

Barrow Hall Community Primary School

Barrow Hall Lane, Great Sankey, Warrington, Cheshire, WA5 3AA

Inspection dates 18–19 November 2014

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Leadership and management | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| 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.

- The impact of the headteacher's actions to improve key areas of the school's work, over the past two years, has been considerable.
- The management of teaching and learning is particularly successful. The quality has improved considerably because of senior leaders' and governors' clear expectations and robust checking of teachers' work; this has a positive effect on pupils' achievement.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding and they feel entirely safe. Excellent care and guidance are provided by school leaders, and through the role models of those who work in the school. Attendance is consistently above average.
- Changes in teaching staff have been managed exceptionally well, resulting in improved teaching quality that is now good overall. Pupils are kept busy in lessons and their learning is well supported by teachers and teaching assistants.
- Children in the early years build well on their broadly typical abilities on entering the Reception class. Provision has improved and their learning and personal development are managed well. Children make good progress.
- Good progress continues throughout the school. It has gathered much more pace over the past two years. Standards are above average at the end of Year 2 and are currently on track to be so at the end of Year 6.
- The school works very effectively with parents. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's work.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching does not yet bring out the best from the most able pupils in reading and writing. Their achievement could be better.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 27 lessons and part lessons, three of which were observed jointly with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with members of staff, pupils, a representative from the local authority, an external consultant and members of the governing body.
- Also taken into account were 86 responses from parents via Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), as well as questionnaires completed by staff members.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation that included: national assessment data and the school's own assessments of pupils' progress; curriculum information; safeguarding documents; minutes from governing body meetings; samples of pupils' work and the school's own view of its performance.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|----------------------|
| Kevin Johnson, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Steve Rigby | Additional Inspector |
| Barbara Harrold | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger-than-average primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is very small when compared to the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- Leadership has changed since the previous inspection and there have been significant changes in teaching staff. The headteacher was appointed in January 2013.
- There is a breakfast club and after-school care on site. These provisions are not managed by the governing body and receive a separate inspection and report.
- There is full-time provision for children in Reception classes.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the most able pupils consistently achieve the standards they should in reading and writing by:
 - increasing the range of reading, and challenge, for the most able pupils across the curriculum
 - ensuring that the most able pupils are consistently challenged to the limits of their abilities in all their writing
 - maintaining the highest expectations of what pupils can achieve in both areas of literacy.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- School leaders and governors have very successfully changed, and improved, the way that the school works. They are driven by the headteacher's clear vision for every pupil's achievement.
- There is unfailing commitment from leaders at all levels to providing the best possible quality of learning. Excellent relationships with parents are fostered. Within the school's very strong culture of learning, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development flourishes and they achieve well.
- The management of teaching and learning has been particularly successful. As a result, teaching has improved substantially in a relatively short time. Incisive analysis of teaching quality by the headteacher identified a dip in performance since the previous inspection and the need for issues to be tackled urgently, including the accuracy of previous assessments. This challenge was met in full by the headteacher and governors. As a result, inadequate teaching has been eliminated and all staff, including those newly appointed, both respond well to the school's high expectations and drive good progress.
- Teachers' performance is subject to robust scrutiny by senior staff, as is the performance of the headteacher by governors. Expectations are clear and well-planned training, combined with very well focused feedback on teaching quality, ensures that the emphasis on learning, and teachers' accountability for it, do not waver.
- Throughout the process of improvement, the school has worked very closely with the local authority and external advisers. Staff members collectively have embraced the advice, training and support that have been provided. That has resulted, for example, in better teaching, effective middle management, and improved provision in the early years.
- Senior leaders fulfil their important role with great success. They have effective systems for checking the quality of the school's work and making sure that actions lead to the best results for most pupils. They provide excellent role models for colleagues, with regard to best classroom practice and relationships in the school.
- Middle leaders, responsible for individual subjects, have extended and strengthened their role considerably in the past two years. Well-targeted training in leadership skills means that they contribute very effectively, for example, to the induction of new staff members as well as curriculum management. They have adapted the new primary curriculum very well to the needs of pupils in the school. The exciting range of learning planned promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well and prepares them fittingly for their future lives in modern Britain.
- Physical education has been enhanced by the school's effective use of the primary school sport funding. Pupils comment positively on the wider range of opportunities they have to improve their skills and fitness, when taught by the sports coaches who work in the school. Teachers work alongside coaches to improve their own knowledge and teaching skills in the subject. The school's trophy cabinet provides ample evidence of pupils' success in competitive tournaments.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all of the government's requirements. They are given proper importance both in school and at governors' meetings. Leaders keep a close watch on attendance and punctuality to ensure that pupils' above-average attendance is maintained.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Outstanding work by governors has steered the school successfully through significant changes in leadership, staffing and financial management. The school is now firmly set on the path to further improvement, and governors work determinedly to ensure the pace of that improvement is upheld. They know the school exceptionally well and play a crucial part in planning its future. The school's academic performance is measured against the national picture and governors are quick to challenge and hold the school to account. Governors know about the quality and effectiveness of teaching because they have challenged it in the past and supported the headteacher in work to improve it. They are well prepared, through relevant training and their own professional experiences, to deal with issues related to performance management and teachers' salaries. Statutory duties are carried out efficiently, including the checking of the impact of the use of the pupil premium and primary school sport funding to ensure that overall they secure equal opportunities for all pupils and tackle any potential discrimination.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are invariably polite and well mannered. They have respect for adults and are very mindful of one another. They have clear views on what is right and wrong in their dealings with others and respect others' cultural values and lifestyles.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They listen well, work hard, share ideas with others and respond positively to guidance from teachers by correcting their work or assessing its quality for themselves. They are always on time for school and say that they 'have no favourite lessons – they enjoy all of them'.
- Their conduct around the school is equally outstanding. They move around sensibly and safely, display excellent table manners in the dining room and behave impeccably in assemblies, or when visitors come to talk to them.
- Pupils contribute a great deal to the everyday life and ethos of the school. They arrive smartly dressed and ready to learn, keep the school and playground tidy and carry out a variety of duties that help the school to run smoothly.
- The school council members actively seek pupils' views, to give them a voice in school matters. They raise generous amounts of money for charities and have managed some good improvements to the infants' playground. The e-safety committee fulfils a very important role in keeping all pupils aware of possible hazards when using the internet.
- By the time pupils leave Year 6, they are confident, self-assured individuals who are extremely well prepared socially and academically for their move into secondary education.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- Safeguarding arrangements in the school are clear and pupils understand the part that they have in helping to keep themselves and others safe.
- Pupils are aware of some potentially dangerous situations outside school, such as where not to play, and how to deal with any problems they may face. They also understand the different forms that bullying can take, and are well informed about internet bullying and how to avoid that risk.
- They state firmly that there is no bullying in school, nor any seriously offensive name-calling, and are confident that it would be quickly dealt with should it occur.
- Pupils feel entirely safe. They have every confidence that an adult will help them if needed. All of those spoken to agree that the headteacher is behind all of the changes for the better they have seen.
- Parents have no concerns about their children's safety in school.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good and continues to improve because of the way that senior staff model and share best practice. This maintains teachers' high expectations and contributes to the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils are kept busy in lessons. Well-prepared learning resources and some imaginative lesson 'openers' quickly capture pupils' interest and prepare the way for learning activity that generally takes account of pupils' varying abilities well. Different levels of challenge in activities are explained to all pupils so they can make decisions about how they will test themselves.
- Pupils are questioned well and know that their ideas are valued. Consequently, they are keen to share their own thoughts and listen to those of others. From this, they gain a sense of security, which serves their personal development and confidence very well.
- Electronic whiteboards are used to good effect to help pupils to understand new ideas. Computers also feature well as an additional tool for learning.
- There are good opportunities for pupils to test their ideas on each other. This gives them time to think their work through, and to tackle mathematics problems or writing more confidently.
- Assessment is used effectively to test pupils' learning and set new challenges. Evaluative and challenging marking consistently helps pupils to improve their work.
- Mathematics has been a recent focus in the school and is taught well. Pupils learn new number skills and increase their understanding of how numbers work at a good pace. There are good levels of challenge for pupils and opportunities to use knowledge in different ways to solve problems. This ensures their good

progress. The most able pupils did particularly well in mathematics in the 2014 Year 6 national tests.

- There is also a good focus on developing literacy skills. Emphasis is given to basic spelling, punctuation and grammar and pupils always have time to check their work and correct any mistakes, so that they make quicker progress. Phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught effectively, so pupils achieve good reading levels overall. The most able pupils, though, have a limited range and choice of reading, and this prevents them from achieving the highest possible levels of reading skills and a deeper understanding of what they read.
- Pupils throughout the school increasingly write for different purposes across a range of subjects, so that writing books may also contain work in science or history. However, as in reading, often too little is expected of the most able writers, so too few of them achieve the levels that they should.
- Teaching assistants contribute substantially to pupils' good learning. They work effectively alongside teachers in lessons to check that pupils make the good progress that they should. Teaching assistants who work with disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are extremely sensitive to pupils' particular difficulties and manage their learning very well.

The achievement of pupils is good

- From broadly typical starting points in the Reception class, pupils achieve well by the time they leave Year 6.
- In Years 1 and 2, pupils build well on their good development in the early years.
- There was a significant improvement in the proportion of pupils who reached the expected standard in the national phonics screening test at the end of Year 1 in 2014. This stemmed from improved leadership and better teaching of phonics in the early years. Provision for those pupils in Year 1 who need extra time to develop skills and boost their progress is managed well. Good progress continues in Year 2 and by the end of the key stage, standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics, at the end of Year 6, in the 2014 national tests, were broadly average. Inspection evidence shows that the progress of that group was slowed in the lower junior classes because of ineffective teaching. In addition, assessments were not as rigorous as they should have been. However, the new drive initiated by the current headteacher meant that progress accelerated for those pupils in Years 5 and 6, and in fact they made better-than-expected progress during their final year in the school. This momentum has continued and currently, standards in Year 6 are on track to be higher than in the previous year. Year-on-year progress is good throughout Key Stage 2.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good, and sometimes rapid, progress. Their needs are met very well because training for all staff has made them better equipped to identify special educational needs quickly, and focus on what pupils need to help them to learn well. Teaching assistants play a crucial role in helping those pupils to learn and recording their progress.
- Provision for the most able pupils has focused on mathematics in Years 5 and 6 and a higher proportion of Year 6 pupils achieved the highest possible Level 6 in 2014 than found nationally. The proportion of pupils who achieved Level 3 in reading and mathematics at Key Stage 1 was significantly above average, and a little above average in writing. Leaders are now working to raise expectations for the most able pupils across the whole school. Training is planned for teachers to develop the skills of the most able pupils in reading and writing as part of the school's action to address and improve these areas of achievement.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points. However, the number of disadvantaged pupils is very small and any comparisons between their attainment and that of non-disadvantaged pupils both in the school and nationally would be statistically unreliable.

The early years provision is good

- Children make good progress in the Reception Year.
- Most start with broadly typical abilities for their age. On entry to Reception, children's personal and social skills are generally good, but they have not yet gained the skills they need to help them to tackle reading and writing confidently. By the end of the Reception Year, however, the majority of children achieve a good level of development, including disadvantaged children, and are well prepared for their new challenges in Year 1.
- Leadership of the early years is highly effective. In a relatively short time, the leader has established new systems and procedures that have raised staff expectations, and provide clear direction about children's learning and how progress is assessed. She has improved the teaching of phonics so the standards have

improved as children's reading and writing needs are addressed.

- Teaching is good and activities, whether adult-led or chosen by the children, offer good interest and challenge to encourage children's curiosity and confidence. Their social skills are developed well alongside their physical skills through opportunities for outdoor play and problem solving.
- Children are kept safe in the wholly positive setting where they learn to behave very well. There are excellent links with parents, who contribute to their children's good development by sharing important information with Reception staff, and supporting their children at home. Leaders are fostering strong links with other early years providers to ensure the smoothest possible transition into Reception for all children.

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

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| Unique reference number | 111234 |
| Local authority | Warrington |
| Inspection number | 448424 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 538 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Chris Forrest |
| Headteacher | John Littler |
| Date of previous school inspection | 25 November 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01925 728197 |
| Fax number | 01925 721581 |
| Email address | barrowhall_primary@warrington.gov.uk |

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