also the presentation of pupils' work is inconsistent; some pupils take little care to ensure their work is well presented.
- In the Reception class, children behave well. Good relationships between adults and children help them to settle and feel happy and safe in school. Children follow instructions willingly and are learning the importance of taking turns and considering others.
- The school has a calm, well-ordered and positive atmosphere, and pupils are happy in school. Many pupils show good attitudes to learning and enjoy extra responsibilities, such as being members of the school council. Pupils listen to others well and enjoy opportunities to work collaboratively.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and all parents who responded on the online questionnaire agreed their children are kept safe. Pupils know how to keep safe and speak confidently about the dangers of drugs, of the internet and of speaking to strangers.
- Pupils show a good understanding of different forms of bullying including name-calling, racism and cyber-bullying. They say there is very little in their school, and one boy in Year 6 said, 'In fact I can't ever remember any bullying happening here!' They are confident that if it did occur, it would be dealt with quickly and fairly.
- Attendance is above average, reflecting both pupils' enjoyment of learning and the school's effective work in encouraging all pupils to attend regularly.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- School leaders are committed to school improvement, and the school improvement plan identifies some of the right priorities, for example raising attainment in writing. However, lesson observations focus too much on teaching skills and pupils' attitudes to learning rather than the impact of teaching on all pupils' learning.
- Self-evaluation is overly generous as too much reliance has been placed on termly progress data without verifying that this apparently good and outstanding progress is a true reflection of the work in pupils' books over time and of the quality of day-by-day teaching in all classes. Consequently, the school's systems for managing teachers' performance do not have sufficient influence on improving the quality of teaching, as targets are not specific enough to meet the development needs of individual teachers.
- The curriculum is broad and interesting, although as yet it does not promote pupils' good achievement overall. Also, the opportunities to extend and enhance pupils' writing skills in, for example, science, history and geography are not exploited well enough. However, it does promote pupils' personal development well, and pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. The curriculum is further enriched through a variety of clubs, visits and residential trips.
- Parents have positive views of the school's work, and regular newsletters ensure parents are kept fully aware of things that have happened in school and forthcoming events. All parents responding on Parent View say they would recommend this school to others and are particularly appreciative of the quality of care their children receive.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for this school although the school improvement advisor visits the school termly to discuss self-evaluation and pupils' achievement. When the substantive headteacher was absent from school, the local authority was instrumental in securing an acting headteacher.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors provide good support and ask leaders some challenging questions. They regularly visit the school, work with pupils and receive reports from the headteacher and the local authority. However, they have an over-generous view of the school's effectiveness as they do not consider well enough the impact of teaching on pupils' learning. They have not checked regularly how the headteacher is managing teachers' performance and ensuring that pay awards are linked to this performance. They know that the pupil premium money has provided a teacher for small-group sessions and enrichment activities. However, they are less knowledgeable about its impact on the achievement of eligible pupils. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	112798
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	403189

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	86
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Linda Shipley
Headteacher	Val McKie
Date of previous school inspection	25 June 2008
Telephone number	0114 2890413
Fax number	01629 640874
Email address	info@barlow.derbyshire.sch.uk

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