

INSPECTION REPORT

**BARNHAM CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY
CONTROLLED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Barnham, Thetford

LEA area: Suffolk

Unique reference number: 124688

Headteacher: Mr. Chris Mills

Reporting inspector: Michael Miller
OIN: 17556

Dates of inspection: 8th to 9th October 2001

Inspection number: 193487

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First
School category:	Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils:	4 to 9
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Mill Lane Barnham Thetford
Postcode:	IP24 2NG
Telephone number:	01842 890235
Fax number:	Not applicable
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Alan Ashcroft
Date of previous inspection:	14 th April 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Barnham Primary School has 84 pupils on roll, 48 boys and 36 girls. In addition, seven reception age children attend part-time. It is smaller than most first schools. It is located in the village of Barnham, south of Thetford. The majority of pupils are from white ethnic backgrounds. Just under 70 per cent of the full-time pupils live outside the catchment area, mainly in the nearby Thetford Education Action Zone. Many parents choose this school because of its good reputation. Fifteen per cent of the pupils live in the village and local area. The balance mainly comes from the local RAF base. Pupil mobility is higher than average. Significant numbers of pupils join, or leave, the school after the normal age of admission, across all year groups. There are 17 pupils on the school's register of special educational need.¹ This is higher than average. The general attainment of pupils on entry to the school is below average. Some 8 per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals; this is below average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good and effective school with a number of very good features. It responds well to the differing needs of the range of its pupils. The results of seven-year-old pupils in the national tests in 2000 were high. The school makes very good provision for the pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teaching is good overall, and is sometimes very good or excellent. The school is well led and managed by the headteacher and the governors. It provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- [A] Standards achieved in the national curriculum tests in 2000 were high.
- [B] The value the school places upon the personal as well as academic development of its pupils in order to enable them to achieve well, including:-
 - (1) high standards and pupil achievement in writing and music;
 - (2) very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
 - (3) very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- [C] The high quality of the day-to-day working partnership between teachers and pupils. This is achieved through:-
 - (4) the consistently good quality of teaching and learning;
 - (5) the very good quality and range of learning opportunities;
 - (6) the good quality of the school's development planning.

What could be improved

- Partnership opportunities and communication links with parents.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Standards achieved by pupils at that time were requiring some improvement. The quality of education and the school's management and efficiency were good. The school's climate for learning was very good. The school has been methodical in addressing the key issues raised and improvement has been good. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and are now broadly in line with national expectations. ICT continues to form a focus for improvement as part of the school's development planning. There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching as a result of monitoring and lesson observations by the headteacher. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching and support staff are used more effectively. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together to enhance learning opportunities for the pupils.

¹ The DfES Code of Practice gives practical advice to schools and local education authorities about their responsibilities to ensure that all pupils who have special educational needs receive the most appropriate help to further their learning and personal development. This is a statutory duty under the 1993 Education Act.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 2 based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
Reading	A	C	A	A
Writing	B	B	A*	A
Mathematics	D	E	A*	A

Key

well above average A

above average B

average C

below average D

well below average E

A performance is consistent with the top 5 per cent of primary schools nationally.*

Standards in the national tests for reading, writing and mathematics have tended to follow the general attainment of the groups of pupils year by year. When the year group has high numbers of pupils with special educational needs then the test and task scores tend to be below the average for all schools. In other years, such as 2000, when there was a lower proportion of pupils with special educational needs, pupils' performance is very high in comparison with the national average. Standards also vary due to the high pupil mobility rate, the numbers of pupils entering the school (with below average attainment) from outside its normal intake area and at times other than the normal age of entry. What is clear from the inspection is that the school provides a climate for learning within which pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those with special educational needs, are able to achieve well.

The school's literacy strategy has been well implemented; for example, in the teaching of literary style and the structure of writing. This gives the pupils a thorough basis for all language skills. Similarly, the school has implemented in full the national numeracy project. Inspection findings show that, in the lessons seen, standards are average in English, mathematics and science by age seven and for the oldest pupils aged nine, with many achieving above their expected levels. Standards in other subjects of the curriculum are broadly average overall, though with many examples of work in science, history, design technology and writing by pupils in displays and books showing high achievement. Pupils make good progress across all year groups.

Children in reception enjoy a wide range of worthwhile activities and, as a result, make good progress. Many children enter the school with below average attainment in reading for meaning and enjoyment, speaking and listening skills and personal and social development. By the end of their foundation year² it is expected that most will be at least in transition to or working at the early levels of attainment required under the National Curriculum.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils like coming to this school. They are happy and like their teachers and the staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. However, some pupils are still learning to manage their own actions successfully.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils like and trust their teachers. They learn and play well together.
Attendance	Attendance is very good. Punctuality to school and lessons is good.

Pupils are very positive about their life and work at school. The school provides well for the pupils' personal development within a 'family' atmosphere. This is particularly supportive of the younger pupils, enabling them to develop a sense of 'belonging'. Older pupils also show a sense of responsibility, and duty of care, to the younger pupils.

² From September 2000, the term Foundation Stage refers to children's education from the age of three until the end of the reception year.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-9 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching and the quality of learning were never less than satisfactory in any lessons seen. Overall, teaching and learning were good or better in a substantial majority of lessons. This represents good improvement since the last inspection and reflects the determination of the headteacher and staff to ensure high quality educational provision. Particular strengths in the teaching are to be found in lesson planning and classroom management, which allow for flexibility to meet the needs of all pupils and to build on pupils' contributions. This plays an important part in the establishment of the high quality, day-to-day working relationships between teachers and pupils. In the best lessons, the questioning and communication skills of teachers are very high. They listen to their pupils, have high expectations of them and offer good levels of challenge in their learning. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities and backgrounds are included in the life and work of their classes.

Pupils' literacy skills are being used well to support other curriculum areas, particularly in history, geography and religious education. Teachers' marking reinforces writing skills, ensuring pupils' own ideas are well recorded. The teaching of computer word-processing skills supports pupils' writing; graphical work is used effectively in, for example, mathematics and geography. Numeracy skills are being developed appropriately and the teaching enables good support to other areas, such as science, history and geography.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The statutory curriculum is well in place. The curriculum offered is broad and the subjects are well balanced and designed to meet the needs of the pupils.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The school is effective in its approach, which ensures the inclusion of all pupils in what the school has to offer. Extension work opportunities provide suitable challenge to gifted and talented pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. This reflects the denominational nature and focus of the school as a family and a community. There is good provision through subjects of the curriculum as well as assemblies.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very well. Procedures for ensuring pupils' personal welfare are properly in place.

The school's curriculum fully meets the statutory requirements of the national curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school provides for its pupils a relevant curriculum, which is continuous and progressive in its development of skills, knowledge and understanding. The quality and range of the curriculum is very good. It is better than that expected of a small school and enriched by well-integrated links across a range of subjects. However, although the school has a sound programme of trips and visits, it is often dependent upon voluntary help to enable such visits to take place. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good and they are particularly well supported in English and mathematics. Child protection measures are in place and staff are well briefed and trained. The staff and governing body take care to ensure that the health and safety aspects of the school are monitored and that pupil welfare is tracked.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	There is good and effective leadership from the headteacher, who is ably supported by a staff strongly committed to improvement and to ensuring the best opportunities for each pupil.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors are very effective in fulfilling their responsibilities and taking an active partnership role in establishing a clear, educational direction for the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Monitoring procedures are effective and strategies for performance management are properly in place.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school provides good value for money. The principles of 'best value' are applied very well.

The headteacher works well with his staff in developing strategies that will enable the pupils to achieve well. Subject co-ordinators work hard to improve the quality of education, and to ensure that the pupils are given good, and equal, opportunities to succeed at school. In this, the school development plan is well considered and includes projects designed to improve the work of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents' meeting was attended by 16 parents. Twenty-six per cent of parents returned questionnaires.

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high expectations the school has of its pupils to succeed • Their children like the school and it helps pupils to become mature and responsible • Behaviour is good • The school is well led and managed • Teaching is good and enables the pupils to make good progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The range of activities offered outside lessons • The way the school works and communicates with parents • Better information about the progress their children make • The amount and range of homework

Parents' views are satisfactory overall. Inspectors agree with, and endorse, the parents' positive views about the school. However, there is a sizeable minority who feel that the school does not inform them well enough about their children's progress, or work sufficiently closely with them. On some very specific issues, the school has not fully succeeded in taking some parents with them or explaining matters to their satisfaction. The inspection finds that, although the school does provide all parents with a good range of information about their children's work and the life of the school, the formats in which this information is communicated could be improved. Reports fully meet statutory requirements and opportunities for formal and informal discussions with parents concerning their children's progress are good. The school would like to further improve the range of activities outside lessons. It requires voluntary parental support to succeed in this because it is a small school, with a small staff. Requests are regularly made to parents through newsletters, the prospectus and the governors' annual report. Whilst some support has been provided on a short-term basis, longer-term commitment from parents has not been forthcoming to enable the school to meet its goals. However, it is clear that most parents see communications improvements as a means of enabling them to support their children's learning better.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

[A] Standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests in 2000 were high.

1. The National Curriculum tests show that standards of attainment³ for the then seven-year-old pupils, in Year 2, were well above average. Although care should be taken when interpreting results from relatively small year groups (in this case 12 pupils) their achievement placed the school in the top five per cent (A*) for writing and mathematics, and in the top 10 per cent for reading⁴, when compared with all schools nationally. Barnham received a School Achievement Award in recognition of the progress its pupils made over the period from 1996 to 2000.
2. However, whilst the inspection evidence confirms that the school enables its pupils to achieve well and make good progress, results in the national tests have varied from year to year. There are valid reasons for this. First, the attainment of pupils on entry to the school is mainly below, and sometimes well below, average⁵. The records of the assessments made when pupils entered the school confirm this. Secondly, there are high levels of pupil mobility. For example, in the successful Year 2 group from 2000 (now Year 4) the turnover of pupils has led to the loss of some of the higher attaining pupils and an increase in the proportion of those with special educational needs. Only 15 per cent of pupils come from the local village. Up to 17 per cent of pupils have parents based at the local military bases and often arrive, or leave, at short notice. Nearly 52 per cent of the pupils on roll at the time of the inspection came from outside the school's main intake area. Most of these pupils come from the nearby Thetford Education Action Zone, where standards have been identified as requiring improvement. This is because Barnham School has gained a good reputation amongst parents for enabling their children to achieve well.
3. Provisional results for the 2001 national tests were published after the inspection was completed⁶. These indicate a group of Year 2 pupils with mainly average standards for reading and writing, below average for spelling and above average in mathematics and science. Overall, attainment in line with national expectations is confirmed by an average points score⁷ of 15.1; this is at the average for Level 2.
4. However, detailed analysis of these 2001 results shows higher attainment from the 70 per cent of pupils in this year group who had attended the school continuously for the three years from reception to Year 2. Those pupils with special educational needs were also achieving well. At the time of the inspection, half this year group (now in Year 3) were identified as having special educational needs. The inspection also found that, even early in the year with this same class of pupils, there was some immaturity in their approach. The behaviour of a number of these pupils affected their own learning on occasions. For example, their listening skills are generally under-developed and their teacher has to work extremely hard at times,

³ Attainment refers to the standards students achieve compared with national averages. Standards are also compared with results obtained in similar schools, that is those with a similar uptake of free school meals. Achievement refers to the progress students make in terms of where they started when they entered the school. Thus, good achievement does not necessarily mean that standards are above average, but that students do well and make better than expected progress. National data for 2001 was not available during the inspection.

⁴ See: summary Standards Table on page 7 in Part A.

⁵ See: paragraph 5.

⁶ Department for Education and Skills Statistical First Release SFR 37/2001; and Autumn Term Package published October 2001.

⁷ The average points score provides schools with a single statistic to compare the overall grades attained by their pupils with those in another school. At Key Stages 1 and 2, the level attained by each pupil, for example, in mathematics, is given a score. A Level 1 = 9 points, a Level 2 = 15 points, a Level 3 = 21 points and so on. Therefore, the average points score in mathematics is worked out by adding up all of the points based on the level attained by pupils and then dividing by the number of pupils who took the test. The National Curriculum has been written on the basis that pupils, by the end of Key Stage 1, are expected to reach Level 2. Therefore, a school whose average points score for mathematics in the end of Key Stage 1 tests is greater than 15.0 is one whose pupils are performing above that expected for their age.

using a whole variety of highly professional strategies, to ensure whole class and group co-operation.

[B] The value the school places upon the personal as well as academic development of its pupils in order to enable them to achieve well. Including:-

- (1) high standards and pupil achievement in writing and music;**
- (2) very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;**
- (3) very good provision for pupils with special educational needs.**

5. Baseline assessment tests of pupils entering the school in the reception class consistently show below average attainment levels, particularly in the areas of speaking, listening and social development. The school is, therefore, very aware of its role in providing pupils with opportunities for their personal development as well as academic education. The following areas describe and illustrate some of the main strengths identified by the inspection:-

(1a) high standards and pupil achievement in writing

6. The most consistent area of success for the school has been in writing. When compared with all schools nationally, pupil achievement was above average in 1998 and 1999, and well above average in 2000. In the 2000 national tests, pupils' performance was consistent with the top 5 per cent of primary schools nationally⁸.
7. In the literacy lessons seen, there is a very strong focus on the development of a creative approach to the use of language. In Year 4, for example, good work on the use of verbs as 'powerful' language takes place. Pupils know how verbs can be used to stimulate imagination and switch the focus from past or present to future through the correct use of tense. They put such knowledge to good effect in their own work; for example, in their analysis of poems such as 'Sir Winter'. Pupils understand the importance of grammatical rules and a language's use of inflection in showing the relationship between words.
8. Good links are made with other subject areas such as science; for example, in Year 4 when studying text about the development of butterflies and in the use of vocabulary, such as 'caterpillar', 'pupa' and 'chrysalis'. The use of dictionaries is encouraged and pupils create their own 'word banks' for personal use and future reference. The scrutiny of work showed how the school's approach to extending pupils' vocabulary gives rise to their increasing confidence in the creative, expressive and imaginative use of language as they progress through the school. In Year 2 science, for example, pupils confidently write sentences about animals, such as horses, describing how they move or what they prefer to eat. There is a good balance in the use of writing for fiction and non-fiction purposes. Even in 'ordinary' pieces, such as 'What I did in the holidays', by Year 4 pupils, ideas flow and points are well communicated, painting a clear picture in the reader's imagination. This is because, from Year 1, pupils are encouraged to observe and convey meaning in their writing, for example in a class book on a trip to Southwold. Here, words and pictures brought to life pupils' excitement in travelling by bus, their experiences when playing on the beach, and discovering a dead crab!
9. Pupils' sensitivity is also well illustrated in a Year 3 class newspaper, produced on computer, when reporting the death of a local farmer's working horse. There are good displays of book reviews by Years 3 and 4 pupils. Stories are well summarised and evaluated with comments such as "The book was warm and exciting because ..." Pupils regularly recommend books and authors to each other through such reviews, and even make comments about the standard and suitability of the illustrations.

⁸ See: summary Standards Table on page 7 in Part A.

10. Humour is used well. For example, a Year 2 pupil constructed similar sentences to ‘The rain in Spain ...’ and wrote *“The brain went down the drain!”* Descriptive language that maintains interest can be seen in Year 4 work on the theme of ‘The Door in the Depths’ where one pupil writes: *“There were millions of futuristic cars, helicopters and tanks. It was night. There were hundreds of lights and flashing bill-boards. But the strangest thing of all was that instead of people there were Robots – hundreds, thousands, millions of Robots ... I did not know how I was going to escape. What should I do?”* In some Year 3 work on ‘Imaginary Worlds’, where pupils asked themselves questions about the nature of objects, another pupil wrote: *“I found a quill. It was old, precious, soft and a bit scruffy.”*

(1b) high standards and pupil achievement in music

11. High standards were seen during the inspection in music. This has been an area of continued success since the last inspection, when standards were above average. In an excellent Year 4 lesson, for example, the quality of teaching and learning were very high because the teacher was well focused on enabling the pupils to develop as *musicians*. This went significantly further than just helping the pupils to play or control an instrument. Pupils’ composing and performing skills are high. They use different forms of notation very well to record their work. Practice and musical exploration work in groups is very well focused. Pupils *make music* effectively through different combinations of sounds and instruments. By Year 4, they show a very good familiarity with a range of tuned and untuned percussion instruments. This is further supported through the governors’ recognition of the importance of music in pupils’ personal and cultural development. All older pupils learn to play recorders and the governors make available the necessary funding to provide the instruments.

12. The headteacher has an excellent understanding of the importance of recording pupils’ performance in lessons in order that they can undertake and share in self-evaluation. Consequently, pupils are very good at listening to each other and identifying how they can improve. Pupils are helped to do this by the headteacher’s skill in, for example, placing performers at optimum distances from a microphone to enable a balanced recording. Tape recorded material, extending back over a three- year period, confirms a consistency in pupil achievement and standards.

13. The standard of singing in assemblies during the inspection was good. Pupils sing well for meaning and expression. For example, when singing the hymn *Now Jesus one Day*, the chorus word ‘Splash’ was enunciated well and with enjoyment. Music is used well in assemblies to create a reflective atmosphere. Pupils are regularly asked to identify instruments used in recorded music, for example in an unusual saxophone recording of a Bach Aria. The school also provides well for pupils to take part in musical performances through local area music festivals and services in the local church.

(2) the school’s very good provision for the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

14. Overall, provision for the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. This flows naturally from the school’s conscious determination to ensure the best opportunities for the individual, personal development of its pupils. It also reflects the denominational character of the school as a Church of England foundation. The vice-chair of governors is a local parish priest. She regularly contributes to school life, not least through taking regular assemblies, which are of good quality. These actively involve the pupils, who are keen to contribute; for example, in a re-enactment of Jesus’ call to the first disciples in the Bible story of the miraculous draught of fishes. Pupils also helped in the construction of a paper chain, which illustrated the strength of the 12 apostles and the importance of ‘working together’ as a school community. There are good opportunities for pupils to reflect on such ideas.

15. There is a real ‘family’ feeling about the school and the way adults and pupils co-operate, which makes a very important contribution to the pupils’ social and spiritual development. Parents are regularly invited to class assemblies as part of the school’s provision to link home and school life. The social life of the school is well integrated through work and play. This is well illustrated in the photograph albums in the foyer available for visitors to the school. These document and represent well the enthusiasm of the pupils and the range of activities provided, including trips and visits. However, because it is a small school, teachers are often reliant on additional, voluntary parental help to enable trips and visits to take place.
16. The school makes good use of the local church for school services. There are good opportunities, through religious education, for pupils to gain an understanding of other faiths. Representatives from major world religions are invited to the school to support its work in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school has few pupils from other than a white ethnic background. However, there is good provision for multi-cultural education through curriculum subjects; for example, in some very good three-dimensional art and design work on Japanese carp kites. The spiritual element is also enhanced by the use of associated captions to the pupils’ work such as *“Like carp, grow up brave and determined.”* In a Year 4 mathematics lesson, pupils wondered at mathematical models, illustrating a range of geometric and natural shapes; this inspired them in their exploration of pattern.
17. Moral education provision is also a strength of the school. There are firm guidelines and expectations of behaviour to which the pupils’ respond well. The school has worked hard on its strategies for positive classroom management, which continue to form part of its development planning⁹. Pupils are well behaved, polite and respectful both in and out of lessons. They work well and play well together. They are friendly and show a healthy level of curiosity. Pupils of all ages often asked interested and pertinent questions of inspectors!

(3) the school’s very good provision for pupils with special educational needs

18. There is very good provision for pupils with special educational needs (SEN). Consequently, such pupils make good progress. At the heart of the school’s approach is a commitment to equality of opportunity and ensuring that each pupil is enabled to achieve well in relation to his or her individual ability. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils benefit from what the school has to offer. The headteacher, as special educational needs coordinator, ensures that procedures are scrupulously followed where pupils require additional help or support. Advice is sought, and taken, from the full range of support agencies available. The parents of pupils requiring additional help under the SEN Code of Practice are encouraged to be fully involved, and the school works closely with them. Targets and individual education plans for SEN pupils are properly established and regularly reviewed. There is good support for SEN pupils in lessons through the deployment of learning support assistants. Teachers and classroom assistants work well together, and their use of record books to record information and the progress of pupils is very effective. The school’s pastoral approach, and positive classroom management strategies, ensures that the personal development of SEN pupils, for example those with emotional or behavioural difficulties, is very good.

⁹ See paragraph 30.

[C] The high quality of the day-to-day working partnership between teachers and pupils.

This is achieved through:-

- (4) the consistently good quality of teaching and learning;**
- (5) the very good quality and range of learning opportunities;**
- (6) the good quality of the school's development planning.**

(4) the consistently good quality of teaching and learning

19. In lessons seen, the quality of teaching and learning were never less than satisfactory. This represents good improvement since the last inspection and reflects the determination of the headteacher and staff to ensure high quality educational provision. Teaching throughout the school is good overall. There is also a close link with pupils' attitudes and their behaviour in class, which is good.
20. Teaching and learning were consistently good for children aged up to five years in reception. They were good, and sometimes very good, for pupils in Years 1 and 2, aged five to seven. They were good and sometimes very good or excellent in Years 3 and 4 with pupils aged seven to nine. This leads to a high quality in the teaching and learning partnership at the school. Overall, teaching and learning were good in 53 per cent of lessons and very good or excellent in 40 per cent. They were good or better in 93 per cent of lessons¹⁰.
21. Particular strengths of the teaching, which support pupil learning, include:-
- Clear thinking and curriculum planning. Teachers plan lessons well to match their pupils' abilities.
 - Objectives for lessons are clearly explained and targets for pupils well set.
 - There is good classroom organisation and management, demonstrations, and resources are well used.
 - Classroom assistants are active in their support of pupils and enhance their learning opportunities.
 - Teachers have high expectations of pupils and are active in involving them in lessons.
 - Teachers offer good levels of challenge to pupils in their work.
 - Questioning techniques are good and teachers communicate well with their pupils.
 - Teachers are flexible in their approach and effectively change management strategies during lessons to meet pupils' needs.
 - Teachers are good at listening to their pupils.
 - Teachers show appreciation of and value pupils' work and efforts.
 - Good relationships are established between teachers and pupils.
22. No lessons were unsatisfactory and there were no significant weaknesses identified in the teaching. However, one area for improvement is in the teaching of physical education. The school has already identified this as an area for professional enhancement, which currently forms part of the school's development plan¹¹.

(5) the very good quality and range of learning opportunities

23. The school's chosen curriculum fully meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The curriculum is relevant, and provides well for the continuous and progressive development of pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. The quality and range of the curriculum is very good. It is better than that expected of a small primary school and it is enriched by well-integrated links across a range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs have access to the full curriculum.

¹⁰ See note to the 'Summary of teaching' table on page 21.

¹¹ See paragraph 31

24. A particular strength is the planning for the combined reception / Year 1 class. Here, the class teacher has thought through the implications of the Foundation Stage curriculum for reception children and those of the National Curriculum for the Year 1 pupils in the class. Her planning, together with the input of the learning support assistant, is very successful in providing the necessary range of opportunities, through common tasks, for both groups of pupils. For example, there is a strong contribution to literacy. Even the youngest children are starting to become familiar with specialist language, such as 'phoneme'¹² and 'grapheme'¹³. In an art lesson, involving mark making and printing activities, the focus was on the use of pupils' creative imagination. This properly met the National Curriculum art and design requirements for investigation of media, whilst linking with the Stepping Stone¹⁴ on creative development. One Year 1 pupil, working on colour blending and smudging techniques using chalks, was able to describe her work as looking *"like a maze or a ball of string"*. This was a good example of the way in which pupils' self-evaluation and critical and analytical skills are encouraged from an early age.
25. Overall, the school's curriculum is very well balanced to meet the pupils' individual needs. The school puts due emphasis on what needs to be taught, for example in its literacy work on speaking, listening and reading. Trips and visits are planned and made at the right time, for example pond dipping in science. There is well considered spending on learning resources to enrich the curriculum, for example on recent improvements to the school library. The curriculum, therefore, provides a very good balance of educational theory and practical application. It is a curriculum designed for the pupils.

(6) the good quality of the school's development planning

26. Discussion with the headteacher, staff and governors confirms that the school has a very good understanding of the areas in which it would like to improve. Consequently, the school's development planning and thinking are good and well considered. They are specifically focused on improving the quality of learning opportunities for the pupils. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The shared level of commitment and capacity of the headteacher and staff to succeed in achieving further improvement is very good. There are five key areas that have been identified by the school for further development. Each teacher has responsibility for one of these areas:-

(a) Developing literacy

27. There has been full implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. In evaluating its success, the school has asked itself a simple but key question: "Is our teaching of English more effective than it was?" For example, in support of reading development, the main library provision has been upgraded. However, the school's accommodation is limited and the library has to be situated in the main school corridor. In the absence of funding for additional building works, staff have done well to compensate for the limitations this imposes. The school aims to improve further the already good standards in pupils' writing¹⁵. Monitoring of pupils' progress is good and, for example, teachers aim to promote extended writing in subjects other than English. Opportunities for additional training for teachers and classroom assistants are being identified.

(b) Developing mathematics

¹² Phoneme: the smallest unit of sound in a word. There are approximately 44 phonemes in English. A phoneme may be represented by one to four letters: to, shoe, through.

¹³ Grapheme: written representation of a sound; may consist of one or more letters.

¹⁴ In the Foundation Stage, for children aged 3 to Reception, progress is assessed in terms of 'Stepping Stones'. The 1st stage / Stepping Stone = Yellow; the 2nd Stage = Blue; the 3rd = Green; the 4th (Early Learning Goals) = Black. This final stage leads on to the National Curriculum Levels.

¹⁵ See paragraphs 6 to 10.

28. Through numeracy and mathematics work the school has, for example, set appropriate targets to enable younger pupils to work more independently and to develop skills of concentration. It aims to improve attainment in areas such as data handling, which is also supported through information and communication technology. New schemes of work were introduced in April 2001 for older pupils. These are currently being evaluated.
- (c) Developing information and communication technology (ICT) provision
29. This was an area of weakness at the last inspection, when standards were below average by Year 2 and well below by Year 4. There has been a significant improvement. Standards are now broadly in line with the average expected for both year groups. Improvements are still being made to the school's computer hardware and software. There are now sufficient computers on trolleys, for movement between rooms, to enable whole-class teaching. However, accommodation difficulties mean that the school is unable to develop a separate, specialist network room. The school would like more parents to volunteer to help with computers in lessons. Further, planned developments include connection to the Internet of at least one computer in each classroom. Staff have recently started a programme of ICT training, as part of a nationally funded initiative, to further improve their personal and teaching skills.
- (d) Developing positive classroom management strategies
30. Good work has already been undertaken on this, in co-operation with the local authority advisory service. The school's behaviour policy has been effectively reviewed. All staff and governors have been involved in training for positive classroom management in developing pupils' ability to manage their own behaviour and to better take control of their own learning. The inspection confirms that these strategies are working well. The full impact of these initiatives is due for further reassessment in April 2002.
- (e) Developing physical education provision
31. A new scheme of work has been put in place and is being evaluated. As with many small schools, the provision of a full range of team games equipment is a problem. The school has, therefore, subscribed to the local authority's 'Top Sports Bags' scheme whereby equipment is shared with other schools to enable the teaching of, for example, netball, tennis, basketball, football, rugby, hockey and cricket skills. In-service training opportunities are being sought to develop and improve staff expertise in the teaching of dance. The co-ordinator has also identified the need for the development of more structured play opportunities at lunchtimes. This is seen by the school as an important element in the pupils' personal and social development, and in giving them choice. However, for health and safety reasons, this is dependent on funding for additional playground supervisors or parent volunteers.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Partnership opportunities and communication links with parents

32. The majority of parents are very happy with the standards being achieved by the school and with their children's response to what it has to offer. They are pleased with the high expectations the school has of its pupils. It is clear from the questionnaire responses that their children like the school. Parents feel that the school's focus on pupils' personal development enables them to become mature and responsible for their age by the time they leave at the end of Year 4. Indeed, the inspection found that relationships between pupils and teachers were very good throughout the school. Pupils like coming to this school. This is supported by the fact that attendance is above average, and punctuality to school and lessons is good. There have been no exclusions. The vast majority of pupils are very happy within the school family. Pupils like and trust their teachers, and other adult staff, and learn and play well together. Behaviour is perceived by parents as being good. The inspection

evidence supports this, but finds that some pupils, particularly those in Year 3, are still learning to manage their own actions successfully¹⁶.

33. However, there is a significant minority of parents (from the evidence of the parents' meeting and questionnaires) who find that communications between home and school do not meet their expectations. There is a perception that improvements are required in respect of the parent/school partnerships, which will enable them to better support their children's education. Parents want to know more about the work the pupils do at school in order to enable additional support for independent learning at home. A significant number would also like to see parents being invited to support extra-curricular activities.
34. Inspectors spent some time exploring these issues with the staff and governors, as well as parents, and in evaluating the information and procedures for the school's communication links with parents. Barnham is a small school, with a committed staff who often go that 'extra mile' in order to enable the best opportunities for their pupils. The school has regularly made appeals for parental help and support. This track record is easily traced through, for example, the prospectus, the governors' annual report and in regular newsletters. A few parents, and the governors themselves, do help on a regular basis. However, the school does require more support. Examples of areas where this would be valued include voluntary lunchtime help to enable the safe introduction of directed games and use of play equipment, and help with computing in lessons. Both these areas have been identified by teachers as part of their development planning¹⁷. Teachers are also reliant on additional parental help to enable them to run curriculum related, and other, trips and visits.¹⁸ Both school and parents would like to see the range of extra-curricular activities and after-school clubs enhanced. However, this also poses problems because over half the pupils come from out of area¹⁹ and public transport is a difficulty. Some parents have expressed a willingness to help on short-term projects, such as trips, the school fete or fireworks events, but there is an identified need for longer-term support to enable the school to achieve its goals.
35. Inspectors find that parents do have open access to teachers, particularly after school on an informal basis. This was commented on favourably at the parents' meeting. However, some parents feel that access to the headteacher is not as open as it is to class teachers. There is a tendency to forget that he is a teaching head. There is no-one to take over his class at times when he is teaching if an emergency arises, or a parent requires immediate contact. Also, facilities are lacking for parents who wish to meet privately with the headteacher. He shares an office with the school secretary, who has to leave if any confidential interview is necessary. The only other alternative is the staff room, which may lead to interruptions if its use is required by, for example, support assistants working with small groups of pupils. Other teachers have a classroom for more private or confidential discussions with parents. The headteacher is the only one who does not have his own 'area'. This is an accommodation problem, which can only be resolved through additional building works.
36. There is a whole range of good and useful information provided for parents. This includes curriculum related guidance booklets and target information leaflets for literacy and numeracy, as well as regular newsletters. However, not all of this information necessarily reaches home via 'pupil post'. This is confirmed by the school secretary, who regularly receives parental telephone calls concerning this problem. In order to improve further, the school needs to look at alternative strategies. Discussions during the inspection with the chair and vice-chair of governors show that they are already considering other possibilities. The inspection also finds that the presentation of newsletters and other information material

¹⁶ See also paragraph 4.

¹⁷ See also paragraphs 29 and 31.

¹⁸ See also paragraph 15.

¹⁹ See also paragraph 2.

for parents could be improved, particularly through the use of ICT and desktop publishing. Improvements in staff expertise in this area forms part of the school's development training for teachers²⁰. Consideration is also being given to the creation of a school information website. Teachers have produced a good 'home video' for parents of children in the foundation stage of their learning, which gives a good and accurate picture of the life and work of the school. These are potentially very good means of improving communications with parents. Currently, the school is good at showing *what* it does, but is not always successful, through its communications, in explaining to parents *why* it does it. For example, formal homework is not set; however, there is an expectation that pupils will undertake reading work at home, with the support of parents. These expectations are clearly set out in the prospectus and initial guide to parents. Again, improvements to explaining the '*why*' of the school's guidance about independent research and literacy and numeracy work would be helpful for parents.

37. Inspectors disagree with parents concerning the information the school provides on pupils' progress. Reports are always of good quality and often exemplary. They are comprehensive, informative and give targets well focused on enabling pupils to make progress. There is good information about pupils' personal and social development, room for parental comments and a record of agreed future actions. Reports, and opportunities for parents to consult teachers at formal meetings, fully meet statutory requirements. At parents' meetings and open days, parents are encouraged to look at pupils' books and their work before meeting with teachers. The pupils themselves often make a good contribution to their own reports through a self-evaluation section. Random sampling uncovered the following pupil comment: *"At school I like art because it is fun. I did a really beautiful garden collage and a very lovely Joan Mirò, and (my teacher) photocopied it and stuck it up on the cupboard. By the way, (Mrs. X) is the best school teacher."*
38. Overall, there is some room for improvement in the quality and clarity of the school's communications with parents and, as a result, the headteacher and governors have accepted this. Before the end of the inspection they were starting to formulate plans for a consultation exercise with parents. It is clear that the majority of parents see potential improvements in communications as helping them to contribute better to their children's learning. They also see this as supporting the high quality of the day-to-day working partnership between teachers and pupils that exists within the school, and enables it to achieve its undoubted success.

²⁰ See also paragraph 29

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

39. The inspection did not find any significant areas for improvement in the quality of education, other than those identified by the school itself and which already form part of its current development planning.²¹ This is a successful school. However, in order to improve further the effectiveness of the school's management, the governors, headteacher and teaching staff, with the support of the local education authority, should:

- **Work to improve the partnership opportunities and communication links with parents by:-**
 - **undertaking consultations with parents to strengthen links and further enhance the teaching and learning partnership, and opportunities provided for pupils;**
 - **improving the presentation and quality of the newsletters and information booklets provided for parents through, for example, more effective use of ICT;**
 - **improving strategies and channels for disseminating information to parents;**
 - **continuing to encourage parents to play an active part in the life of the school through voluntary service and support.**

²¹ See paragraphs 26 to 31

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	10

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Number	1	5	8	1	0	0	0
Percentage	7	33	53	7	-	-	-

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than six percentage point(s).

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR/1 – Y4
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	87.5
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	7

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	YR/1 – Y4
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	17

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	3.4
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
		2000	7	5

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total ⁽²²⁾	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (85)	100 (85)	100 (77)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Total	12	12	12
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	100 (85)	100 (77)	100 (85)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

²² Where the number of pupils in the year group has a total of 11 or more, but either (or both) of the boys' or girls' totals are ten-10 or fewer, only the total results, rather than separate gender results, are given.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	4
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	67
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR/1 – Y4

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18
Average class size	21.3

Education support staff: YR/1 – Y4

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000 / 01
	£
Total income	222,830
Total expenditure	209,911
Expenditure per pupil	2,333
Balance brought forward from previous year	20,111
Balance carried forward to next year	18,877 ⁽²³⁾

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	0
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

²³ This figure of £18,877 represents the governors' contingency funding to ensure the costs of staffing 4-four classes throughout the school year and provision for planned improvements to the school playground and environment.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate 26.4%

Number of questionnaires sent out

91

Number of questionnaires returned

24

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	58	34	8	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	39	44	17	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	26	61	13	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	61	26	0	0
The teaching is good.	39	44	4	4	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	26	35	30	9	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	30	52	9	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	48	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	9	43	35	13	0
The school is well led and managed.	17	70	0	13	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	30	62	4	0	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	8	17	13	45	17