

Barton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane, Barton, Cambridge CB23 7BD

Inspection dates	4–5 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has been uncompromising in her efforts to ensure that all pupils fulfil their potential. Working very closely with the governing body, she has ensured rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work in the last two years.
- Governors know the school well. They provide an effective balance of support and challenge to school leaders.
- Good teaching ensures that pupils make good progress. They are well prepared both socially and academically for the next stage in their education.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. They are taught well and, as a result, make good progress. Outdoor provision is especially strong.
- At key stages 1 and 2, teachers generally have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This helps pupils to develop a love of learning.
- Pupils are great ambassadors for the school. They are very friendly, sociable and articulate. They behave well and feel very safe. They have very positive attitudes towards their work and are very keen to succeed.
- Pupils have good opportunities to develop creativity in art and music. Teachers make good use of visits and visitors to bring subjects alive and to make learning purposeful.
- The school has a very strong partnership with parents. They are very positive about all aspects of the school's work and particularly recent improvements.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and sounds) is not consistently strong.
- Across the school, teachers do not always respond quickly enough when pupils are finding work too difficult or too easy.
- The headteacher takes on too much responsibility for improving teaching. Middle leaders are not fully involved in this aspect of school improvement.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the teaching of phonics by:
 - providing more training and support to adults who lack confidence in teaching this aspect of the curriculum
 - ensuring that teachers always expect enough of pupils when they are learning about phonics.
- Ensure that teachers always respond quickly if pupils are finding work too hard or too easy.
- Ensure that middle leaders take more responsibility for improving the quality of teaching in their areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is a very strong leader. Her determination over the last two years has been instrumental in the rapid improvement in all aspects of the school's work. She has worked very closely with the governing body and the local authority to secure the necessary improvements, especially in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, outcomes for pupils are improving rapidly.
- The headteacher has developed a highly ambitious culture in the school. She has shared this very clearly with staff and governors and, as a result, she has their full support. It is very clear that the needs of the pupils, both academic and social, are the first priority in all decision-making.
- The headteacher has made sure that there have been good improvements in the quality of teaching by providing both support and challenge. She sets teachers clear targets for improvement where needed. All staff benefit from training that is closely matched to their needs.
- Many middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, are relatively new to their roles. They are keen and enthusiastic. They are beginning to play a valuable part in checking pupils' progress by looking at books or analysing assessment information. However, the headteacher takes on too much responsibility for improving the quality of teaching. The role of middle leaders is currently underdeveloped because they are not fully accountable for the quality of teaching in their areas of responsibility. Consequently, some inconsistencies, especially in the teaching of phonics, have not been picked up quickly.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to support the very small number of disadvantaged pupils throughout the school. The funding helps to employ additional adult support and to give pupils access to the full range of school activities. Both have a good effect on pupils' social and academic development.
- Additional funding for primary sports has had a limited effect in the last year due to staff absence that has been entirely beyond the school's control. Despite the best efforts of school leaders to overcome this, opportunities to improve pupils' participation and to develop teachers' skills have not been as extensive as they would have liked. As a result, the headteacher and the governing body have reviewed how to use funding in the next year, and their plans to employ directly a specialist coach are well considered.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils enjoy a broad and balanced curriculum. Teachers make good use of the delightful school grounds to engage pupils in outdoor learning. Pupils also enjoy school visits such as the one to a farm, during the inspection. These broaden their understanding of subjects and contribute well to their enjoyment of school. Pupils also have extensive opportunities to develop skills in the arts. For example, every pupil in Years 5 and 6 learns how to play a musical instrument, and visits from artists give pupils opportunities to learn new skills when, for example, sculpting.
- There is a strong and effective focus on supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others by, for example, raising funds for a night shelter. Pupils have many opportunities to learn about British values and, as a result, are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of values such as tolerance and respect. For example, when writing about the meaning of 'respect', pupils make thoughtful comments such as, 'You would accept different accents' and 'You listen to people when they are talking.'
- The school has a highly productive partnership with parents. They support the school well by raising funds for different projects and by helping their children with work at home. Parents are very positive about the changes that have been made by the new headteacher, especially with regard to communication between home and school. Parents typically make comments such as 'The mood of the school has been completely transformed in the last two years' and 'The headteacher has had an amazing influence on the school.'
- **The governance of the school**
 - The governing body responded decisively and speedily to address the weaknesses found in the previous inspection. Governors acted quickly to review their roles and changed their practice in the light of recommendations. Consequently, they now provide effective support and challenge to the school.
 - Governors are kept well informed by the headteacher but have also established very thorough systems to check things for themselves. This means that they are knowledgeable about what the school does well and what still needs to be improved. They challenge leaders to make improvements where they are needed.

- Governors know where teaching is especially strong and how the school continues to improve it. Their systems for rewarding good teaching through performance management are thorough and are well understood by teachers.
- Governors check carefully that the pupil premium has the right effect on improving pupils' opportunities and outcomes.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. School leaders and governors create a safe culture by ensuring that policies and procedures are kept up to date and are well understood by all members of the school community. For example, leaders ensure that all staff receive training regularly, including when new staff join the school. Leaders ensure that vulnerable pupils are well supported. They work closely with external agencies when needed.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching across the school has improved greatly since the last inspection, ensuring that pupils now make good progress from their different starting points.
- Teachers plan work which interests and engages pupils so that they learn well. Relationships between staff and pupils are especially strong. Pupils feel well supported by staff when they are struggling with their work. This means that they are willing to have a go at new work without fear of failure.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that they make good progress in English and mathematics but there are inconsistencies in how well phonics is taught. Pupils have enjoyed changes made to the teaching of writing. They say that the 'Wonderful Write' activities where their work is based on a whole-school topic such as 'Pancake Day' have helped to make writing activities more interesting.
- When teaching phonics, teachers do not always have high enough expectations of what pupils should learn or record. Occasionally, teachers lack confidence in teaching phonics and their weak subject knowledge, such as the incorrect enunciation of sounds, slows the pace at which pupils' skills improve.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils, especially when working with disadvantaged pupils or those who have special educational needs or disability. Teaching assistants are well informed, helping pupils sensitively to improve their skills and knowledge.
- The quality of feedback given to pupils has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers mark pupils' work in accordance with the school's agreed marking policy. They now give pupils clear guidance about what they have done well and how to improve their work.
- Teachers usually have high expectations of what pupils should achieve in their work. They make good use of their assessments of pupils' prior learning to plan work carefully so that it meets the needs of different groups such as the least or most able. This means that pupils are challenged well and improve skills quickly most of the time. As they become more confident, teachers are becoming more adept at adapting work to the response of pupils in lessons. However, this is not yet consistently strong and, on occasion, teachers do not respond quickly enough when pupils are finding work too hard or too easy.
- Parents and pupils are very pleased with the quality of teaching in the school. Pupils enjoy their homework tasks, especially when they are encouraged to find things out for themselves. They also enjoy opportunities to read with their parents and to have access to an online mathematics program to support their learning at home.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are greatly improved since the previous inspection and are now excellent. They are proud of their achievements and the school. They happily celebrate each other's success.
- Pupils have high aspirations for their own achievement. They appreciate the opportunity to learn about the world of work by taking part in careers fairs or by making and selling products as part of an enterprise project. As one said, 'This has helped us to learn that we can achieve anything if we work hard.'
- Pupils are very happy at school. They enjoy their work and cooperate very well together. They are very caring towards each other.

- When talking about bullying, pupils report that it is a very rare occurrence. They firmly believe that if it does happen it will quickly be dealt with by adults in school. This is confirmed by school records.
- All parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, agreed that their children feel safe and are well looked after. Pupils confirm that this is the case. They have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. For example, they talk knowledgeably about road safety and e-safety. They know what they should do if someone calls them names or is unkind to them, be it face to face or on social media.
- Pupils keenly take responsibility. They feel that their views are valued and that they are able to contribute to school improvement. For example, school councillors have recently helped to improve lunchtime arrangements.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school because expectations for behaviour are high and clear to everyone. Pupils are polite and courteous, and the school is a calm and orderly place. The 'Barton basics', which set clear guidelines for learning behaviour, are understood well by pupils. They report that these have helped to improve behaviour over the last two years.
- Playtimes are happy and enjoyable occasions. The playground is well resourced and pupils have plenty to do. Pupils learn to play well together and develop strong social skills. For example, older pupils take great delight in using the new 'mud kitchen', playing together happily and showing great imagination as they explore their own ideas.
- Pupils are eager and keen to work in lessons, particularly when they are appropriately challenged. They usually respond quickly to adults' instructions and learn to persevere when faced with demanding work. However, pupils lose focus when they are expected to sit for too long at the start of lessons and are sometimes too slow to settle when moving from the carpet to start their work.
- Pupils' thorough enjoyment of school is seen in above-average rates of attendance. Pupils say that they do not like to miss school because 'Every day is fun.'

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Outcomes for pupils have improved across the school since the previous inspection. Overall, pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school. However, there are some variations in overall attainment from year to year, due to the significant differences in the number of pupils who have special educational needs or disability in each year group. In English and mathematics, in particular, pupils quickly develop new skills and understanding most of the time.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 6 has improved and has been above average overall for the last two years. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- While the attainment of Year 2 pupils in 2015 was lower than previously, this reflected good progress from much lower than usual starting points. Current Year 2 pupils are already working at higher levels and are making good progress.
- Pupils' attainment in national phonics screening at the end of Year 1 has also improved greatly with an above-average proportion reaching the expected level in 2015. However, there is some variation in progress in the current year, with younger pupils improving skills most quickly. Some least-able pupils in Year 2 lack the phonics knowledge needed to help them read with confidence, and teaching does not improve this quickly enough.
- The school successfully ensures that all groups, including the most able and the very small number of disadvantaged pupils, make good progress over time. However, pupils' progress slows when teachers do not adapt work quickly enough for the most able who are finding work too easy or the least able when work is too difficult.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability receive good support, enabling them to acquire new skills and knowledge quickly. There are well-tailored programmes for pupils with especially complex needs that cater successfully for their social, emotional and academic development.
- As well as making good progress in English and mathematics, pupils are beginning to achieve well in other subjects. Pupils' books show that they make good progress in science. In music and art, pupils produce high-quality work, reflecting the desire of leaders to ensure that teaching does not focus just on developing skills in numeracy and literacy.

Early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well in early years provision, ensuring that they get a good start to their school life. Their attainment is above average by the end of the Reception Year. They are prepared well both socially and academically for their move to Year 1.
- Good teaching in the early years means that all children, including those who have special educational needs or disability as well as the very small number of disadvantaged children, make good progress. Adults work together extremely well to ensure that there is a very happy atmosphere as children work. They plan exciting activities that engage children fully. Work builds well on children's natural curiosity and very successfully supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Throughout the school day, adults focus strongly on teaching children about the importance of good behaviour and staying safe. The children are active and inquisitive learners who work well together and are happy to share. They are well supervised in a safe environment. There are no breaches of statutory welfare requirements.
- There are good systems for assessing children's prior learning, including making home visits when they start school. Adults make good use of this information to plan work that captures children's interests and builds on what they already know.
- Early numeracy and literacy skills, including learning about phonics, are taught well. At group times there are good levels of challenge for all, including the most able. When children are working individually, adults often interact well and usually provide good levels of support. However, there are some missed opportunities to move learning on even more quickly when children have grasped a concept and are ready for the next steps in their learning.
- Adults make exceptionally good use of the outdoor area to support children's learning. The outdoor area has recently been greatly improved and is now an inspiring space where children can work and play. Outdoor work is meticulously planned to provide opportunities for children to work under the guidance of an adult or to explore ideas for themselves. Children show especially strong perseverance when working outside because they are so interested in what they are doing. They enjoy learning and succeeding, for example when finding the beads hidden in a sand tray or building a home using wooden blocks.
- The new early years leader is a highly skilled practitioner. She has very high expectations and has improved progress and the quality of provision very quickly. The early years leader makes sure that staff are knowledgeable about how young children learn, and helps them all to feel valued members of the team.
- Adults give parents a great deal of helpful information so that they can support their child at home. Parents appreciate the accessibility of staff as it means that any minor concerns can be resolved quickly. Consequently, parents are very pleased with early years provision, typically making comments such as 'The Reception class team do a fantastic job' and 'The adults are very positive and encouraging.'

School details

Unique reference number	110829
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10011792

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cathy Martin
Headteacher	Claire Coulson
Telephone number	01223 262474
Website	www.bartonprimary.org.uk
Email address	office@barton.cambs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27–28 March 2016

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school with four classes.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is just above average. These pupils are not distributed equally across the school, with the highest proportion being in Years 3 and 6.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is additional government funding provided to give extra support to looked after children or pupils known to qualify for free school meals

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in 11 lessons, most of which were observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made some short visits to observe learning at other times.
- Discussions were held with pupils, staff, a representative from the local authority and governors.
- The inspector took account of the views of 62 parents and carers who responded to Parent View. The inspector also talked to parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- The inspector heard pupils read and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress; planning and monitoring documents; the school development plan; records relating to behaviour and attendance; safeguarding information; and health and safety documentation.
- The inspector analysed 20 questionnaires from staff and 40 from pupils.

Inspection team

Mike Capper, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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