

Barrow Hedges Primary School

Harbury Road, Carshalton, SM5 4LA

Inspection dates

20–21 March 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

- There are weaknesses in the quality of teaching provided for pupils in English and mathematics, especially in some classes in Key Stage 1 and in lower Key Stage 2.
- Teachers' marking does not regularly provide pupils with enough guidance on how to improve. They do not always ensure that pupils have read or responded to their comments.
- Checks on the quality of teaching since September 2012 have not always been accurate enough to identify precisely what needs to be done to improve.
- Information on progress has not been used to inform senior leaders about the current achievement of groups of pupils in order that appropriate adjustments to teaching can be made.
- Disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, and those known to be eligible for the pupil premium do not make good progress because additional support for them is not consistently well targeted.
- Temporary arrangements during a period of staff changes at senior leadership level have had a negative impact on the school's performance, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- Attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics has been consistently, significantly above national averages since 2008.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage, which is exceptionally well resourced, make a good start to their education.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are good. They are usually mature, polite and courteous in lessons, even when teaching is not engaging.
- The previous track record of the substantive headteacher, together with that of the new deputy headteacher, indicates that the school has strong capacity to improve.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are good. Most express very positive views, with the overwhelming majority confirming that their children feel safe in school.
- The governing body knows the school well and has ensured that safeguarding arrangements are robust.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons or parts of lessons, of which five were joint observations with senior leaders.
- The team held meetings with the interim headteacher, the substantive headteacher and other senior leaders.
- A meeting was also held with the Chair of the Governing Body and a parent governor. A meeting with a local authority adviser was arranged separately.
- Inspectors considered parents' and carers' views of the school through the 87 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Responses to 11 staff questionnaires were also considered.
- The team listened to pupils read and held a meeting with a group of Year 6 pupils.
- Short observations took place outside classrooms to evaluate pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors examined a number of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, records of checks on the quality of teaching and local authority reports. They also looked at records relating to attendance, safeguarding and behaviour, and the school's improvement plan. In addition, they scrutinised pupils' workbooks.
- Year 4 pupils and staff were away on a school journey during the inspection.

Inspection team

Angela Konarzewski, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Peter Thrussell

Additional Inspector

Noureddin Khassal

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average-sized primary school. It is expanding and is now three form entry up to Year 3. Building work to increase the number of classrooms is ongoing.
- The majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by the school at school action is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- Fewer than 10% of pupils are entitled to support under the pupil premium (which provides additional funding for looked after children, those known to be eligible for free school meals and the children of service families). This proportion is much lower than the national average. In the 2012 Year 6 cohort, there were no looked after children or children of service families)
- The school currently meets the government's floor standards which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- Since September 2012, the school has been led by an interim headteacher, deployed from an agency. The substantive headteacher, who was previously the deputy headteacher, returned from her maternity leave part time two weeks before the inspection. She will take up her full-time post before Easter. The deputy headteacher and four other members of staff, two of whom are newly qualified teachers, were also newly appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, especially in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2, so that it is at least good by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve and building more precisely on pupils' prior learning
 - reducing the amount of teacher talk in lessons and ensuring there is a brisk pace
 - improving the guidance given to pupils through marking, making sure they have understood, responded to, and applied feedback given.
- Accelerate pupils' progress especially for potentially vulnerable pupils, by:
 - increasing opportunities for pupils to read across the curriculum and in lessons
 - establishing regular opportunities for pupils to write at length
 - ensuring pupils have opportunities to use and apply what they have learnt in mathematics in real-life contexts
 - establishing additional targeted help for disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and pupils eligible for the pupil premium that ensures they make good progress.
- Strengthen leadership and management at all levels by:
 - providing an effective support programme to develop teachers' skills
 - ensuring senior leaders, including the inclusion manager, use information on pupils' progress to identify underachievement and take swift, effective action
 - establishing systems for checking on the impact of the pupil premium expenditure to make sure any gaps in achievement are closing.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because progress from above-average starting points is too variable across the school. Progress in Key Stage 1 and Years 3 and 4 does not match the good progress seen in the Early Years Foundation Stage or Years 5 and 6.
- Most pupils enter the Nursery and Reception with skills that are above those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage because they are given good opportunities to develop their skills, especially in their personal, social and emotional development, in communication, language and literacy, and in mathematics.
- As a result of this good start, pupils enter Year 1 with attainment that is significantly above average. From Years 1 to 4, however, their progress slows because the quality of teaching is too variable..
- In Years 5 and 6 pupils progress speeds up because of effective and consistently good teaching. This results in attainment in English and mathematics that is significantly above average by the time pupils leave the school. These outcomes, however, mask some slower progress further down the school.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make slower progress when tasks do not match their needs and abilities appropriately. Similarly, progress dips when teachers do not build on pupils' prior knowledge, skills and understanding effectively. At the end of Year 6, the very few pupils supported by pupil premium funding were approximately six months behind their school peers in English and just over 18 months behind in mathematics.
- Progress in reading is patchy because pupils do not consistently apply knowledge of the links between letters and sounds to decode words of which they are unsure. The teaching of letters and sounds in Key Stage 1 has improved but there is still more to be done to plug gaps for older pupils. Opportunities to practise reading skills across the curriculum are sometimes missed.
- Progress in writing is hampered where marking and feedback do not give clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve their work. Pupils are not regularly given the chance to practise writing at length. Even so, high levels of attainment were noted in lessons, for example in Year 5 where adjectives such as, 'squinting'; 'chestnut brown'; 'distraught' and 'effulgent' were used by pupils of high ability with confidence.
- In mathematics, where a specialist teacher is deployed to teach and advise on the subject, most pupils are making steady progress. Higher ability pupils, supported through links with a secondary school, attain at particularly high levels. However, some pupils, particularly those of lower ability, make slower progress because opportunities to use and apply learning in real-life contexts are often missed.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not yet consistently good enough to ensure that progress is always good, especially in Key Stage 1 and lower Key Stage 2. Good or better teaching, seen in some lessons and year groups, is not yet the norm across the school.
- In lessons that require improvement the pace of teaching is often slow, teachers talk for too long or there is a lack of challenge because of low expectations, so pupils lose focus and they 'switch off'. Intended learning is not always made explicit. Too often, pupils record their answers on mini whiteboards where mistakes and misconceptions are wiped away and cannot, therefore, be addressed by teachers or teaching assistants.
- When teaching assistants are appropriately directed to support pupils effectively, they have a very positive impact on pupils' progress, but this is not always the case.
- Marking of pupils' work in writing and mathematics does not consistently give good guidance to pupils on what they need to do to improve their work and many basic errors are not corrected.

Pupils are not given regular opportunities to act on feedback or to respond to teachers' comments. In some instances, teachers' handwriting is difficult to read.

- Where teaching is best, progress can be excellent. For example, in an outstanding lesson in Year 1, the teacher illustrated multiplication within the amusing context of octopuses wearing socks. Pupils of all abilities were appropriately challenged and highly engaged and so their progress was rapid.
- In Years 5 and 6 some effective questioning by teachers to establish pupils' understanding was observed. Good use of 'talk partner' work ensured that all pupils were actively engaged in lessons and pupils were able to respond to teachers' challenging questions following opportunities to discuss them with a partner.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Good relationships between staff and pupils promote positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour, particularly in good or better lessons, in assemblies and around the school.
- Inspectors found pupils to be welcoming, polite and courteous as well as confident and articulate, and able to sustain good eye contact in conversation.
- Where teaching is engaging and interesting, pupils display exemplary attitudes and behaviour. However, in some classes, where teaching requires improvement, pupils become restless and inattentive. Behaviour in these classes is not always well managed.
- Behaviour outside lessons is usually good, although some boisterous playground behaviour was observed during the inspection. However, the overwhelming majority of parents and carers say their children feel safe in school and pupils back up this view.
- Pupils have a good understanding of all kinds of bullying, including cyber-bullying about which they have received training from a local authority expert. They say there is very little bullying and that, when it does occur, it is always dealt with appropriately.
- The promotion of equality of opportunity is good, and pupils' rare experiences of discrimination are tackled rigorously so they are not repeated.
- Attendance is above average, demonstrating that pupils enjoy coming to school.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because too many systems and procedures were not effectively followed during the period of interim leadership from September 2012. As a result, the education provided by the school has not been of a good enough standard to ensure pupils make good progress in their learning in all classes.
- For example, an effective system for checking and evaluating the progress of pupils that was introduced by the new substantive headteacher prior to her maternity leave has not been utilised since September 2012. Consequently, senior leaders, including the inclusion manager, do not currently have a clear overview of pupils' progress. In addition, staff have not received training in implementing a new system recommended by the local authority.
- The evaluation of the quality of teaching since September has, in some cases, been too generous. Teaching that requires improvement has not been adequately addressed. Newly appointed staff have not been appropriately supported to ensure good quality teaching. As a result, weaknesses in teaching have allowed pupils' progress to dip unchecked in some classes and lessons.
- Partnerships with parents and carers are highly positive as evidenced through Parent View.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of interesting activities that add to their enjoyment for learning. The comprehensive programme of curriculum enrichment includes residential visits, visitors to the school, after-school clubs, and musical and sporting activities. These are displayed in a calendar on the school's website, providing good information for parents and carers.
- The school's core values: responsibility; honesty; care; and respect are regularly discussed and

are on display around the school. They underpin the school's good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- The track records of the substantive headteacher and deputy headteacher, coupled with the support of a knowledgeable governing body and the local authority, indicate that the school has good capacity to improve. Prior to the period of interim leadership the local authority provided good support for the school. From September 2012 they were not thorough enough in checking how effectively leaders were managing the school. They are currently working closely with the new leadership team and governors to quickly address these issues.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have a sound understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They know that provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. They are aware that standards, particularly in relation to the quality of teaching, were not maintained during the recent period of staff changes. In order to better hold the school to account, they use information on pupils' progress to compare their achievement with others nationally. As a result they know that standards pupils reach are high and that pupils' progress is stronger in writing and mathematics than in reading. However, during the period of interim leadership, they did not have access to greater detail on pupils' achievement which has hindered their effectiveness in checking whether pupil premium expenditure has been used well. They have sought to address their concerns during this period and are ensuring that they now receive all the information they require to challenge the school's leaders more effectively. Governors have a sound understanding of systems to manage the performance of teachers and the link between teacher performance and pay progression. They have ensured that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements. Governors regularly seek additional support or training to maintain their effectiveness.

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	102959
Local authority	Sutton
Inspection number	402906

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	591
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alison Myerscough
Headteacher	Peter Thorpe (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	25–26 June 2008
Telephone number	020 86434428
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Email address	barrowhedgesprimary@suttonlea.org

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