

Bartons Primary School, Bognor Regis

Lethaby Road, Bognor Regis, West Sussex PO21 5EJ

Inspection dates

17–18 October 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils do not make enough progress. Their attainment at the end of key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics is below national figures and has been so for some time. Improvement has been too slow.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not consistently good. As a result, many pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly those who are most-able.
- Current pupils are not making rapid enough progress to enable them to catch up. Too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and understanding because of weak teaching in the past.
- The early years requires improvement. Not enough children are well-prepared for Year 1. Planning for learning does not focus sharply enough on improving their speech and language development.
- Leaders have not focused precisely enough on improving outcomes for pupils. Nor have they measured the success of new approaches by their impact on pupils' progress or attainment. As a result, leaders cannot be sure about what is working well in the school and what is not.
- Governors and the local authority have not been effective in holding school leaders to account. Different governing bodies over time have not succeeded in challenging the school to do better.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well. They have delightful manners and respect the adults who work with them. Pupils are confident, happy and love learning.
- Pupils are safe and protected in the school because adults know them really well and have built up positive relationships, including with parents.
- Pupils benefit from a broad and interesting curriculum built around the strong values of 'Team Bartons'.
- Leaders and staff have transformed the ethos of the school. They have raised expectations and created a welcoming and aspirational atmosphere. Teaching, learning and assessment are improving.
- Most pupils make good progress in reading. The teaching of phonics has improved and pupils are encouraged to read and enjoy challenging books.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- Ensure that teaching, learning and assessment lead to good progress over time for all pupils, by:
 - identifying precisely the gaps in pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills and tackling these systematically
 - challenging the most able pupils.
- Ensure that children in the early years are well-prepared for key stage 1, by:
 - creating a more stimulating environment to provoke children's interest and develop their imagination
 - extending their spoken language during child-initiated activities
 - developing the skills of teaching assistants in the early years, so that they can fully contribute to children's language development and progress.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management, by:
 - ensuring that plans to improve the school are now precisely focused on ambitious goals for pupils' progress and attainment
 - evaluating the success of new approaches and initiatives by their impact on pupils' progress and attainment
 - developing the emerging skills of subject leaders and the leader in the early years so that they can be more effective.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Over time, leadership and management of the school at all levels has not improved outcomes for pupils.
- Following her appointment, the current headteacher quickly realised the extent of the work that would be needed to improve the school. While there have been improvements to leadership, teaching, and pupils' attitudes to learning, the pace of improvement has not been fast enough and outcomes for pupils remain too low.
- Initiatives to improve the school are sensible and are likely to bring about improvement in the long term. However, leaders are not sufficiently focused on the vital goal of improving pupils' progress and attainment. They monitor whether staff are implementing the new approaches, rather than their impact on pupils' learning. As a result, leaders cannot judge whether their approaches are having the desired impact on pupils' progress and attainment.
- New middle leaders to the school are quickly learning how to carry out their roles. However, they are not yet fully confident about focusing on pupils' progress and holding staff to account.
- The local authority has not supported or challenged the school effectively. Not enough action was taken to tackle previous leaders about the persistently low attainment of pupils at the end of key stage 1.
- Leaders are completely realistic and honest about the need for the school to improve. They fully accept that outcomes are not good enough. Since her appointment in September 2016, the headteacher has successfully strengthened teaching through new appointments and restructuring of roles. She has developed leadership, including the appointment of a new deputy headteacher. She has ensured that staff are now well-trained, that their work is monitored and that they have precise targets to improve pupils' progress.
- The school is more ambitious than it was. Positive values of teamwork, looking outwards and building relationships in the community have enhanced the school's ethos and reputation. The improved atmosphere in the school is having a very positive impact on pupils. They have risen to the challenge of the headteacher's expectations. With such commitment from the pupils themselves, there is much scope for improvement.
- The curriculum on offer to pupils is rich and diverse. Rightly, pupils concentrate on improving their writing and mathematics. They benefit from challenging and inspiring texts to read and on which to base their writing in English. Pupils told inspectors about how much they were learning in history, science and art. Pupils' work and their contributions to school life are displayed with care and pride around the building.

- School life and timetabled subjects contribute very strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral,

social and cultural development. Leaders have made sure that pupils have opportunities to learn how to work together successfully and study other cultures and religions. Pupils now have more opportunities to take part in sports, perform in music and theatre and contribute to the local community. Pupils enjoy being part of a school where different home languages are spoken.

- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide eligible pupils with extra help and support. As a result, pupils who are disadvantaged do not fall behind others, even though there is still a lot of ground to make up. Importantly, as a result of targeted work with families, many individual pupils eligible for the pupil premium have improved their attendance.
- Additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well. Pupils who have particularly complex difficulties or vulnerabilities, are well supported. As a result, many pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress that is helping them to catch up.
- The school uses the sport premium funding effectively to provide specialist coaching in particular games and sports. Pupils enjoy these opportunities and can talk with confidence about the boost to their physical fitness and well-being. In addition, funding is used to extend teachers' skills in teaching physical education and sports for all age groups.
- Parents, staff and pupils are broadly confident in the school. In particular, parents feel that the school is welcoming and many believe that it has a better reputation than previously. Parents have supported the change from an infant to a primary school and feel that this has been managed well.

Governance of the school

- Governors have not been effective in challenging the school to improve outcomes for pupils. In the past, governors did not challenge school leaders. They did not have a deep understanding of how they should evaluate the school's performance or analyse information about pupils' progress.
- There have been some wise changes to the governing body in recent times and since the appointment of the new headteacher. New governors are bringing fresh eyes to the school and experienced governors are pleased to be more directly involved in school life. They visit frequently and are in closer contact with staff and leaders.
- However, as is the case with the headteacher and other senior leaders, governors are acutely aware of how much the school needs to improve. They are conscious of their own weaker areas. Although governors try hard to ask probing questions, they are not clear about how to challenge senior leaders to bring about rapid improvement.
- Governors have put together an action plan. However, their objectives focus too much on what they will do as part of their monitoring rather than the targets they want the school to meet.
- Governors are assiduous about checking the relevant aspects of school procedures such as safer recruitment of staff.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The school meets all statutory requirements, including those related to the safer recruitment of staff.
- The headteacher is the designated safeguarding leader and has a deep sense of duty. She knows pupils and their families very well and has a strong relationship with other agencies working to protect children. She is also not afraid to press other professionals for more urgent and appropriate action where necessary.
- The school's securely stored records of safeguarding concerns are thorough, orderly and are updated when necessary.
- Staff are well-trained in line with current priorities and know exactly what to do if they are worried about a pupil. Their knowledge is up to date and they are confident that any concerns they raise will be followed up promptly.
- The school has worked effectively with parents on e-safety and pupils have learned how to keep safe online and when using social media.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Over time, teaching has not led to good progress for pupils.
- Until very recently, expectations of what pupils could achieve have been too low. The most able pupils have not been stretched, particularly in mathematics and writing. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, which put their future achievement at risk. Teachers have not made sure that these gaps are filled.
- Improving writing is rightly a focus across the school and pupils have many opportunities to practise. It is encouraging that pupils' handwriting is improving. They also benefit from creative and exploratory tasks that interest and inspire them. However, teachers do not always ensure that pupils are challenged enough. There is not enough attention to detail. For example, when speaking or writing pupils make grammatical errors which are not picked up, and which are then repeated.
- Nevertheless, it is clear that teaching is beginning to improve and lead to better progress. Pupils are productive and purposeful in lessons. They are willing to learn and they try hard to be diligent. Pupils have confidence in their teachers and other adults and trust them to help them to do well.
- Pupils help each other in lessons by listening to each other and being respectful of others' views. They pay close attention to the work they have done and are keen to improve and extend themselves. Pupils value the guidance they receive from their teachers and respond well to it.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of their timetabled lessons. They throw themselves into activities with energy and commitment, even when the teaching is not so strong. Pupils' enthusiasm is particularly evident when studying science, religious education, music and physical education. Teaching in these subjects is clearly having a positive impact on pupils' broader understanding of the world around them and is preparing them for their next steps.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. It is in this area that the new leadership has had the most impact. During the inspection it was evident that some older pupils were enjoying and appreciating opportunities that they had never had before, such as representing their house and receiving awards for good attendance.
- The school is a friendly and welcoming place. Pupils are confident, lively and outgoing. They are unfailingly polite and charming to visitors, being clearly proud of their school. Pupils take care of their books; their work is neat and well-presented. They appreciate and take care of their attractive school building and its environment.
- Pupils are positive and enthusiastic about all that the school offers. Now that the school is offering more interesting opportunities, pupils are eager to shine, in and out of lessons. They enjoy showing off their achievements and working together.
- Pupils get along together very well and are kind to each other. Bullying is rare but when there are any unpleasant incidents, pupils are confident that staff will deal with these well.
- For those pupils who have particularly complex difficulties or vulnerabilities, they are well-supported and their ability to regulate their emotions improves. They become happier and more settled over time because of the support they receive and the friendship and respect they gain from each other.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They enjoy posts of responsibility, such as looking out for younger children and being kind to them. Pupils know that they can speak to an adult if they have any worries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are attentive in lessons, respond quickly to instructions and know how to behave appropriately in formal and informal occasions. They manage their own behaviour and emotions well. Over the last year, there has been a significant reduction in instances of seriously poor behaviour.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and adults. There is very little name-calling or derogatory language. On the few occasions when someone steps out of line, pupils are confident that staff will deal with misdemeanours firmly and fairly.
- Attendance has improved over recent times and overall figures are now in line with national figures. School leaders have worked very hard to improve the overall attendance of pupils in vulnerable circumstances and they can point to important improvements for individual pupils.
- The school has successfully changed attitudes to punctuality. Leaders have introduced stricter procedures at the start of the school day, positive incentives for being on time and a very popular early morning club which gets pupils off to a good start.
- However, the school is keenly aware of the need for continued vigilance regarding punctuality and attendance. Attitudes to attending school have been hard to change. There is still too much casual and unauthorised absence, when parents do not meet the

school's raised expectations.

- Very occasionally, pupils are rather boisterous when moving around the school. In addition, a very small number of staff, parents and pupils noted concerns about some disruption to learning in lessons and inconsistencies in the way that behaviour was managed. However, these concerns do not reflect the overall evidence.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils in key stage 1 and in the early years have not attained highly enough. Their results have been below national figures and have shown little improvement year on year, particularly in mathematics and writing.
- Across the school, too many pupils are not sufficiently challenged. As a result, many pupils do not reach the standards of which they are capable, particularly those who are most-able.
- There has been some improvement in pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 1 recently, particularly in reading, but such improvement is not rapid enough. Older pupils who are now in key stage 2 have suffered a legacy of weak teaching, which has left gaps in their learning and much to catch up with before they will be prepared for secondary school. Standards for the older pupils in the school are not high enough.
- Pupils' writing is weaker than it should be and the weaknesses begin in the early years. While school leaders are rightly tackling weaker writing, it is taking time to make an impact on current pupils. In some cases, insufficient attention to detail is hampering rates of progress because pupils make persistent errors that are not picked up quickly.
- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium make better progress in some areas than others. Individual pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, including the most able, make rapid progress because of the extra support they receive. However, as attainment overall is low, particularly for the most able disadvantaged, the progress of disadvantaged pupils is not close to that of other pupils nationally and remains disappointing.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well-supported from their starting points to catch up with their peers. For those pupils who have very complex needs, the school can point to significant improvement in their communication and understanding.
- Recent improvements to teaching and learning are gradually having an impact on pupils' progress in mathematics. Pupils are gaining a greater range of skills and are beginning to develop a deeper understanding and ability to reason.
- The teaching of reading and phonics has improved over the last year. Pupils are now able to use their phonic knowledge confidently and accurately with unfamiliar words. In addition, a bespoke reading programme has led to increases in pupils' reading ages. Pupils love reading and challenging themselves. They enjoy using the well-stocked library and making recommendations to their friends. Pupils read aloud fluently and with expression.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Children do not make enough progress from their starting points in the early years and are not well-prepared for Year 1. Not enough children reach a good level of development when compared with national figures.
- Leaders have correctly identified that children join the school with low starting points, particularly with language development, but have not been successful with ensuring that all children catch up quickly in time for key stage 1.
- Leaders have not ensured that adults working with children in the early years contribute to their rapid progress in speech and language development. Leaders identify those pupils who require extra help and some of the programmes used make a positive difference. However, there is not enough high-quality questioning and encouragement for pupils to talk to each other and adults through their play. Teaching assistants work hard with the children and form trusting relationships, but do not model enough high-quality speech to support pupils who need it.
- Activities planned for child-initiated sessions do not make the most of opportunities to stimulate children's imaginations and promote their language. The leader for early years was not able to make enough of a contribution to the original design and resourcing of the early years area and is aware that activities and materials need to be more inspiring.
- When adults work directly with children in the early years they make better progress, including those children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children's work and the records of their assessment show how they are improving their concentration and their ability to write and control a pencil or crayon. In addition, children are now getting off to a better start with number work.
- Children's work and leaders' planning show a wide coverage of the different areas of learning. Children's moments of achievement are captured well and used effectively to track their progress.
- Over the past year, the teaching of phonics in the early years has improved and children, including those who are disadvantaged, are now better prepared for reading more challenging texts in Year 1.
- Children are happy and safe in the early years. The leader has a secure knowledge of the children in her care and has built up strong relationships with parents and local pre-school providers.
- Children settle down quickly as a group and learn to cooperate with each other and play purposefully. They respond well to instructions and routines. They are friendly and confident, inviting their friends and visitors to join in with their activities.
- All statutory requirements of the early years are met. In addition, the early years leader has a strong understanding of safeguarding and child protection for the youngest children. She responds promptly to any concerns and works effectively with other agencies, including those who provide early help for families.

School details

Unique reference number	125922
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10036931

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Deborah Norris
Headteacher	Kate Powell
Telephone number	01243 822056
Website	www.bartons.w-sussex.sch.uk
Email address	head@bartons.w-sussex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 December 2011

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Bartons Primary school is a smaller-than-average school. The school was previously an infant school on a neighbouring site. In 2014 it relocated to the current site as a primary school, at the heart of a new housing development. The current Year 6 pupils are the first to go through the school.
- The school is one-form entry, but there are currently two classes in Years 4 and 5, owing to the reorganisation and an increase in numbers in the local area.
- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2016. A new deputy headteacher was appointed in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in every class, on several occasions accompanied by senior leaders. Inspectors also made short visits to lessons.
- Inspectors, together with leaders for literacy and mathematics, reviewed pupils' current work and also a sample of work from previous years.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, governors and groups of staff. An inspector spoke to parents at the beginning of the day.
- Inspectors met with pupils from the school council and also selected a representative group of pupils to be interviewed. Inspectors listened to pupils reading and talked to them about their books. Break and lunchtimes were observed.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including information about pupils' progress and attainment, records of the work of governors and plans to improve the school.
- Her Majesty's Inspector met with a local authority adviser and reviewed recent reports of local authority visits to the school.
- Information about pupils' behaviour and records of their attendance were considered. The school's approach to safeguarding and records of concern were checked and evaluated.
- Inspectors took into account the 70 responses to the online survey, Parent View, together with comments from parents, in addition to the school's own parent survey. Responses from 12 staff to the staff survey and 42 responses to the pupil survey were also considered alongside other evidence.

Inspection team

Janet Pearce, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Janet Maul

Ofsted Inspector

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