

Barton Hill Academy

Barton Hill Road, Torquay, TQ2 8JA

Inspection dates 24–25 April 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected	N/A
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- As a result of the inspiring leadership of the headteacher, the whole staff team and the governors share a fierce ambition for continual improvement.
- Teaching is consistently good, and some is outstanding, following the effective action taken to improve teaching and the excellent programme of staff development.
- Children settle very quickly into the Early Years Foundation Stage. They are given things to do that interest and excite them. Staff work very effectively to develop the children's speaking skills and widen their vocabulary.
- Achievement is good. All groups of pupils make good progress in English and mathematics from the time they enter school.
- Pupils with speech and language difficulties in the resource base make particularly good progress because they are taught very well.
- The individual learning and needs of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable are met extremely well. The very high quality of care shown to the pupils and their families is a strength of the school.
- Teamwork and collaboration are essential elements of the school's approach and this is reflected in the pupils' excellent attitudes to learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding.
- Parents and carers are confident that the school works hard to keep their children safe and takes good care of them.
- Every opportunity is taken to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to widen the pupils' view of the world. They enjoy all that school has to offer them; there is a vibrant climate for learning.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- At times, pupils do not use their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects to extend their use in different ways.
- There is some inconsistency in how pupils are expected to respond to teachers' marking.
- Occasionally, higher-ability pupils are not given work that is hard enough to quicken their progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 28 lessons, four of which were joint observations with school leaders.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils; many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and break times.
- The inspectors held meetings with five members of the governing body, including the Chair, and the Regional Director of the Academy chain. A telephone conversation was held with an outside consultant who has been working with the school for the last five years.
- The inspectors held meetings with school staff, including senior and middle leaders and teachers with responsibility for key areas. A discussion was held with members of the school's pastoral team.
- Inspectors heard children read and also observed morning playtime and lunch breaks. They attended two assemblies. Pupils' work was scrutinised.
- Note was taken of the 63 responses to the staff questionnaire, the 56 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and responses to the school's own survey of parents' and carers' views. Inspectors met some parents and carers informally at the beginning of the school day.
- A range of documents was looked at, including the school's data on pupils' progress, planning, school self-evaluation and monitoring, as well as records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anne Wesley, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Robert Arnold

Additional Inspector

Wendy Mariott

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this academy

- The school is much larger than the average-sized primary school.
- It has 21 single-age classes, which include three Reception classes and a Nursery.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A much larger than average proportion of pupils are eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children with a parent or carer in the armed services.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is well above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also well above the national average.
- A breakfast and after-school club, which is managed by the governing body, is available.
- The school has a special educational needs resource base provision for 10 pupils with speech and language difficulties.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has a wide range of awards including the Inclusion Flagship Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark, ICT Mark, Gold Arts Mark, Healthy Schools Plus and the International Schools Award.
- Barton Hill Primary converted to become an academy school on 1 September 2012. When the predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality of teaching from good to outstanding by:
 - providing more opportunities for the pupils, especially the more able, to use their basic skills more creatively in their writing and in solving problems in mathematics
 - ensuring pupils regularly act upon their teachers' advice on how to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils enter the school with skills and knowledge much lower than typically seen for their age. They make good progress through the school so that, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain standards broadly in line with national standards in reading, writing and mathematics. To achieve this, many pupils in Key Stage 2 make better progress than might be expected of them; however, fewer achieve the higher levels at the end of Year 6 than other pupils do nationally.
- Good progress begins in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Children do especially well in speaking and listening even though many have poor speaking skills and a very limited vocabulary when they start school. This is because all adults encourage children to explain or describe their thinking as fully as possible and do not accept just one- or two-word answers.
- Good progress continues through Key Stage 1, with teachers placing a strong and effective emphasis on improving writing. Teachers prepare the pupils well before they start writing so that even those most reluctant to write are enthusiastic about their tasks. Pupils in Year 1 are fascinated by the life cycle of butterflies and are being very well prepared for writing their own account of how caterpillars change into butterflies.
- Phonics (the sounds that letters make) are now taught regularly and systematically in Reception and Key Stage 1. As a result, pupils' early reading and writing skills are improving. They make particularly good progress in phonics in Year 2.
- Pupils' learning in lessons, work in books and the school's own checks of pupils' progress show many pupils are continuing to make rapid progress, especially in writing and mathematics. Currently, in Year 5 and 6, there is evidence of more-able pupils beginning to produce more work at the higher levels.
- Teachers work together to monitor the progress of all pupils, with the result that support is quickly targeted where it is needed. The support is delivered by skilled teaching assistants under the guidance of an extremely talented special needs coordinator. Therefore, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress.
- Pupils in the resource base for speech and language difficulties make very good progress. Their individual needs are catered for especially well to help them achieve as well as others in the school.
- The good progress of pupils supported by pupil premium funding demonstrates the positive impact of this support. The gap between these pupils and their peers is wide, especially in early communication skills as they enter Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, it has begun to close. However, in tests at the end of Year 6 in 2013, results showed that these pupils made faster progress than other pupils in the group, closing the gap in mathematics and reading, and ending the year just four months behind the others in writing.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching, including of reading, writing and mathematics, is consistently good. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books show that teaching has been typically good over time.
- The youngest children quickly become enthusiastic about learning. They are curious about the world around them and often enthralled by the activities planned for them. Nursery children were enthusiastic about walking through their 'class jungle' hunting for animals and were very keen to learn the names of those they found.
- Throughout the school, teachers work hard to inspire the pupils. Reception children still talk excitedly about the chicks they hatched. The event inspired a high standard of both creative and written work.
- A new topic for Year 5's new topic on space began with an 'Alien Day' with pupils and staff dressed up. Pupils engaged very well with the 'Jabberwocky' nonsense poem, seeing it as an

alien language, acting out the nonsense words in the poem while dressed as aliens. This helped pupils come naturally to a very good understanding of how to recognise the verbs and adverbs within the poem.

- Pupils are encouraged to challenge themselves within lessons. In a lesson for Year 5, pupils were encouraged to try out some new learning in groups, then in pairs and then 'go solo'. They knew that when they had understood the concept once, they could do it by themselves; they all tried to do this. They also had the opportunity to make the calculations more difficult, which many did, with the result that some pupils were multiplying four-digit numbers effectively.
- Calculation skills are good and practised regularly; however, there are few opportunities for pupils to use them to solve problems in a variety of situations.
- Teachers have used a very structured approach to improving writing skills which has been extremely effective. Pupils' own writing is based on a story that they become familiar with and then use what they have learnt to write their own. In Year 4, pupils wrote their own 'legend' by studying an example very carefully. Pupils write competently in lessons structured by the teachers. They do not often apply their skills in other subjects or develop their creative writing skills.
- Throughout the school, pupils are taught to read well. The use of a good text and the promotion of a deep understanding of the text are effective. For example, a Year 6 class could identify what they needed to put into a persuasive argument by analysing together an article about endangered animals.
- Teaching assistants ensure books are changed frequently. The teachers work hard to encourage pupils to read more frequently at home.
- Pupils have their own targets in numeracy and literacy. This is often reinforced in their exercise books where teachers' marking shows them where they have been successful; however, it does not consistently show them what they need to do next to improve their work. When teachers do give advice, pupils do not always act upon it.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, as well as those who are known to be eligible for the pupil premium. They do this by working closely and effectively with them, whether in class, on individual programmes, or in small groups. The individual programmes planned by the teacher for the pupils in the resource base ensure their specific needs are met very well.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. There is an exceptionally warm, welcoming atmosphere throughout the school. Pupils are always very friendly and extremely polite. They get on very well with each other and with adults. They enjoy school and are keen to learn. They are expected to behave extremely well, and they do.
- Teachers manage pupils' behaviour extremely well. They create a very effective climate for learning. Pupils respond extremely positively to the high expectations of them in lessons. Their fast progress is only possible because of their positive behaviour and attitudes to learning.
- Children in Nursery and Reception learn the rules of good behaviour quickly. In the Nursery, they learn to play together, persevere with activities and begin to choose their own resources. In Reception, they show an increasing maturity as their ability to concentrate grows. For example, one of a group of children studying a plant at length explained quite coherently that the roots were 'like tubes sucking up water'.
- The behaviour of the group of pupils who may have displayed challenging behaviour previously has improved dramatically over time as a result of a highly skilled, consistent approach in dealing with their particular needs. Typically, as one Year 6 pupil said, 'Some people would get really angry in lessons, now that doesn't happen. It is stopped before it starts so we all just get on with what we are doing.'
- Pupils have a very good understanding of the different forms bullying can take. They say it is extremely rare, but that any problems 'are very quickly sorted out'.

- The pupils would know how to act if something seemed dangerous and they are secure in the knowledge that help is on hand should they need it. They feel very safe.
- The school's work to keep the pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school's ability to keep their children safe and to deal with any problems quickly.
- Pupils enjoy taking responsibility and contributing to the life of the school. They are proud to be on the School Council where they say their views are listened to. They are keen to be Barton Buddies and peer mediators so that they can help 'everyone to enjoy playtimes'.
- Attendance has continued to improve through a very wide range of strategies and is now at average levels. The skilled group of adults who work with the more vulnerable families are especially effective. The pupils like the rewards for full attendance, but more importantly, they want to come to school.

The leadership and management are good

- The strong leadership team and governors have a clear vision to improve standards by continually improving the quality of teaching across the school.
- The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well through very systematic and rigorous checking of pupils' progress and the quality of teaching by the school leaders. The headteacher has a very clear picture of what must be done next. Senior and middle leaders have a systematic approach to checking teachers' performance; as well as checking progress, they monitor planning, watch lessons and regularly check pupils' work. They are supported in their work towards continual improvement by belonging to the academy chain.
- Very effective performance management provides support, constructive criticism and appropriate training for the teachers' work in the classroom. Actions to bring about improvement are always followed through to see if they are successful. As a result, the quality of teaching is now consistently good, with more elements which are outstanding.
- The school provides very high-quality care and guidance resulting in most pupils' highly positive attitudes towards school and learning; this underpins their improving achievement. The breakfast club is well run and ensures that pupils have a good start to the day. They take this one step further by offering pupils free toast later in the morning.
- The pastoral team work well with parents and carers, especially with the group of parents and carers who find contact with school difficult.
- The school is diligent and effective in promoting equality of opportunity and eliminating any potential discrimination.
- The wide range of subjects taught provides many opportunities for pupils to extend their experiences of the local and wider community. The lessons are often enhanced by residential trips, visits and visitors, all widening the pupils' view of the world. Singing and making music further enhance what the school offers the pupils.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is central to all of the subjects offered, and helps pupils understand their rights and the rights of others.
- The school uses additional physical education funding to provide experiences in a range of sports for all pupils as well as developing teachers' skills in a wide variety of sports. The school aims to increase the number of pupils who can swim 25 metres and offer more extra-curricular activities to more pupils so promoting active healthy lifestyles.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body provide effective support and challenge that is based on a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development within the context of the school and the community it serves. They work closely with the headteacher to ensure that the school maximises the benefits to be gained from belonging to the academy chain, especially in accessing training for themselves and the teachers. They understand fully the management of teachers' performance and the implementation of Teachers' Standards and

how they affect salary progression. Governors make sure that the school funds, including pupil premium and the sports grant, are used effectively. They also make sure that statutory responsibilities, such as safeguarding requirements, are fully in place and effective.

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	138369
Local authority	Torquay
Inspection number	440042

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	558
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Beecham
Headteacher	Jane Young
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	0180 3327161
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