

Barmston Village Primary School

Barmston Centre, Washington, Tyne and Wear, NE38 8JA

Inspection dates 15–16 January 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- From starting points that are often well below those typical for their age, pupils make good progress to achieve above average standards in reading and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this to challenge pupils to progress quickly. They give clear explanations and effectively engage pupils' interest in learning.
- The school is calm and supportive. It provides a nurturing environment for all pupils, particularly for those pupils who find it more difficult than others to engage in learning.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are happy and behave well, wanting to learn. Parents say that staff care for their children well and make sure that any concerns are addressed quickly.
- Senior leaders work closely with other leaders in the school to support staff development which has led to better progress and standards for pupils, especially for the older ones.
- There is good understanding of the schools' strengths and weaknesses. Leaders and governors identify how the school can become even better and work closely and successfully with teachers to achieve this.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Attainment in writing is lower than in reading and mathematics, especially for boys.
- Not all teachers plan tasks for pupils that provide good enough opportunities to improve the quality of their writing both in English lessons and when working in other subjects.
- Most teaching is good rather than outstanding. Pupils are not always challenged well enough to achieve their best.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, some of the activities fail to encourage children to learn, investigate or be creative and so their progress slows.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out by two inspectors over two days. They visited sixteen lessons or parts of lessons and listened to pupils read. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher took part in a joint observation with inspectors.
- Separate discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body, the school adviser and a representative from the local authority. The opinions of 25 members of staff were also considered from their questionnaire responses.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, looked at children's learning journals, staff planning journals, data on pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation and information relating to the welfare of pupils and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils during morning playtime and lunchtime, and attended an assembly.
- Because there were insufficient responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), inspectors took account of the results of the school's own questionnaire to parents and held discussions with parents throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Kate Pringle, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lesley Richardson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is significantly above average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those children in local authority care and those from service families.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is broadly average.
- The proportion supported at schools action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- More pupils enter and leave the school other than at the usual times when compared with other schools.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing, especially for boys, by:
 - ensuring that teachers use their understanding of the levels at which pupils are working to plan tasks that help them improve the quality of the content of their writing
 - giving pupils the chance to practice their writing skills, at the level they achieve in English, when they write in other subjects.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
 - making sure that pupils of differing abilities are fully challenged at the right level through tasks which help them to make consistently good progress through the school
 - developing the range of activities on offer in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children can make more progress and be more investigative and creative when they make their choices both indoors and outside.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery with skills which are well below those typical for their age. They gain confidence quickly and make good progress although their attainment is still below that expected when they leave the Reception class.
- Learning about letters and the sounds that they make (phonics) is strong with pupils making good progress to achieve levels which are above average in the Year 1 phonic screening check. This has a good impact upon pupils' reading abilities as they confidently break words into smaller sections and sound them out.
- By the end of Year 2 pupils consistently achieve in line with national averages in all subjects showing good progress from their individual starting points in Year 1.
- Over the past three years there has been gradual improvement in the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 because of changes in how they were taught. From average levels in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in previous years, pupils' attainment in 2013 shot up to well above average in reading and mathematics. In writing, however, there were no such dramatic gains, and an average standard was maintained.
- Boys' attainment in writing was considerably below that of girls. The school has put a number of good strategies in place to encourage boys.
- Pupils' achievement overall is good. Throughout the school pupils' progress is good in reading and mathematics but slower in writing. Pupils currently in Year 6 are not set to achieve quite as well as last year. Attainment in reading and mathematics is above average and attainment in writing, as with last year, matches the national average. These results indicate good achievement for these pupils from their starting points.
- Written work is often short and pupils do not always have the opportunity to use the skills they have been taught as they write about their experiences.
- School data and national test results show that pupils who are eligible for free school meals make good progress in line with other pupils. By the time they leave Year 6, there is little difference in their performance in reading and writing to that of their peers. There is a slightly wider gap in mathematics. Pupil premium funds have been spent carefully to provide learning in smaller groups and a clear focus on reading and writing for these pupils.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well in line with other pupils because their progress is carefully tracked and they receive support which is skilled and appropriate to their needs.
- More able pupils generally make good progress but few have attained the higher grades in the past. Present indications are that, because of greater challenge for these pupils, some achievements at level 3 for Year 2 pupils and level 6 for Year 6 pupils are anticipated.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and some is outstanding. Pupils respond well to lessons because they respect their teachers and want to please. They settle quickly and always try their best to achieve what their teachers ask of them. Work is well presented in books and pupils take great pride in their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, learning that is led directly by teachers is excellent and progress is rapid. However, when children are free to make their own choices, progress is not as fast. Often, the activities on offer are not planned well enough to excite children's desire to learn, investigate or to be creative.
- Teachers prepare children well for their learning and use a range of fun and interesting activities, to keep them paying close attention as the lesson unfolds. For example, in a literacy lesson, when children shared their ideas to describe a pair of gloves, the teacher pretended to

make mistakes as she wrote down the sentence. Children enthusiastically corrected the errors, spelt out words the teacher got 'stuck' on and made sure that punctuation was correct. The level of enthusiasm was tremendous with children highly motivated and making excellent use of past learning.

- In most lessons teachers match work carefully to the needs of pupils well. Teachers know the levels that pupils are working at and use this information to set activities that enable them to make good progress. In a minority of lessons, this is not always the case. As a result, a few pupils are not always given tasks that are challenging enough to help them make even faster progress, especially in their writing.
- There is not enough expectation for pupils to improve the quality of their writing. For instance, work may be headed 'to write for an audience' but pupils are not aware of what specifically the teacher will mark work against so that they can check their work and improve it.
- Opportunities to use writing skills across other subjects vary. Although in Year 6 pupils write at length in other subjects using their developing skills, in other year groups opportunities to do so are fewer and can be restricted by, for example, the use of worksheets.
- Teachers have high expectations about the quality of presentation in books. It is excellent. They mark work regularly and many use marking to share with pupils how well they have progressed and how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are very well trained and work in close partnership with teachers to drive learning forwards. They complement teachers well through their excellent support of pupils in small groups and within the classrooms. They have a considerable part to play in the development of those who find learning more difficult.
- Parents believe that, because of good teaching, their children progress well and are well prepared for their move to secondary school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- In this welcoming school, staff recognise the qualities of individual pupils and support each one of them to become thoughtful, caring of others and to make the best of themselves. Pupils enjoy school where they are happy and feel safe. Parents support these views and would recommend the school without question.
- The behaviour of pupils is good. There is a strong code of acceptable behaviour and this is applied consistently by every member of staff. Pupils respond to it very well and voice their dismay at the thought of being put on a 'grey' or 'black cloud'.
- Pupils behave well in the dining room and in the playground. They are kind and caring towards each other and polite and well-mannered to staff and visitors. They know that adults care for them and that they will listen to their ideas and concerns with due consideration. Older pupils very much enjoy their work as buddies as they, in their words, 'provide a good example' for others, especially younger children.
- Attendance is average. A small proportion of pupils arrive at school after registration. The levels of fixed and permanent exclusions and persistent absences are reducing.
- Pupils understand the different forms bullying can take. They and their parents recognise that incidents of bullying can occur but that these are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff and incidents are now considerably reduced.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. There are many opportunities for pupils to learn responsibility for their own safety through e-safety, cycling, 'stranger danger' and additional swimming for those who do not achieve the minimum levels of ability.
- Parents are pleased with the individual personal support the school gives. They speak positively about the friendly climate of the school, good relationships and the ease of communication with all staff.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy head value the skills of all staff and manage their work highly effectively so as to provide the best possible education and care for pupils. They have an excellent understanding of the strengths of the school and, where there are weaknesses, a carefully constructed development plan identifies areas for improvement and how these will be achieved. Past actions are carefully scrutinised to determine whether there is room for further improvement.
- Senior and middle leaders carefully monitor their areas of responsibility and can clearly demonstrate the improvements that they have achieved: the improving progress at the end of Year 6, the integration of the new English and mathematics programmes and the good quality teaching of phonics.
- Tracking of pupils' progress is rigorous and there is a good understanding of the process of assessment, helped by the sharing of findings with other local schools. Senior leaders check the quality of teaching carefully and accurately and when weaker teaching is identified appropriate training is put in place. The quality of teaching for each individual teacher is linked to the progress pupils make in their class and this in turn is linked to pay awards. The process is rigorous and there are high expectations of staff to meet the required levels in order to advance.
- The curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. Work is well under way to introduce the new National Curriculum in September 2014. Pupils enjoy the visits they make to learn about different places and times. Visitors to school add to their understanding of the wealth of experiences available to them outside of their village.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well and is reflected in the good quality of behaviour and the thoughtful nature of pupils. The school has successfully promoted cultural development since the last inspection and pupils benefit from a greater understanding of different communities and cultures locally and in other countries.
- Additional funds, such as those for the pupil premium and for primary sports, are carefully allocated to make sure pupils make good progress and to promote their physical well-being. The positive impact of the use of pupil premium funds is shared with parents through the school website. Leaders are presently monitoring the increased uptake in sports, the improving performance of pupils in sport and the improvements in the teaching of Physical Education through classes led by trained coaches.
- Although in some lessons there can be lower levels of challenge, this is a school that is committed to all pupils having equal opportunities to succeed. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated.
- The local authority believes this to be a good school and provides light touch support in line with their 'supporting schools' policy. In addition, the school buys in extra advice from outside the authority which most recently has been concerned with developing the roles and responsibilities of middle leaders and governors, both to good effect.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They draw on the expertise of individual governors and provide good support for the school. They recognise that the quality of teaching is improving and how this has impacted positively upon the outcomes for pupils. With their additional training over the past year, governors are more aware of their role in questioning school leaders about the progress of pupils. They use the school development plan to monitor improvements and because of their better understanding are becoming stronger in their challenge to senior leaders.
 - Governors carefully manage the way that staff are rewarded. Finances are overseen well and the school is held to account for the spending of additional monies, such as pupil premium funding, which are clearly accounted for on the website. Safeguarding practices are well documented and meet statutory requirements.

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	108835
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	431382

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	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs C St Clair
Headteacher	Mrs J Harman
Date of previous school inspection	28 January 2009
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