

Barcroft Primary School

Barcroft, Willenhall, West Midlands WV13 1NA

Inspection dates

13–14 October 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	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher and senior leaders have set high expectations and have brought about rapid improvements in the quality of education.
- Governors know the school well and are now providing an increasing level of challenge as well as support.
- Provision is good in the early years, where outcomes are improving rapidly. The learning environment and resources are of an exceptionally high quality.
- Pupils currently in school are making rapid progress, especially since the start of term. Older pupils are making up a lot of ground lost in previous years. Work in their books indicates that different groups, including low- and high-attaining pupils, are doing well.
- Outcomes have improved markedly at the end of key stage 1, especially in reading and writing.
- Support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective to ensure that the large majority make rapid progress from their starting points.
- Teachers plan lessons well that build on pupils' prior learning. Phonics is taught well.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are courteous and polite and take responsibility for their learning and behaviour.
- Safeguarding arrangements are very thorough. Pupils, rightly, feel very safe. Leaders and governors make sure that a strong culture of safeguarding is promoted throughout the school.
- Attendance is improving rapidly; the proportion of persistent absence is falling sharply.
- Outcomes require improvement, particularly in key stage 2, where pupils suffer from a legacy of previously weak teaching.
- The teaching of mathematics is not as strong as it is in other subjects, particularly for most-able pupils. Teaching does not consistently take pupils to a greater depth in their learning.
- Opportunities for children to practise their numeracy skills are not sufficiently developed in early years.
- Records of monitoring of teaching do not sufficiently link pupils' outcomes with lesson observations.
- Leaders do not provide sufficient strategic direction for evaluating outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes, particularly at the end of key stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that the quality of teaching in mathematics is as strong as it is in other subjects
 - providing more opportunities for children to develop their numeracy skills in early years, in both the indoors and outdoors environments
 - making sure that teachers challenge the more able pupils consistently, including those who are disadvantaged, to work at greater depth in mathematics
 - monitoring the teaching in mathematics in a way that checks judgements made in lessons against work in pupils' books and their progress.
- Leaders and governors should ensure that there is a greater strategic overview of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, and for disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able pupils, by:
 - publishing a strategy that highlights the key barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils, including those who are the most able, and how the school intends to overcome these barriers through pupil premium funding
 - evaluating outcomes for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities; then, where pupils are not making sufficient progress, identifying what the barriers are to learning, and addressing them.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- This is a rapidly improving school with the capacity to improve further. Immediately after the last inspection, outcomes for pupils fell into very sharp decline across the school. They were exceptionally low at the time of the current headteacher's appointment in 2015. She has acted with urgency and vigour to tackle the significant shortcomings in the school, identified in an external review that she commissioned in her first week in post. This was followed by an external review of governance. Since then, weaknesses identified in leadership, governance and teaching have been tackled with speed. Very few staff who were in post before the current headteacher was appointed have remained.
- The environment of the school has been transformed with an array of resources and designs to promote learning, including rooms in a castle, a gingerbread house, a little pigs' cottage and a canal boat, all transformed into learning areas or mini-libraries.
- There is a unity of purpose among senior leaders and other staff. The headteacher has recruited leaders with a background in working with outstanding schools. She has established clear leadership roles for senior and middle leaders. These leaders reported that the headteacher has enabled them to carry out their roles effectively. Staff report that they are confident and work as part of a team.
- Senior leaders know the strengths and weaknesses very well, including in teaching, which is good and improving. Teaching assistants no longer take full responsibility for teaching classes as previously. Leaders other than the headteacher and deputy headteacher are being trained up to take on a greater role in monitoring teaching and so increase the school's capacity to improve.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher has introduced effective performance management arrangements for teachers, which has led to increased support as well as accountability through meetings about pupils' progress. Leaders have taken effective action to eradicate previously weak teaching.
- Leaders have rightly placed a high priority on training, including for additional adults who take responsibility for phonics groups. Leadership of phonics is good. Phonics is taught consistently well by well-trained adults. A strategic plan is in place to secure further improvements. The school has invested heavily in reading resources to support pupils' learning.
- Assessment procedures are regular and rigorous to ensure that pupils are in well-matched groups. Their progress is closely measured through a new tracking system. Most groups, such as disadvantaged pupils, are monitored closely. The school's system is robust to ensure that assessment is accurate and targets are challenging. Teachers are applying the new policy on feedback and marking consistently and pupils respond well to it.
- Outcomes are rapidly improving, especially in early years and key stage 1, illustrated by recent assessments and current pupils' work seen in their books.
- The broad and balanced curriculum encourages pupils to engage in their learning. The focus on different forms of writing for a clear purpose, across a range of subjects, has led to improved outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in the most recent provisional test results. Pupils enjoy a wide range of subjects, including humanities and languages. The

extra-curricular programme offers a variety of activities and trips for pupils including, for the first time, visits to local places of worship.

- The school uses its physical education (PE) and sports premium effectively to promote a range of sports and healthy activities.
- Provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is effective. Very few pupils remain on the register as they respond well to the appropriate support they receive. While individual pupils' outcomes are tracked closely, there is less evaluation of how well all the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are doing overall.
- Provision for pupils learning English as an additional language is effective from early years onwards.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next phase in their education. Transition arrangements with parents in early years are also good.
- The school is now targeting most-able pupils more closely, for example through a new booster mathematics group in Year 6 and wider experiences such as performing in a production of 'The Gruffalo', but this work is very recent.
- The school is popular with the local community. Numbers on roll have increased and there is a long waiting list as current and prospective parents express confidence in the leadership of the school. The large majority of the responses to Freetext were positive. Parents are well informed through regular newsletters, and supported through meetings informing them how they can help their children at home.
- The school is taking a strategic view to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively in assemblies and across the curriculum, for example through its personal, social, health and education programme. It does this well, and a coordinator has been appointed to lead on this work and extend it further.
- The school promotes British values well, for example through assemblies and by integrating these into the curriculum. Pupils have commemorated Remembrance Day and the Queen's birthday. 'Remembrance' is this term's topic in lessons. Pupils experience voting through elections to the school council and have chosen, democratically, how they want to receive their end-of-year awards for achievement. Pupils recently took part in a competition to portray their ideas of British values.
- Leaders are outward-looking, drawing on outstanding practice from local schools. They engage well with the local authority and external providers, who provide training, moderation and evaluation of their performance.
- The legacy of weak teaching, until recently, means that outcomes are still low by the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders' records of teaching judgements based on lesson observations do not indicate they have been triangulated against work in books and achievement information over time.
- There is good provision to support disadvantaged pupils, and they are now making rapid progress as a result. However, leaders have not put an up-to-date, written outline of their pupil premium strategy in place. Leaders recognise the key barriers these pupils face, and know there is more to do to focus specifically on outcomes for most-able disadvantaged pupils. Leaders have not ensured that they provide all the information on the website as required by the DfE.

Governance of the school

- Changes to the leadership of the governing body have been recent, but already they are providing an increasing level of challenge to the school's leaders. Since the external review in January 2016, which highlighted significant weaknesses, the current chair and vice-chair have ensured that governance is rapidly improving. They have addressed shortcomings identified in the review. They know the school well and what further action is required.
- Governors are well trained for the roles and are starting to hold the school to account for aspects such as pupil premium funding, special educational needs and information published on the website.
- They ensure that the school meets its statutory responsibilities for safeguarding.
- They ask searching questions through the curriculum committee about pupils' outcomes, including for different groups of pupils.
- They are carrying out their role to give strategic direction to the school.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and are a strength. Leaders promote a culture of safeguarding throughout the school. In addition to ensuring that they meet their statutory responsibilities for policies, procedures and training, leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority for everyone. Staff know the families and individuals who need additional support well and are vigilant in looking out for the welfare of pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Expectations of learning and standards of behaviour are high. Work set is challenging, especially in reading and writing. This enables the most able pupils to extend their learning further.
- Teachers have access to an enviable set of resources, both equipment and books. The stunning learning environment inspires pupils' creativity and learning, especially for those who are disadvantaged, when they feel they are sitting in a real castle with clothing and artefacts to match.
- Lesson planning is detailed and builds effectively on previous learning. It is well-planned to meet pupils' different starting points and experiences. This means that work is pitched appropriately for the individual needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language. For example, teachers and adults provide effective support to pupils to find the meaning of key words from a text.
- Teachers and additional adults are well trained to teach phonics consistently and effectively. Pupils are grouped appropriately. Adults show a good subject knowledge and confidence. They know accurately the level at which children are working. They model individual sounds and blends well. In their reading, pupils demonstrate their phonics skills by tackling unfamiliar words.
- Relationships are very good between adults and pupils as teachers and other adults encourage pupils to do well in their learning.
- Pupils are set appropriate homework from an early age.
- Teachers check pupils' understanding carefully before moving on to the next phase of

learning. Written feedback gives pupils a clear indication of their next steps to achieve. Pupils respond well to teachers' comments.

- Teachers employ the behaviour policy consistently and are decreasingly reliant on issuing 'red cards' as standards of behaviour improve.
- Most additional adults are well deployed and support children effectively. Occasionally, there are mistakes in their grammar and spelling which teachers do not pick up on and which reinforce errors with pupils.
- The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are not challenged as rigorously in mathematics as they are in literacy. Rather than working in greater depth, they do more examples of the same activity at the same level of challenge. This can occasionally lead to instances of low-level disruptive behaviour.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and the wonderful environment they experience in school.
- They are able to explain and give reasons for their answers in lessons. They listen well to teachers and other pupils during discussions.
- Pupils have a voice in the school and leaders canvass their views regularly.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Pupils have organised a party for local elderly residents. Their teamwork has been fostered through camping sessions in the school grounds and they show respect for others during their studies on 'remembrance'.
- Pupils are confident in expressing their views on safety; they feel very safe in school. There is a worry box they can use if they are concerned about anything. They feel safe because the school gates are locked and there are high fences around the school grounds. Pupils, including younger ones, know about e-safety.
- Pupils have positive attitudes towards healthy eating, such as choosing fruit at breaktime. They take pride in the learning environment when moving around the school. They are considerate in putting rubbish in the bin after they have finished eating.
- Pupils take pride in the appearance of their work. Their handwriting is neat and legible.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They line up well and move sensibly around the building.
- Pupils are enthusiastic learners, well engaged and eager to participate in lessons. They respond immediately to teachers' instructions.
- Pupils are inquisitive and able to sustain activities for a length of time.
- In the playground, pupils are well behaved and there is a high level of adult supervision. There are purposeful activities for them to play with, such as a pirate ship. No inappropriate behaviour was seen during the inspection.
- Pupils are well mannered, friendly and willing to talk to visitors. They play safely together. They respond very well to the excellent new facilities and activities provided in the play areas.

- Pupils understand the behaviour procedures well concerning the use of yellow and red cards. They are confident that if any issues arise on the playground they are sorted out by adults.
- There have been no exclusions since the current headteacher was appointed. The number of red cards issued has dramatically fallen since 2015.
- The rate of absence has fallen significantly in the last few years and is now closer to the national average. Persistent absence has also been dramatically reduced but is still above average. Attendance is good for groups including for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Staff, led by a senior leader, have been relentless in getting pupils to attend regularly. The school now offers breakfast to tackle the issue of punctuality. Good attendance is celebrated through special assemblies and rewards including gift vouchers.
- There is occasional low-level disruption in lessons, especially in mathematics. This is usually linked to the level of challenge where pupils have finished quickly and become bored and restless without an additional challenge.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes at the end of key stage 1 had been falling steeply from 2011, when they were significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics, to 2015, when they were significantly below. Similarly, in key stage 2 outcomes were high in 2011 but below average in 2015.
- The rate of pupils' progress from key stage 1 to 2 was also in a three-year decline and was significantly below average in 2015. The proportions of Year 6 pupils making expected and more than expected progress in the most recently validated tests in 2015 in reading and mathematics and assessments in writing were all below average.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils from key stage 1 to 2 was similarly in decline in reading, mathematics and writing up to 2015, where differences with outcomes for other pupils nationally were widening rather than diminishing.
- Outcomes for the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, were very low up to 2015 at both key stages 1 and 2, as very few achieved the highest possible levels in reading, writing and mathematics at key stage 1, or in reading and mathematics at key stage 2. Outcomes for the most able pupils in writing, including those who were disadvantaged, were broadly average.
- In provisional results for 2016, key stage 2 results were low in reading, writing and mathematics, especially for most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. This cohort had experienced previous weak teaching for a number of years and only started to increase their rate of progress in their last year in school. Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 did well in writing but less well in reading and mathematics.
- In just four terms since the headteacher was appointed there has been a rapid turnaround. Although outcomes are low, they are rapidly improving. In this year's provisional results, standards at key stage 1 have risen considerably in reading, writing and mathematics. Outcomes in phonics, based on the proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard by the end of Year 1, have been consistently above average in recent years.
- Work in pupils' books shows that they are already making more rapid progress than

previously, especially disadvantaged pupils, and most-able pupils, whose standards of writing and presentation are high.

- Overall, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are currently making good progress; this includes pupils recently taken off the SEN register who are doing well as a result of successful intervention and support.
- Pupils learning English as an additional language are making more rapid progress as teachers provide effective support to help them develop their speaking skills.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership is good. The newly created outdoors environment is stunning, including water features and a 'building site' for children to play in. Indoors is also a high-quality learning environment. It is a safe place which children feel confident to explore.
- The proportion of children who have secured a good level of development by the end of Reception has been on a three-year rising trend, from well below average in 2014 to broadly average in 2016. This trend is set to continue based on the good progress children are currently making in early years. Typically, they join at low starting points for their age, especially in spoken English.
- Children in nursery remain focused and sit well during circle time. The most able children are able to sustain their concentration for long periods without adult intervention. Routines are well established, despite the short time children have been in school. They show resilience in persevering with tasks, for example following instructions to make numbers out of plastic pieces. Children are inquisitive and keen to talk. They demonstrate good manners tidying up and are polite to each other.
- Teaching is good. Adults provide opportunities for children to develop their skills in writing using capital letters and correct letter formation. Adults also provide opportunities for children to extend their vocabulary range, for example using 'gathering' and 'collecting' as alternatives to 'picking up' produce for harvest. Adults take every opportunity to take advantage of incidental opportunities to extend children's understanding of phonics as children are moving to and from activities. They set a good pace in structured activities, with a good level of reinforcement for children learning English as an additional language. Adults use praise effectively to encourage children, who respond well to encouragement.
- Children currently in early years are making rapid progress, especially the most able, who have been quickly identified. Work in children's learning journals demonstrates the progress they are making. Adults' comments are thorough and clearly linked to the next steps in their learning. Children are well prepared for the next phase of their education when they leave reception. Most are confident, articulate speakers.
- Parents are encouraged to be involved through induction meetings and stay-and-play sessions.
- The outdoor environment does not yet have enough opportunity for pupils to develop their numeracy skills.

School details

Unique reference number	135081
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10006998

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	468
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Phil Cross
Headteacher	Jasbir Kaur Johl
Telephone number	01902 368132
Website	www.barcroft.walsall.sch.uk
Email address	postbox@barcroft.walsall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	7–8 December 2011

Information about this school

- Barcroft is much larger than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has grown by over 80 since the last inspection.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is very small, at 1 in 17. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is also very small.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly average. The percentage who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is just over half the school, which is very high.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school mid-way through a key stage is below average.
- The current headteacher was appointed in April 2015 and the current chair, who had recently joined the governing body at the time of the last inspection, was appointed in March 2016, as was the vice-chair.

- Based on their 2015 results, the school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards expected for pupils' learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about admissions, pupil premium, and PE and sports premium funding on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or parts of lessons, of which four were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities, for example to look at pupils' books and talk to pupils.
- Inspectors heard pupils read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other leaders, other members of staff and two groups of pupils. The lead inspector spoke to the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- There were 22 Parent View free-text responses to enable inspectors to take account of parents' views, but very few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View.
- Inspectors also took account of 17 responses to the pupils' survey.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including monitoring of teaching, governing body minutes, improvement plans and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information, policies and procedures including special educational needs, pupil premium, PE and sports premium funding, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

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Sue Cameron	Ofsted Inspector
Richard Ellis	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Harwood	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Hill	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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