

Barwell Infant School

Townend Road, Barwell, Leicester, Leicestershire LE9 8HG

Inspection dates

7–8 November 2017

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, staff and governing body have created a culture and ethos of care and respect. Relationships in the school are extremely positive.
- Pupils' personal development and welfare are good. Leaders have achieved a highly effective balance in promoting pupils' personal development and academic progress.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Children in the early years make a good start to their school life. Children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is improving.
- Pupils make at least good progress from their starting points in key stage 1. The proportions of pupils achieving the standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 for reading, writing and mathematics are improving.
- Teachers are enthusiastic and engage the pupils' interest. They skilfully question pupils to check their understanding and deepen their thinking.
- Teachers have high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in all subjects. Pupils take pride in their work.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well to support pupils' learning and progress.
- In 2017, the proportions of children achieving a good level of development in the early years and the proportions attaining the standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 were below the national averages.
- The attainment of boys is often lower than that of girls, particularly in reading and writing. School differences are greater than those seen nationally.
- Leaders' actions have ensured that rates of attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils, are improving. Attendance, however, is still too low.
- Sometimes, teachers do not carefully match work to pupils' abilities and some pupils, particularly the most able, do not consistently make the progress they should.
- Teachers do not consistently ensure that pupils, particularly the most able, have frequent enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:
 - plans for improvement focus more sharply on the progress of specific groups of pupils in order to drive more rapid improvement
 - they develop further the roles of middle leaders so that they have greater impact on further accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment
 - actions taken accelerate the progress of boys to further diminish differences in their attainment with that of girls in reading and writing
 - they are stringent in securing further improvements to pupils' attendance, including that of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to further improve pupils' progress and raise attainment by ensuring that all teachers:
 - consistently and accurately match activities and work to pupils' abilities and needs
 - teach pupils, particularly the most able, to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Senior leaders and staff are ambitious for the school. The headteacher sets a clear vision for improvement and ethos. Staff promote pupils' personal development and their academic progress very well. The headteacher has led the development of a caring, nurturing culture in which all pupils can thrive.
- The school value of 'children first' informs all decisions made by leaders and is woven into the school culture. Leaders have a good grasp of the school's strengths and the aspects in which it can improve. Their improvement plans, however, do not focus sharply enough on accelerating the progress and raising the attainment of specific groups of pupils, for example that of boys, to drive even more rapid improvement.
- Leaders check the quality of teaching carefully and ensure that staff receive appropriate training to continually develop their expertise. The management of teachers' performance is effective and helps to drive improvement in the quality of teaching, learning, assessment and leadership. While attainment at the end of the early years and key stage 1 is below the national average, pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Senior leaders are rapidly strengthening leadership. Middle and subject leaders, many of whom are new to their roles, are positive and enthusiastic. They are developing their expertise in checking standards and supporting other staff to bring about improvements in their areas of responsibility. The impact of leaders' work to raise standards in mathematics, for example, was evident in lessons and pupils' work. Further work is needed, however, to ensure that middle leaders have greater impact on further accelerating pupils' progress and raising their attainment.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively. The majority of disadvantaged pupils make good progress as a result of leaders' careful use of the funding and their checking of the impact it has on pupils' learning.
- Leaders and the coordinator for provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities ensure that the additional funding is used well. Pupils make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' progress and attainment are not checked rigorously enough, however, so that leaders have a sharp overview of the effectiveness of provision.
- Leaders use the additional funds provided through the primary physical education and sports premium grant effectively. This has improved the skills of teachers in delivering lessons and raised pupils' participation rates by increasing the range of sporting activities on offer.
- Leaders ensure that the school's broad and balanced curriculum and enrichment activities promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education very well. This is a strength of the school. School displays reflect pupils' learning about different cultures and religions, their involvement in fundraising activities and the many opportunities they have to develop their understanding of British heritage and culture to prepare them well for their life in modern Britain.
- The headteacher's clear commitment to developing the 'whole child' is reflected in her

determination to ensure that effective transition arrangements support children's transition from pre-school into Reception. The headteacher works with a partner junior school to help prepare pupils for key stage 2.

- Parents are nearly unanimous in their praise for all aspects of the school. All parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, say that their children are taught well and are making good progress. The overwhelming majority say that their children are happy and feel safe. The very large majority say that the school is well led and managed.
- Leaders are outward-looking and work effectively in partnership with a cluster of local schools to support work which assists school improvement. Teachers in all year groups, for example, work with teachers in other schools to develop the accuracy of their assessment. Leaders also act upon the advice of external advisers and work with two teaching alliances to support improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the early years and key stage 1.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is committed, caring and represents the school's 'children first' ethos very well. Governors understand and fulfil their roles in both supporting and challenging leaders.
- Through their regular visits and scrutiny, their understanding of the school's strengths and aspects in which it can improve is secure. They are not, however, as sharp as they could be in holding the school to account for the progress and attainment of different groups of pupils, for example boys.
- In common with school leaders and staff, the governing body is committed to an ethos of continual improvement. Governors are developing their committee structure, for example, to further improve their effectiveness.

Safeguarding

- Safeguarding is effective. The strong culture of safeguarding is reflected in the very positive views of parents. The ethos of care and respect is demonstrated by staff, pupils and the governing body.
- Designated leaders for safeguarding have ensured that staff have received training so that they are familiar with the latest guidance on keeping pupils safe in education, including the government's 'Prevent' strategy.
- Procedures for reporting concerns and record-keeping are thorough and leaders are tenacious in resolving concerns raised. When appropriate, the support and involvement of external agencies are sought. Leaders' records show that incidents of bullying, poor behaviour or derogatory language are very rare.
- Recruitment processes are also thorough. All required checks are completed and recorded. Members of the governing body have received safeguarding and safer recruitment training.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers are positive and enthusiastic. They have secure subject knowledge which they use to skilfully question pupils and plan lessons which effectively build on previous learning. This enables pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, to make good progress in a range of subjects.
- All teachers have high expectations of the quality and presentation of pupils' work in all subjects. Pupils in the early years and key stage 1 produce work of a consistently high standard. Pupils of all ages and abilities show pride in their work.
- The teaching of reading and phonics is strong. Pupils are confident readers who have a range of strategies for reading words they are not sure of. Teachers ensure that pupils can apply and use their phonics skills in their reading and writing and show very good understanding of what they are reading.
- Teachers show pupils how to improve the quality of their writing. Work in pupils' books shows how teachers provide meaningful contexts to help pupils complete high-quality writing in a range of subjects. Inspectors observed how a teacher in key stage 1 asked pupils to examine a tray of leaves. This encouraged pupils' personal reflection and use of their senses as a stimulus for writing.
- Teachers often make effective use of visual imagery and apparatus to promote pupils' understanding in mathematics. Pupils are often given different work appropriate to their needs and abilities, but teachers do not, however, consistently provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to demonstrate their problem-solving and reasoning skills. This is an area that leaders have identified and there is evidence of their work to develop this aspect.
- Pupils behave very well in lessons. They listen well, work hard and apply themselves to all that is asked of them. They are confident sharing their ideas, and teachers have high expectations of pupils to collaborate to support their learning, which they do very well.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well. They are effective in supporting pupils' learning within lessons and delivering additional support on an individual or group basis, including for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. This helps pupils to make good progress.
- Teachers in all year groups set homework that consolidates and extends pupils' learning as well as promotes the involvement of parents in pupils' learning. Parents speak highly of the family homework tasks in which they choose, with their child, from a 'menu' of activities to work on together. One parent spoke of how working with their child to make a sandwich had promoted a range of skills and learning.
- Sometimes, teachers do not check or use information about pupils' learning to correct misconceptions. Occasionally, teachers do not ensure that work is well matched to pupils' abilities and so some pupils, particularly the most able, sometimes do not make the progress they should.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school nurtures pupils' self-esteem. Pupils cooperate and work very well together. Staff are excellent role models and encourage pupils to be confident and positive learners. There is scope, however, to develop this aspect further so that pupils are even more independent in their learning.
- Pupils understand school systems for behaviour and have a good understanding of right and wrong. They understand how school rules relate to the rule of law, and in voting for school councillors and 'eco warriors', for example, show their understanding of democratic principles. Pupils have a secure understanding of British values appropriate for their age.
- Pupils speak with confidence about how to keep themselves safe, including when online or in relation to talking to strangers. They say that bullying is rare and are very confident, as are the parents who spoke with inspectors, that teachers will quickly resolve any concerns that they have.
- Pupils are proud of their school and respect their teachers. Relationships in the school are a strength. There is an ethos of mutual respect between teachers and pupils, and between pupils themselves.
- Staff teach pupils to be reflective and considerate. Through the curriculum, assemblies and school visitors, staff ensure that pupils understand different faiths and beliefs. Pupils speak with sensitivity about the importance of respecting others. When explaining why poppies are worn for Remembrance, one Year 2 pupil said that it was 'because they were really brave for us'.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils' conduct around the school, in lessons, at break and lunchtimes is excellent. Pupils are very well mannered and considerate.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to and enjoy learning. They take pride in their work, and the quality of their work in all classes and year groups is high. Pupils, including the very youngest, show concentration and perseverance. They only very occasionally lose focus if work is not matched well to their needs.
- At the end of 2017, overall attendance declined and was below the national average, including for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders are working hard to emphasise to parents the importance of attendance and are implementing a range of initiatives, including working with the small number of families whose children have persistent absence, to improve attendance. Figures for the last term show encouraging signs of improvement. This remains, however, an area of continuing focus.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- In 2017, the proportion of children who achieved a good level of development in the early years increased compared with the previous year. The proportion of pupils achieving the required standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check was above the national average. The proportions of pupils achieving the standards expected for their age at the end of key stage 1 for reading, writing and mathematics were lower than the national averages, including at greater depth. Standards in writing were lower than in reading and mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of the early years and key stage 1 was lower than the national averages. However, the majority of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, make good progress from their different starting points, and sometimes better, in reading, writing and mathematics in all year groups. On some occasions, the most able pupils are not consistently challenged to make the progress they should.
- In 2017, the proportion of boys achieving a good level of development in the early years, and their attainment at the end key stage 1, was below that of girls, particularly for reading and writing. The differences in the attainment of boys and girls for reading and writing were larger than those seen nationally. Leaders are taking actions to address this and, overall, boys are making good progress from their starting points. Leaders have not, however, securely ensured that boys consistently make accelerated progress so that differences in attainment are closer to those seen nationally.
- Pupils' work shows that they complete work of a good standard in a range of subjects. In their writing, there is evidence that teaching enables pupils to make clear progress in improving their spelling, handwriting, use of vocabulary and writing increasingly sophisticated sentences. In mathematics, teachers help pupils develop a deep understanding, over time, of the most important ideas in mathematics.
- Teachers ensure that pupils have very positive attitudes to reading. Teachers promote reading through a range of initiatives, such as celebrating a range of authors or providing reading 'challenges'. Through class teaching and individual support, pupils make strong progress. Pupils read fluently and show good comprehension of what they are reading.
- Leaders and teachers quickly identify pupils who need to catch up or need extra support and intervene to ensure that pupils are taught what they need. The pupil premium is used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and staff ensure that pupils make progress academically as well as in their personal development. From their starting points, pupils are prepared well for the next stages of their education.

Early years provision

Good

- At the end of 2017, while the proportion of children achieving a good level of development improved compared to the previous year, it was below the national average. Nonetheless, from their different starting points, children make good progress in the early years. Many pupils enter the school with skills that are below those

expected for their age, and most achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year.

- The early years leader, who is the headteacher, has closely supported the development of staff in the early years to ensure that provision is of high quality. Teachers have also benefited from training from a teaching alliance, as well as work with local schools and the support of an external adviser to further develop their expertise.
- Teaching is strong. Teachers check children's learning and development needs carefully on entry to the early years and use this information effectively to plan learning. This enables children, including those who are disadvantaged, to make rapid progress. Leaders' setting of focused targets for specific groups of pupils, including boys, is not, however, as refined as it could be to more strategically plan provision and learning activities.
- Teachers ensure that children have opportunities for learning in all aspects of the early years curriculum. Leaders are also exploring ways in which children can have greater access to learning outside. Activities in the classroom and outside are not, however, consistently well planned and organised to stimulate children's interest and curiosity or provide appropriate challenge.
- Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled at asking open and closed questions to promote children's learning. They are enthusiastic and positively praise children's behaviour and efforts. Occasionally, staff are not as rigorous as they could be in tackling children's errors and misconceptions.
- Transition arrangements are effective. Leaders and staff use information from pre-school settings to help them understand children's needs. At the end of the Reception Year, teachers work with teachers in Year 1 to ensure that children's needs are met and that their progress is maintained. Discussions and meetings ensure that parents contribute to children's ongoing assessment. The headteacher works closely with staff to help ensure that assessment is accurate.
- Children rapidly develop their social and language skills. One child who the school had assessed as having poor social and language skills at the beginning of the year was working with other children to build a tower and said, 'I need to count my tower, but I need someone to help me.'
- Children's behaviour is good. They quickly settle to tasks. They are 'busy' and show independence and concentration. Routines are rapidly established. Children listen and cooperate with others well.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective and statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	119930
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10037604

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	184
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rachel Everitt
Headteacher	Sarah Carey
Telephone number	01455 842310
Website	www.barwellinfantschool.co.uk
Email address	admin@barwell-infant.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 June 2013

Information about this school

- Barwell Infant School is smaller than the average-sized school.
- There have been significant changes in teaching staff since the last inspection.
- The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds or who speak English as an additional language are well below the national averages.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. Thirteen lessons were observed, some jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors looked at pupils' work, observed the teaching of early reading skills, listened to pupils read and spoke with them to evaluate the quality of their learning.
- Inspectors scrutinised a variety of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and pupils' attainment and progress. A range of plans for improvement were evaluated, as well as the school's self-evaluation of its own performance and documents relating to the management of staff performance and the work of the governing body.
- Inspectors spoke with parents informally at the start of the school day. They took account of the 30 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 14 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the coordinator for the provision for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They spoke with members of the governing body and external advisers. Discussions explored a wide range of subjects, including safeguarding arrangements.

Inspection team

John Lawson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Christopher Davies

Ofsted Inspector

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