

Barlaston CofE (C) First School

Broughton Crescent, Barlaston, Stoke-on-Trent, ST12 9DB

Inspection dates 11–12 September 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- All pupils, regardless of their background, age or ability, achieve well within the school's warm and purposeful atmosphere.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders and managers have maintained the school's strengths and made further improvements, such as to attendance and to the teaching and achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Imaginatively planned lessons engage and interest pupils. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning because the rich curriculum stimulates their interest.
- Older pupils look after younger ones. They work as 'Play Leaders' and 'Playground Buddies' and assist pupils to sort out any problems they have with others. This means that pupils feel safe in school.
- Educational visits and visitors, and the school links with a school in Ethiopia, contribute well to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils are kind, polite and courteous and behave well in and out of lessons. They have good attitudes to learning.
- Parents and carers are confident that their children are looked after well and feel safe in school.
- The headteacher, fully supported by senior staff, sets high standards and expects them to be met, so that staff morale is high and staff are proud to work in the school.
- Governors know the school well and are vigorous and effective in holding the senior leaders to account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers do not always set challenging enough work for the more-able pupils and some do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Teachers' marking is not as helpful in mathematics as in English. Teachers' comments do not always ensure that pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their writing skills in subjects other than English and they are not given enough opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to real-life problem solving.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed six lessons or part lessons, including one on phonics (letters and the sounds they make). Four lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Additionally the inspector observed a group reading session and a whole-school assembly.
- The inspector heard individual pupils read to him.
- The school's work was observed and the inspector looked at a variety of documents, including records of behaviour, assessments of pupils' attainment and progress, records of attendance, documents relating to safeguarding and the school improvement plan.
- The inspector looked at pupils' work and had discussions with pupils, staff, school leaders, governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The nine questionnaires returned by staff were analysed.
- The 23 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) made in the last year were taken into account, as was the school's own parent questionnaire. The inspector spoke informally to parents bringing their children to school and to a parent whose child attends the school breakfast club. He also took into account letters and emails from parents.

Inspection team

David Edwards, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average. It is located in a rural setting.
- Pupil numbers have grown since the last inspection, allowing the school to introduce single-age classes in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2.
- The large majority of pupils have a White British heritage and almost all pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives additional funding through the pupil premium is average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for children who are in the care of the local authority and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is broadly average. The proportion supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. These needs relate mainly to moderate learning difficulties or behaviour, emotional or social difficulties.
- The school has recently opened a 'breakfast club' for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - ensuring that teachers always have high expectations of what pupils can achieve
 - consistently setting challenging work for pupils, particularly the more able
 - improving the quality and consistency of teachers' marking so that pupils are clear about how well they are doing and how they can improve their work, particularly in mathematics.
- Raise achievement further in English and mathematics by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills to real-life problem-solving situations.
 - presenting pupils with more opportunities to practise their writing skills across different subjects.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a very clear vision of where they want the school to be and how to get there. They are very ambitious and together they have created a culture where teaching and good behaviour can flourish. They have moved the school forward to raise standards.
- Each teacher willingly takes on at least one leadership role, such as overseeing individual subjects. Teachers carry out their responsibilities effectively.
- The school's view of its effectiveness is accurate and links well to the school improvement plan.
- Leaders manage the performance of staff rigorously. They ensure a tight match between the needs of the whole school and individual staff, and meet them through extensive opportunities for training and support.
- Teaching is monitored regularly and steps are taken to ensure that it is improving. The school has ensured that there is good support for the more vulnerable pupils.
- The school's evaluation of its own work is accurate, and leaders know the school's strengths and the areas it needs to develop further. Since the previous inspection, they have improved attendance, the progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and, in particular, standards in writing. This demonstrates the school's capacity for further improvement.
- Pupils have memorable experiences through the imaginative ways teachers interpret the curriculum (the range of subjects taught), and the wealth of enrichment activities. They were keen to talk about the school garden, which won local awards, their links with a school in Ethiopia and various educational trips. All of these activities contribute to pupils' good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.
- The primary school sports funding has been used effectively to widen opportunities for physical activities. Activities such as orienteering, 'bucket ball' and dance workshops with a well-known choreographer have proved popular. The funding has enabled the provision of a freestanding climbing wall, which pupils have found exciting. Pupils have competed in a number of competitions with local schools. This has given them an opportunity to use the skills they have been taught.
- The local authority has confidence in the school and the school works thoughtfully with them. Using the advice and support offered by local officers, the school has been able to improve the quality of provision and outcomes for children in the Reception class.
- Safeguarding policies and procedures are followed rigorously. Training for staff in child protection and first aid is up to date. All the necessary checks on staff are recorded clearly in the school's single central record.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - School governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors now offer effective support and rigorous challenge to the school. They keep a close eye on how well pupils are doing, and know how well the school is performing in comparison with other schools. Governors keep themselves informed about the overall quality of teaching and support the way the teachers' performance is managed. They are fully aware of the need to align teachers' performance in the classroom with their pay and promotion and they ensure that this happens. The governing body seeks assurance that the additional funding that the school receives is used effectively to boost the achievement of eligible pupils. Governors take full advantage of the training provided by the local authority and review their own performance systematically. Their governor development plan is closely aligned to the development issues in the school improvement plan. They ensure that the school's safeguarding arrangements fully meet requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good and they respect people from all backgrounds. Relationships between pupils and teachers are strong and teachers successfully create a positive climate for learning. Pupils mix together successfully in the classrooms and in the outside areas. Racial incidents are very rare, but always promptly dealt with. Most parents, pupils, governors and staff all agree that behaviour is good.
- Because of the positive atmosphere that permeates the school, pupils try hard and grow in confidence. They take care with their work, are keen to do their best and have pride in their school. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities for them to use their initiative. Their good behaviour supports their good achievement in lessons.
- Lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. There are few recorded incidents of poor behaviour and there have been no exclusions in recent years. The school is effective in supporting pupils who have found it difficult to control their behaviour.
- Pupils attend regularly and attendance is improving year on year because the school has worked closely with parents and pupils to emphasise the importance of regular attendance. Attendance is now above average, indicating pupils' enjoyment of coming to school.
- The recently introduced school breakfast club is providing pupils with a good start to the day and is helping in the drive for improved punctuality. Parents and pupils appreciate this facility, which strengthens home-school links.
- Pupils share equipment fairly. They enjoy break times and play many games outside. This is because 'Play Leaders' and 'Playground Buddies' from Year 3 and 4 are trained to assist pupils to work out any problems they might have with others and involve them fruitfully in activities which keep them fit.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet the government's current requirements. Parents and pupils are confident that children are safe in school. The school's work in supporting its most vulnerable pupils is exemplary.
- Pupils are secure in their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe in all aspects of their daily life. They understand the dangers that can arise from using the internet, social networking sites and mobile phones. They are confident that there is no bullying in the school, but equally confident that if bullying did occur it would be sorted swiftly.
- Occasionally, when pupils do not have enough to keep them occupied, or if they are unsure about how to complete a task, a few lose their concentration with the result that their learning slows.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils make good progress through the school because effective teaching absorbs, interests and motivates them. As one pupil said, 'Teachers make learning fun.' Pupils' books and improved rates of progress show that teaching is typically good over time. Teachers build on the effective learning that has taken place in the Reception Year.
- Teachers across the school have good subject knowledge. They give clear explanations which enable pupils to start work quickly. Teachers generally use learning time efficiently and pupils make good progress because teachers pick up common mistakes during the lesson and discuss them with the class.
- Teachers use questions to deepen pupils' understanding of topics well. As a result, pupils learn to explain in detail what they are thinking. Pupils are able to discuss their thoughts effectively with each other before they speak to the class. This improves their language skills and their self-confidence. It also contributes to their good spiritual, social, moral and cultural development.

- Where teachers have expectation of what pupils can achieve and set them challenging work, pupils' progress is accelerated. In a mathematics lesson, more-able Year 4 pupils were investigating the pattern in negative numbers and decimal fractions. They were thoroughly absorbed by the task, worked quickly and made good gains in their learning. However, this practice is not yet consistent in all classes.
- There is very effective liaison between teachers and the teaching assistants, with the result that pupils of all abilities are well supported during lessons. This has helped to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers' assessments of pupils' attainment and progress are accurate. The school has improved the quality of marking in English and much of it now helps pupils to reflect on their work. This is still inconsistent though. Where marking does not help pupils to reflect and improve understanding, this slows progress. This is particularly so in mathematics. In addition, not all teachers indicate to pupils what they need to do to reach their next stage of development.
- Although work is planned for different levels of ability, it is not always sufficiently challenging, especially for the most able. Sometimes, teachers only expect these pupils to produce a greater quantity of work or use slightly higher numbers rather than tackle harder tasks that will enable them to use the knowledge and skills they have learnt.
- Homework is set regularly and great care is taken to set it at a level that will interest and engage pupils. Pupils report that they enjoy doing homework. However, some parents expressed concern about the quality of their children's homework. The school is investigating how they can improve it as part of their review of how they teach subjects.
- Pupils are given guidance in tasks to help them assess the quality of their own work, so that they can improve it.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in the Reception Year with skills and abilities slightly below those expected for their age. They make good progress as a result of effective teaching and join Year 1 with attainment that is above average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well as they pass through Key Stages 1 and 2. The teachers provide many opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, confidence and ability to take on responsibility.
- Pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics has improved steadily in the last three years. School information about pupils' progress and the quality of work in pupils' books indicates that these improvements have continued. Pupils reach above-average standards in the phonics checks at the end of Year 1. In 2013, pupils reached average standards at the end of Key Stage 1. Assessment information for summer 2014 shows that standards were above last year's national averages in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Different groups of pupils, including boys and girls, and pupils of different abilities, all achieve well because their progress is closely monitored and support is provided if any pupil is at risk of slipping behind.
- Progress across different year groups and in different subjects is consistently strong. This is shown in the school's data and pupils' work, and through discussions with pupils.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 2. Evidence from pupils' work and lesson observations during inspection, show that pupils are not always challenged to do harder work. This is particularly true for the more able.
- Pupils enjoy reading and read a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books. Developing readers apply

phonic skills with increasing confidence and use other clues, including illustrations and the context of the story. They can readily name books they especially like, and their home-school reading records show evidence of regular reading, both at home and at school.

- Individually tailored work, good use of funded resources and close monitoring of achievement mean that pupils supported through the pupil premium make good progress, which accelerates as they move through the school. In 2013, at the end of Year 2, eligible pupils were on average two terms behind other pupils in reading and writing, and less than two terms in mathematics. Their progress was accelerating and, by summer 2014, these gaps narrowed.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress and achieve well because of good help and guidance. Careful assessments of their individual needs ensure that support is effective, including one-to-one tuition where appropriate.
- Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to apply skills and knowledge from subjects such as reading, writing and mathematics across various areas of learning. However, this practice is not consistent across the school, particularly in writing, where there are too few opportunities to apply across other subjects the skills learnt in English. In mathematics, pupils do not get enough opportunities to undertake real-life problem-solving skills to help to raise standards in the subject.

The early years provision

is good

- Children get off to a good start which leads to them making good progress in their learning. They make particularly good progress in calculation skills and communication, language and literacy.
- Children join Reception with skills and abilities that are slightly below those expected for their age. By the time they leave the Reception class, their attainment is above average in most areas of learning.
- Each child's individuality is recognised and nurtured by all staff, who have a secure knowledge of their family and home circumstances, individual needs, interests and abilities.
- A good variety of stimulating activities and experiences, combined with robust and consistent reflective practice and evaluation techniques, ensure that children thrive and make good progress.
- Disabled children and those who have special educational needs make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and appropriate support put into place to support their learning.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environment is welcoming and stimulating. There is a good balance of teacher-led and activities which children choose for themselves. The menu of varied and imaginative experiences engages children of all abilities and encourages them to sustain their learning. These make a strong contribution to children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Staff observe how well children are learning and are rigorous in recording assessments which are used to plan further activities. Staff help children to understand how they can improve their learning.
- The good leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that all children are safe and parents, carers and children have confidence in the security of the class. The Early Years leader expects staff to work at their best and to bring out the best in children. Her good organisation and planning and the good children's progress that results demonstrate the good overall effectiveness of the school's Early Years Foundation Stage provision.

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	124233
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	448556

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

Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Louise Bentley-Jones
Headteacher	Amanda Clarey
Date of previous school inspection	22 March 2010
Telephone number	01782 372543
Fax number	01782 372543
Email address	office@barlaston.staffs.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

[Piccadilly Gate](#)
[Store St](#)
[Manchester](#)
[M1 2WD](#)

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2014

