

Barley Close Community Primary School

Barley Close, Bristol, BS16 9DL

Inspection dates 11–12 June 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Require improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Require improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Early years provision | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leadership and management require improvement. Development planning has improved but some priorities require fine tuning.
- The governing body has not challenged school leaders effectively, although it has now been strengthened and has greater knowledge of the school.
- Teachers do not always control behaviour in lessons well enough. The behaviour of a small number of pupils requires further improvement because they disturb the learning of others in some lessons.
- Teachers do not set work that challenges pupils consistently. The most-able pupils especially are set learning activities which are too easy for them.
- Teachers' questioning does not encourage pupils' verbal and speaking skills sufficiently.
- Pupils' achievement, especially in mathematics, has been too low. Progress and attainment have been variable across year groups and for several years.
- Although steadily improving, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is still below that of other pupils in the school and nationally.

The school has the following strengths

- The senior leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching and raise achievement, and are leading an improving school.
- Pupils are making better progress, especially in reading, which is being enhanced by pupils' better understanding of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent).
- Pupils enjoy school, as shown by their good attendance, and most have good attitudes to learning. Staff keep them safe and care for them well.
- Children make good progress in the early years because of the good management and teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils' learning in 20 lessons or part lessons. Eight of these observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher or the two deputy headteachers.
- Meetings were held with the executive headteacher, the acting headteacher, the deputy headteachers, other staff with leadership responsibilities and five governors. An inspector also spoke with an improvement adviser from the local authority and the headteacher designate for next September.
- Inspectors discussed teaching and pupils' progress with class teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils' books and records of their progress were examined.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading experiences.
- Inspectors took account of the 67 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents. An inspector also spoke to parents informally.
- The inspectors considered the 52 responses to the Ofsted staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation including: the school's self-evaluation and development plans; an analysis of pupils' achievement and progress; safeguarding arrangements; and policies and records of checks made by leaders on the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection team

| | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Rodney Braithwaite, Lead inspector | Additional inspector |
| David Westall | Additional inspector |
| Helen Owen | Additional inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils who are looked after by the local authority or known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Children attend the Nursery part time. Children in the two Reception classes attend the school full time. There are two classes each in Years 1, 2, and 3, and one class in each of Years 4, 5, and 6.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- The acting headteacher took up the post just over two years ago, following the secondment and subsequent resignation of the previous headteacher. Two deputy headteachers were appointed in September 2014. The headteacher of Stoke Lodge Primary School was appointed on a temporary basis as executive headteacher late last year. A new headteacher will take up her post at this school in September 2015.
- There have been several changes in staff since the previous inspection.
- There is a 'Sure Start' building on the school site. This is used by a Nursery for two-year-old children which has just been taken over by the school. It was not included in this inspection.
- The school works closely with a local cluster of five schools, including a high school.
- There are extensive building works at present on the school site. These are new classrooms which will enable the school to have two classes in every year group.
- Child care is provided by the school in daily before- and after-school clubs.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that teachers:
 - set suitably challenging tasks for all pupils, especially the most able
 - manage the behaviour of pupils more effectively
 - develop their questioning skills, particularly when encouraging pupils' speaking skills.
- Raise pupils' attainment and rate of improvement by:
 - ensuring that the recent improvements in pupils' achievement throughout the school are continued, particularly in mathematics
 - developing pupils' skills in numeracy and solving problems.
- Improve leadership and management by refining and focusing closely on the remaining school priorities for improvement.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because standards and achievement have been below average for too long. Until recently, leaders have not succeeded in ensuring that teaching is consistently good. This has led to variations in the learning of pupils resulting from the lack of challenge and expectation in teaching.
- The acting headteacher has shown determination in tackling the improvements needed but has found that this was a more difficult task than expected. In the last year, with the support of the local authority and the executive headteacher of a local school, he and his management team have had more success in driving improvement.
- Consequently, the quality of teaching is improving, behaviour is better, and the achievement of pupils is rising after some years of little progress. The school is emerging positively from its difficulties and senior and middle leaders have gained good experience in developing their skills and capacity for leading improvement.
- Subject leadership is developing rapidly, although in some cases it has not yet had a marked impact on pupils' attainment and achievement. However, all subject leaders have welcomed the increases in their responsibilities and accept the greater accountability involved. The leadership of provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is an example of the improving picture. The good quality of achievement in the early years is another example of the effective leadership already present in the school.
- The closer involvement of the governing body in the management of the school is a further improvement.
- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching by senior and middle leaders is resulting in more effective and consistent teaching across the school. It has been particularly helpful in supporting and developing the skills of staff new to teaching.
- Leaders are also working hard to improve the behaviour of pupils. A new behaviour policy has been introduced and is understood well by pupils. Leaders are pleased with the initial improvements, although recognise that there remains scope for further improvement.
- The school's evaluation of its strengths and weaknesses is mostly accurate although the resultant development planning requires further clarification in its focus upon identified issues for improvement.
- The new revised curriculum is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and is being helped by continuous encouragement to pupils to aim high in their achievements.
- School leaders promote pupils' understanding of personal values such as tolerance, achievement and respect through class and whole-school assemblies. Pupils also have opportunities to learn about British values through regular elections. These are held for membership of the school council and the eco and healthy schools councils. This introduces pupils to the idea of democracy and helps prepare them for their future.
- The school has used additional funding for physical education and sport to encourage pupils' interest in sport and competition. Pupils are enjoying greater success than in the past in their competitions with other schools. Staff are benefiting from a wide range of additional training, particularly from specialist coaches. The school is also raising pupils' understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. As yet, the school's monitoring of pupils' performance and attendance in sports activities are underdeveloped.
- The school's promotion of equality of opportunity requires improvement because the provision for the most-able pupils requires improvement. The school does not tolerate discrimination and relationships throughout the school are good. Pupils have equal access to all activities, including before- and after-school clubs. The breakfast club provides for a large number of pupils and provides them with a beneficial and nourishing start to the day.
- Leaders have suitable plans to deal with any extremism or radicalisation should they arise, and pay strict attention to this aspect of pupils' education.
- The school has worked very closely with the local authority improvement adviser in the last two years, and with the headteacher of Stoke Lodge Primary School in the last year. This has been increasingly beneficial in supporting the school's improvement, especially in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Leaders, including governors, ensure that safeguarding meets national requirements. The safety and security of pupils are effective and regularly reviewed.
- Leaders and governors make sure that extra funding for disadvantaged pupils is used for their benefit. They compare these pupils' progress with that of other pupils. This has helped in improving their progress in the last year and closing the gap in attainment between them and other pupils in school and nationally.

- Most parents approve of the leadership of the school. A minority have taken some time to appreciate the changes introduced by leaders in order to accelerate improvement.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - After a number of changes, all governors are fully involved in the leadership and management of the school. In particular, the Chair of the Governing Body has been determined to challenge the school's performance on a range of issues. She has led the need to ensure that all governors have the training to give them confidence in their involvement with senior management. This has ensured that governors are proficient at interpreting data about pupils' achievement. Governors have improved their knowledge of the school, although accepting the need for even closer working with school staff.
 - The governing body's knowledge of teaching in the school is much improved. It is being used rigorously to guide pay increases for teachers. These are based on performance targets for them to reach, linked to pupils' progress and attainment. The governing body has a record of not being prepared to approve rises in pay to teachers and leaders who fail to reach their performance targets.
 - Governors monitor the school budget carefully and are fully involved in the allocation of additional funding. Governors evaluate how effectively the funding is used and its impact on pupils' learning.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

require improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. The large majority of pupils have good attitudes to learning, but a small number can sometimes disrupt learning, often when they become bored with the learning activities provided by teachers. A small number sometimes show challenging behaviour, argue with each other and are silly.
- School leaders have introduced new behaviour strategies based initially on rewards through pupils 'climbing the mountain', for which they earn points. As a result, many get enough points to receive achievement awards in the achievement assemblies on Fridays. The yellow/red card system introduced for unacceptable behaviour is not yet fully effective, although all pupils fully understand the new policy.
- Pupils' behaviour around the school is similar. As long as pupils have enough to keep them occupied and interested, they behave and mix well. In the assembly observed, for example, their behaviour was beyond reproach because they were able to play a full part. There have been a small number of exclusions in recent years and four incidents of racial remarks in the last two years have been recorded.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They talk enthusiastically about making a 'Dragon's Den' presentation to a lady from a local chocolate producer, looking at the solar eclipse and making projectors, and visiting a mini-planetarium in a local school. Pupils describe their school variously as 'smart, active and competitive'.
- Children in the Nursery and Reception classes behave well. They very quickly understand what is expected of them and how to mix happily with other children.
- Attendance is good and punctuality has improved. The school ensures that all families understand the importance of regular attendance and pupils enjoy the class competitions for attendance prizes. The family link worker plays an important role in ensuring good attendance.
- Although most parents think the school handles behaviour well, a minority have concerns. This is partly because a number of them feel that pupils who behave consistently well are not recognised enough for this and 'naughty children' are rewarded disproportionately when they improve. Inspectors respect that view, but also feel that leaders have been working effectively with new methods to continue to improve behaviour.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils are very confident that they are safe in school. They name several adults who they could turn to if they had personal problems. Only one expressed concerns but those were about the new building works. All in discussion agreed that they felt completely safe from the building site as it was fenced off.
- Although pupils report some annoying behaviour by others, they have few concerns about bullying or homophobic behaviour. They say that there are a few incidents but mainly to do with name calling. Pupils have a good understanding of cyber bullying – 'We have posters in our class' – and are fully aware of the dangers present in modern technology.
- Leaders ensure that parents have regular information about school safety. They also promote school safety provision for all ethnicities, faiths and beliefs. The school also works well with external agencies in supporting families and children who may be at risk of not doing so well.

- The school runs safety workshops for pupils on subjects such as road safety, life skills and Childline.
- In almost all of their responses, parents, carers and staff were confident that children are safe in school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching has not been effective throughout the school to ensure that pupils consistently reach the levels of which they are capable. There have been changes of staff, including leaders, since the previous inspection which have affected the continuity of the development of pupils' learning. Consequently, teaching has been variable and not consistently good in all year groups.
- Teachers in the past have not provided work that is challenging to all groups of pupils, especially the most able. Teachers have also allowed too much disruption of learning by a small number of pupils.
- There is present evidence that teaching has been steadily improving in the past year. This is raising attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning by the acting and executive headteachers and the deputy headteachers has contributed to improving teacher skills through focused coaching and guidance.
- Teachers now have higher expectations and are setting appropriate challenges according to pupils' abilities. However, they are sometimes slow in moving the most-able pupils on to more difficult work. Teachers' questioning skills and guidance to pupils on the development of their speaking skills are also variable.
- When teachers offer interesting and exciting challenges, pupils make good progress. This was observed in Year 4 when pupils enthusiastically planned their instructions for how to catch a dragon. Pupils' learning was helped by well-informed guidance from adults and the good use of probing questioning encouraging their thinking skills.
- The teaching of reading and writing has developed more effectively in the last year. It has also been enhanced by more effective teaching of phonics, especially in the early years and Years 1 and 2. The teaching of mathematics, although better than in 2014, still requires improvement. Pupils' numeracy skills, especially their ability to solve mathematical problems, require further development.
- The introduction of regular and understandable checks on pupils' progress has led to a better understanding by teachers of the individual needs and abilities of their pupils.
- Teachers give pupils regular learning targets. Their marking of pupils' work and verbal feedback about learning are much improved.
- Relationships between staff and pupils are mostly good. Almost all pupils are respectful but a few pupils are yet to understand the behaviour teachers expect from them.
- Teachers work effectively with their teaching assistants, who make helpful contributions to pupils' learning.
- The large majority of parents consider that teaching is good.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement has not been good in reading, writing and mathematics. Teaching has not ensured that pupils make consistent progress in their basic skills. As a result, progress has been variable across year groups and in different subjects.
- In 2014, pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 were below average in reading, mathematics and aspects of grammar such as spelling and punctuation. However, pupils reached nationally expected levels and made generally good progress in writing. There are many indications of better progress this year, especially in mathematics and reading. Leaders recognise that this progress must be maintained in order for all pupils to reach their potential.
- In particular, not enough pupils have achieved well enough in the past to reach above-average standards because teaching has lacked challenge.
- Children join the Nursery with skill levels below, and sometimes well below, those typical for their age. They make good progress in their basic skills and this continues in Reception. In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress and most are now reaching the standards expected by the end of Year 2. Their progress in mathematics has improved strongly. However, too few pupils reach above average standards, especially in writing.
- Inspection evidence from observations of learning and examination of pupils' work suggest that improvement has continued throughout this year. Better progress in pupils' learning of phonics is also contributing effectively to improvements in reading.

- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has been similar to that of others in recent years and also requires improvement. There are encouraging signs that these pupils are making better progress as a result of much-improved knowledge of their particular needs leading to a tighter focus on their learning.
- The progress of the most-able pupils has required improvement for some time. By the end of Year 6, too few pupils have reached higher than average attainment in any subject. Leaders are making vigorous efforts to ensure that teachers not only plan higher challenges for these pupils but also implement them rapidly in their learning activities.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving. In 2014, at the end of Key Stage 2, their progress in reading, writing and mathematics was lower than that of other pupils nationally, and similar to that of other pupils in their class. Their attainment has improved compared to 2013 and this improvement has continued this year. In 2014, disadvantaged pupils were about two terms behind their classmates in reading and mathematics, and one term behind in writing. Compared with other pupils nationally they were two years behind in reading and mathematics, and one term behind in writing.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They have regular opportunities to read in lessons and, as observed in a lesson in Year 2, are constantly encouraged to discuss their books, practise their skills and work with adults and each other to understand the texts they read. Some older pupils are beginning to read widely and talk with enthusiasm about the works of Michael Morpurgo and William Shakespeare. One pupil had good knowledge of the play, *Antony and Cleopatra*.
- As the school develops its new curriculum, pupils are improving their achievement in other subjects. This includes a more frequent promotion of literacy and numeracy across most subjects. This is improving past weaknesses in pupils' skills and knowledge.

The early years provision

is good

- Leadership and management of the early years are good. The leader ensures that all staff have a comprehensive understanding of the individual needs and progress of all children. In addition, school leaders carefully and regularly monitor the skills of staff and are able to determine the strengths and areas for improvement in teaching.
- Children start in the Nursery with skills and experience generally below levels typical for their age, especially in their literacy and mathematical skills. They make good progress because teachers and classroom assistants constantly check and record children's progress in and out of the classroom.
- Good progress continues in the Reception classes because of continued good teaching. As a result, children make particularly good progress in their communication skills and their knowledge and understanding of the world. Their 'busy books' show clear evidence of good progress in making marks, letter formation and eventually writing simple sentences.
- Children's phonics skills have also improved rapidly because staff have planned a clear programme of learning linked to literacy skills. This helps many children to reach a good level of development by the time they transfer to Year 1.
- Staff provide numerous stimulating and exciting learning activities for children. They are skilled in using the very spacious outdoor areas and wide range of resources to benefit children's learning. This was observed when children were learning through a theme of life cycles. They had learning opportunities in writing, science, symmetry in mathematics and number work, all of which they welcomed enthusiastically. Sometimes, however, the higher challenges to more-able children are not always present.
- Children's attitudes to learning and their behaviour in class and around the school are good. They are eager to learn and show good understanding of what is expected of them in all situations.
- Their safety and well-being are a high priority in staff planning. Safeguarding systems are rigorous, and staff are very watchful in recognising any problems children may have personally or in their learning.
- Staff work effectively with parents, who are very happy with their children's progress. They greatly enjoy seeing their children's progress in the excellent learning journals created for each child.

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 | 109047 |
| Local authority | South Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 456233 |

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 | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 367 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Mandy Collier-King |
| Executive headteacher/acting headteacher | Richard Clark/Joe Beament |
| Date of previous school inspection | 4–5 July 2012 |
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