

INSPECTION REPORT

BARTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barton, Cambridge

LEA area: Cambridgeshire

Unique reference number: 110829

Headteacher: Miss Sue Carpenter

Lead inspector: Mrs Lesley Robins

Dates of inspection: 29th – 31st March 2004

Inspection number: 255440

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Primary
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	88
School address:	School Lane Barton Cambridge Cambridgeshire
Postcode:	CB3 7BD
Telephone number:	01223 262474
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr Margaret Penston
Date of previous inspection:	16 th March 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Barton is a small village school in Cambridgeshire. It has increased in size since it was inspected in 1998, from 64 to 88 pupils on roll, with an overall balance of boys and girls. However, there are seven boys and just two girls in Year 2, and one boy and eight girls in Year 4. Pupils are taught in four mixed age classes, whose composition changes each year. For this small school, pupil mobility is high at about 27%, and the numbers of pupils joining the reception class each year vary dramatically. The school has had four different head teachers since its last inspection, and numerous changes of class teachers, some of which have been as recent as this educational year.

Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals, but more than in 1998. Many pupils come from comparatively advantaged backgrounds. Attainment on entry is above average. The proportion of pupils with identified special educational needs is below the national average, but there are more pupils with statements of special educational need than might be expected in this small school. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. Most pupils are of white British backgrounds, with a very small number from other ethnic minority groups.

The school has achieved the ActiveMark and Health Promoting Schools awards and has Investors in People status.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
5848	Lesley Robins	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage, science, art, PE, special educational needs.
9708	Sylvia Daintrey	Lay inspector	
25778	Andrew Hicks	Team inspector	Mathematics, ICT, DT, music
32712	David Waxler	Team inspector	English, geography, history

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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	8
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	10
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	14
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	16
AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE	
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	23

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a sound, improving school providing satisfactory value for money. Many leadership and staffing changes have made sustained improvement difficult, and have led to underachievement by some pupils. This is now being tackled effectively. Standards are satisfactory overall, with good standards in some areas, and clear signs of improvement in others. The quality of education is sound with strong features. The school is well led and managed.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are

- The reception children achieve good standards
- Standards in English are good for most pupils, but the older, most able pupils do not achieve the standards they could in their writing
- The most able pupils in Years 2 and 6 do not achieve as well as they could in mathematics
- Pupils with special educational needs, (SEN) achieve well across the curriculum
- Standards in science, and in aspects of music and physical education, (PE) are above average
- Standards in information and communication technology, (ICT) are unsatisfactory for the juniors
- Assessment systems are not thorough enough to ensure consistently good standards
- The pupils have very good attitudes and behave well, within the school's caring ethos, and its very good provision for personal, social and health education
- Pupils' learning is enriched by good links with parents, very good links with the wider community and other schools, and a very good range of out of school activities
- The new headteacher's work is having a positive impact on standards and quality

Improvement since the last inspection in 1998 is satisfactory. Standards have improved in science but in ICT have declined for the juniors. Standards in writing and mathematics show clear signs of improvement. Attitudes to learning have improved and the strong family ethos has been successfully maintained. Supervision of pupils has improved significantly. Governors now meet all their statutory duties. Assessment remains unsatisfactory. Provision for art and DT is better. The school has increased in popularity and its accommodation is much better.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	A	B	C	C
Mathematics	D	D	C	C
Science	B	B	B	B

*Key: A - well above average; B - above average; C - average; D - below average; E - well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

The pupils' achievement is sound overall. Nearly all the very youngest children are likely to exceed the goals they are expected to reach by the end of reception. They do well in their early reading, writing and number skills. In Years 1 to 6, achievement in reading, spelling and handwriting is sound. Achievement in speaking and listening and in writing is more variable for the older most able pupils. Except for the most able pupils, the pupils are achieving satisfactorily in mathematics. Achievement in science is sound, but is unsatisfactory for the junior pupils in ICT. The pupils with SEN achieve well. The many staffing changes have had the greatest impact on standards for the oldest pupils. Standards in lessons were above average in Years 1 to 4 in English, but average for the oldest pupils in writing. In science, standards were above average in Years 1 to 6. In mathematics, standards seen were average, but with good signs of recent improvement.

The pupils' personal qualities and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. Pupils are very keen to learn and the oldest work very well independently, in an atmosphere of very good, harmonious relationships. Behaviour, attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is sound. Well planned and well organised lessons with good teamwork between teachers and support staff promote effective learning. Successful learning is underpinned by encouraging and positive relationships, where pupils work well together. Sometimes not enough is expected of the pupils and this leads to underachievement. Assessment is inconsistent. It is often not used well enough to plan the next stages of learning or to help pupils know how to improve their work. **Teaching is satisfactory.**

The well-planned curriculum effectively meets the needs of mixed-age classes. A wide range of activities out of school and very good community links significantly enrich learning. The refurbished accommodation is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. The pupils are very well cared for and parents make a positive contribution to their education.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The committed and energetic governors know their school well. They have effectively supported the school through a period of much instability. The new headteacher's purposeful approach has established a good sense of teamwork and is improving standards. Experienced managers support their colleagues well. Most teachers are new to their management roles and their workloads are heavy in this small school. However, they know where improvements can be made. The school development plan has the right priorities but has too many actions to be accomplished in one year.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

The parents value much of what the school has to offer, but some do not feel well informed. The inspection team judges that there are good arrangements for parents to know about their children's progress, and that there is good information about the curriculum and school events. The school has good plans in place to tell parents more about the topics their children study. The inspection team and school agree with parents that homework arrangements need improvement. The pupils are increasingly involved in contributing to school life, but are not as involved in evaluating their own learning as they could be. Pupils most like: being with their friends at school; their lessons, particularly those in art, DT, PE and science; and Golden Time. A very few find their teachers a bit strict; this was not evident during the inspection.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are

- Raise the achievement of the more-able pupils in writing and mathematics
- Raise standards in ICT for the juniors
- Make assessment consistent, systematic and thorough

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards are good in the Foundation Stage. In English, standards are above average in Years 1 to 4, but average in Years 5 and 6. Standards are average, but improving, in mathematics and above average in science. Achievement overall is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The reception children achieve well in their personal, social, and emotional development and they reach above average standards in communication, language and literacy and in their mathematical development
- In writing and mathematics, pupils with SEN achieve well, the middle ability pupils make the expected progress, but the most able pupils do not do as well as they might
- Standards in science are above average, particularly in the pupils' investigative skills
- Standards are unsatisfactory in ICT for the junior pupils
- Standards are good in aspects of PE and music

Commentary

1. In the **Foundation Stage**, standards are good overall. The reception children are keen and questioning. The shyest children grow in confidence. All concentrate well both in taught sessions and in self-chosen activities. They are good at sharing and looking after equipment. They show very good knowledge of numbers and letters, and have made a very good start on learning to read, write and count.

Key Stage 2

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	27.0 (28.1)	26.8 (27.0)
Mathematics	27.0 (26.5)	26.8 (26.7)
Science	29.6 (29.7)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 14 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

2. The numbers of pupils who take the tests each year is very small, and the ability profile of each Year 6 group is different, so these results must be treated with some caution. In 2003, results were average in English and mathematics and above average in science. Over the past four years, the test results in English and science have been in line with those for similar schools, but have been weaker in mathematics.

3. In English and mathematics, carefully targeted support enables the few pupils with SEN to achieve well. They make good progress in their reading, their ability to write in different subjects, and in their mathematical skills. The middle ability pupils successfully achieve the average standards expected, because work is usually pitched at the right level for them. However, the most able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could, mainly because the work they are given is not hard enough.

4. The pupils' investigative skills are a notable feature of the good standards and sound achievement in science, for all pupils. They cover a lot of scientific knowledge as they move through the school, and develop very good understanding of ideas such as fair testing and hypothesis.

5. Whilst the junior pupils can use ICT effectively for word processing and research, their use of ICT to analyse and present data is under-developed. They do not know enough about computer modelling and control technology. This is mainly because these aspects have not been tackled in sufficient depth.

6. The pupils' singing is rhythmical, tuneful and expressive. Instrumentalists accompany the singing well, playing confidently and with good technique on instruments such as violin, flute and recorder, achieving above average standards. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve above average standards in gymnastics and their achievement is satisfactory. Games skills in Years 5 and 6 are very good and the pupils' achievement is good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes throughout the school are **very good**. Behaviour and personal development are **good**. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well across the school. Attendance and punctuality are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils are very keen to learn and the oldest work very well independently
- Very good relationships result in a very harmonious environment for learning and play
- Behaviour is very good in many lessons, in assemblies and in the playground, but some older pupils occasionally behave in a silly and disrespectful manner
- The headteacher has taken very effective action to improve attendance and punctuality

Commentary

7. From the youngest age onwards, the pupils are very interested in learning new things and bringing the knowledge they already have into the classroom. Attitudes to learning have improved since the last inspection and are now very good. Reception children listen attentively to a story, are keen to answer questions and contribute their ideas. Throughout the school, the pupils are excited about learning and eager to be involved. In Years 3 and 4, for example, when the pupils arrive in the morning, they study with great interest and anticipation the list of lessons for the day. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils are able to work very hard on their own. They talk in a very mature manner about what they have learned, linking this most effectively with their own experiences from travels or family backgrounds.

8. One of the strengths of the school, much valued by parents, is the strong family ethos of caring for others which has been successfully maintained during a period of considerable instability. Reception children achieve well in learning to help and share with each other, for example when putting on their aprons for water play or taking turns to use gardening tools, saying politely, "Can I use that after you?" In Years 1 and 2, the pupils play very constructively together in their 'Golden Time', which is their reward for working and behaving well all week. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 often work very well together. They show good concern for each other and for younger pupils. Parents and pupils are confident that any minor incidents of name-calling or falling-out are soon dealt with. There have been no racist incidents in the last two years.

9. Pupils are very well behaved in most activities throughout the school day. In nearly all lessons, the atmosphere is one of quiet industry. In a gymnastics lesson for reception, Years 1 and 2 children, for example, the pupils used the apparatus very sensibly and so were able to achieve well. Pupils move about the school in a very orderly manner and sit very attentively in assemblies. Behaviour in the playground has improved with the introduction of better supervision and more things to do. There were no exclusions last year. The school has effective strategies to manage the few pupils with behavioural difficulties. Very occasionally, these are not successful and result in some disruption to the class. There were two short fixed period exclusions this term. Teachers are usually able to channel pupils' lively attitudes into productive work, but sometimes in Years 5 and 6, especially if the pace of the lesson drops and the more-able pupils lack challenge, an element of restless behaviour and unnecessary remarks can creep in.

10. The strengths in provision for pupils' moral and social development have been maintained since the last inspection, with the programme for personal, social and health education now making a powerful contribution. Pupils are fully involved in and respectful of the school's rules and arrangements for rewards and sanctions. They enjoy carrying out their responsibilities. Year 6 pupils act very effectively as peer mentors in the playground. Spiritual development is well promoted in assemblies and religious education but is still not specifically planned for in other subjects. Pupils develop a very good understanding of their local culture through the school's close links with its nearby community, but multi-cultural education remains an area for further development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data	4.9
National data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.0
National data	0.4

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

11. Attendance is above the national average and unauthorised absence is negligible, as it was at the last inspection. Attendance has improved further since the figures reported in the table and is currently 96 per cent. Two years ago, attendance was 93 per cent, below the national average. On her arrival, the headteacher put in place a strategy to reverse this trend, which has been very successful. Expectations are made very clear to parents and they comply well. Attendance data from registers is now transferred to a computer package and monitored very effectively by the headteacher and administrative staff. Changed arrangements for the start of the day have been effective in improving punctuality and ensuring a prompt start to lessons.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **sound** overall. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The curriculum is good, as are the links with parents. Links with the wider community and with other schools are very good. The pupils are very well cared for.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some strong features, but with a key weakness in assessment.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are well planned and organised, with clear objectives
- Learning is underpinned by good relationships
- Pupils generally work well on their own, and in groups, showing good application
- Sometimes not enough is expected of the pupils and a lack of challenge slows learning
- Assessment is not used systematically enough to plan the next steps in the pupils' learning

Commentary

12. The teachers think carefully about the needs of their mixed age classes and identify clearly what they want the pupils to learn. In the reception/Year 1 class, for example, the teacher plans different and appropriate activities for the younger children. In Years 1 to 6, teachers make good use of the well-constructed curriculum plans to ensure that the pupils cover appropriate work. Activities are well prepared and the involvement of teaching assistants is good. This makes for smooth lessons, where time and resources are used well to support effective learning. In an English lesson for pupils in Years 3 and 4, for example, the careful planning, good teamwork between the teacher and assistant, and the very well paced teaching enabled all the pupils to achieve good standards.

13. The pupils know well what they are going to learn in their lessons. This helps them to focus and work productively. The teachers are consistently encouraging with their pupils, praising their

efforts, and this is motivating for them. The pupils talk articulately about their learning and most say that their teachers help them when they are stuck. Relationships between adults and pupils are relaxed and reassuring, with clear expectations of good behaviour.

14. From reception onwards, the pupils are good at getting on with their work on their own and they work well with each other. The youngest children organise their self-chosen activities well. Older pupils readily share their ideas, work sensibly together and are often supportive of each other. In a games lesson, for example, pupils helped each other with their batting and bowling skills.

15. Sometimes, the teachers do not expect enough of their pupils, and this limits their achievements. The use of undemanding worksheets, for example, in reception, and in English and mathematics lessons is unhelpful. The teachers sometimes miss opportunities to extend the pupils' learning through carefully targeted or challenging questions. The opposite of this was evident in a science session for pupils in Years 5 and 6, where the teacher's open-ended questions pushed the pupils' thinking. Teachers do not always plan rigorously enough for how they are going to extend the learning of the most able pupils, rather relying on the pupils to take their learning on for themselves.

16. Although there is some useful assessment in place, it is inconsistent and lacks rigour. This is a major factor contributing to some underachievement. The good self-assessment process in the science scheme of work is having a positive impact on achievement in that subject. In the Foundation Stage, although some useful observational assessments are made, these are not used to plan the next stage of learning. Pupils do not have individual targets in English and mathematics and the marking of their work does not always help them to know how to improve. Assessment records are not systematically used to track pupils' progress through the school or to inform the next teacher.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 19 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	3	8	7	1	0	0

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** and well planned. There is a **very good** range of activities outside the school day. The building, staffing and resources support the pupils' learning **well**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a very good range of extra curricular opportunities
- The provision for pupils with SEN is good
- The curriculum is well organised to meet the needs of mixed-age classes
- The good quality of the building and resources and the effective deployment of specialist staff enhance learning
- The outdoor area for the Foundation Stage offers limited access and is rather cramped

Commentary

17. The school provides very good opportunities for all pupils to take part in a wide range of extra curricular activities including football, ballet, story club, wildlife, school band, French and Sing for Fun club. This is particularly impressive for a school of this size. The curriculum is enhanced by an extensive programme of visits and visitors which take due advantage of the local environment. For example, pupils visit the Fitzwilliam Museum to support work in history and geography.

18. The curriculum is inclusive, overall providing well for pupils' needs. The school's focus on valuing the individual is a key feature of this inclusiveness. Pupils with SEN are well supported

throughout the school. Individual education plans are well written with clear, specific and achievable targets. Teaching support and tasks are well matched to the pupils' needs, enabling them to achieve well. There is a sensitive and well-managed approach to pupils with behavioural difficulties. The school recognises the importance of enabling such pupils to participate fully in lessons, but balances this carefully with the needs of other pupils. Less confident pupils or those lacking in physical competence are successfully encouraged. There are good opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to achieve well, notably in music and sport.

19. The curriculum is well planned to meet the complex needs of mixed age classes with detailed schemes of work mapped out for subjects. With the exception of ICT, where planning does not cover the curriculum in sufficient depth, subject schemes ensure good coverage. A two-yearly rolling programme ensures equal access and opportunity for pupils.

20. Enhanced by the recently completed extension and refurbishment, the spacious buildings and grounds provide a very attractive learning environment. Increased storage has improved the space in the school hall, for activities such as PE and large-scale music making. There are sufficient areas to withdraw small groups of pupils within most classrooms and elsewhere in the school. However, the outside area for reception children has not been well planned. It is not readily accessible, and inhibits easy flow to and from the classroom. It is also too small for boisterous play and for the range of outdoor learning. However, the adults make sound use of the outdoor area. There are well-organised library areas and plentiful wall space for display. Good quality resources are well labelled and easily accessible to support all curriculum activities fully.

21. Teachers and support staff are well deployed and effectively supported by part-time specialists. Good use is made of volunteer helpers. The school makes very effective use of Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs), and links with the local secondary school to strengthen learning in aspects of PE, English, science and French.

Care, guidance and support

Arrangements for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety are **very good**. Provision of support, advice and guidance for pupils is **good**. The school **satisfactorily** involves pupils in its work and development.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Procedures for the care and supervision of pupils have improved significantly since the last inspection
- Pupils' personal development is very well supported
- Pupils' ideas and opinions are listened to and valued
- Guidance to help pupils improve their academic performance is not as effective as it should be, and they are not sufficiently involved in monitoring their own progress

Commentary

22. The key issue at the last inspection about the supervision of pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes has been dealt with very successfully. More members of staff are now on duty, and a learning support assistant provides valuable continuity of care at lunchtime. The school won the Health Promoting Schools Award last year for its work on providing safe and healthy playtimes. Arrangements for child protection are now very good. The designated teacher is extremely experienced in matters relating to child protection. Staff have attended training and know what to do if they have any concerns. Health and safety procedures are now carried out rigorously, with teaching and non-teaching staff, together with governors, fulfilling their responsibilities very effectively.

23. Parents are very pleased with the way their children are helped to settle into school. Induction arrangements are good, and include home visits soon after the child has started in reception. Pupils are confident that they can discuss any personal difficulties with staff, and the school makes good use of external sources of help if required. Pupils are highly motivated by 'Golden Time' as a reward

for good behaviour and fully accept it as a fair system. A particularly strong feature is the way in which each child is celebrated as a special person. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported so that they are able to make good progress. Gifted and talented pupils have been identified and some extra provision is made, for example in sport. Assessment systems are not well developed, so support and advice to help pupils, especially the most able, to reach the next level in their academic attainment are not sufficiently strong. Pupils are not as involved in taking responsibility for and evaluating their own learning as they could be, through having individual targets for example.

24. Pupils are increasingly involved in contributing to school life. They were consulted two years ago on their likes and dislikes about the school, and effective action was taken to deal with their concerns about playtimes and some unkindness. Year 6 pupils have been trained to help their peers in the playground, and it was their idea to call themselves, 'The WHOs' ('We Help Others'). Pupils have been involved in the design and purchase of new playground equipment. The headteacher has well developed plans to set up a school council next term.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **good**. Links with the community and other schools are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are many strengths in the school's improving partnership with parents, although parents do not feel as well informed and involved as they did at the last inspection
- The curriculum is enriched very significantly by the school's extensive use of the local community and active participation in the local partnership of schools

Commentary

25. Parents are generally supportive of the school. They value the information provided for them in the fortnightly newsletter introduced by the headteacher. This is enhanced by the regularly updated information available on the web site and by email for those who prefer electronic communication. The headteacher has also introduced half termly curriculum information evenings, supplemented by written materials, to support parents in helping their children at home, for example in numeracy as part of the drive to improve standards in mathematics. These are well attended and parents find them useful. They would like to be informed of the topics their child will be studying, as happened in the past. The headteacher has appropriate plans to provide a Parent Partnership Pack that will fulfil this need. A third of parents responding to the questionnaire did not feel well informed about how their child is getting on. The inspection team found that pupils' annual reports provide good information, including National Curriculum attainment levels for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teachers are accessible at the start and end of the day and parents are invited to many events such as the weekly sharing assemblies, which celebrate pupils' achievements.

26. Parents contribute well to their children's learning by hearing them read at home, and providing a background which values education. Some parents come in to school to help and a few with experiences of different cultures make a valuable contribution to pupils' multi-cultural education. The Friends of Barton School have successfully raised significant amounts of money towards the new building extension. Parents are eager to provide more help at home but a significant minority are dissatisfied with the arrangements for homework. The inspection team and the school agree that, apart from reading, homework is set and marked erratically. This is an area ripe for a closer partnership and consultation between home and school.

27. The opportunities provided for the pupils in this small school are greatly enhanced by the many links that the school enjoys with other organisations, people and places. Pupils of all ages benefit hugely from the wide range of visits. For example, the youngest class recently visited a toy museum, which inspired the reception children to write poems about toys. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 recall with enthusiasm their visit to the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge where they saw a sarcophagus, which illuminated their study of the Ancient Egyptians. External agencies run after-school clubs in French and football. Governors lend their expertise by contributing, for example, to the recent science week. Close links with the church and the local village community contribute to many aspects of pupils' personal development. The school has established a strong partnership with the playgroup on the site and with the secondary school to which most pupils transfer. This ensures smooth transition into reception and out of Year 6. The secondary school provides teachers with advanced skills who come into Barton to support staff and help teach the older pupils subjects such as science, PE and French. Pupils have good opportunities to take part in joint sport, dance and music events held with other primary schools.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership of the head teacher is **good** and that of other staff is **satisfactory**. Governance is **good**. School management is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's clear sense of purpose has successfully helped the school to settle and move forward again after a period of uncertainty
- Rapid staff turnover has disrupted teaching. The school has worked hard to minimise its effect through a strong sense of teamwork and good deployment of staff to maximise expertise
- Arrangements to support teachers new to the profession are very good
- The governing body has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses

Commentary

28. The headteacher has a clear view of the challenges faced by a small school. She has swiftly identified where improvement is needed and is putting effective strategies in place. Many teachers, including the headteacher, are new to the school. There has been a recent period of rapid and unavoidable turnover of staff. The headteacher and governing body have worked successfully to create a united, committed and highly professional team of teachers and support staff that places the school in a good position to move forward.

29. Throughout this time, the school has worked hard to minimise the disruption to pupils' learning. The development of a well-planned curriculum has helped sustain some continuity in pupils' learning. In addition, at each change in staffing, the school has deployed teachers effectively to take every advantage of their expertise, for example in the organisation of music and PE teaching. The school's commitment to working as a team and its success in doing so are recognised in the latest "Investors in People Review Assessment Report". This commends the school's efforts and reports that the *"staff work well together, supporting each other to develop teaching and learning."*

30. The staff share the head teacher's vision that values the contribution of every child. The school successfully meets the needs of most pupils. However, staff turnover has inevitably interrupted pupils' education and affected the long-term quality of teaching and learning. Standards on leaving, most notably for the more-able pupils, are not as high as they could be. The school recognises what has happened and teachers are working successfully to redress pockets of underachievement, for instance in mathematics and writing.

31. The small size of the school creates great pressure on all staff. Teachers have multiple management roles, taking responsibility for several curriculum areas. Most subject leaders are new to their posts. They have had insufficient time to bring about change and improvement. More established coordinators support their colleagues well. Targets for school improvement are

appropriate, but the development plan contains too much, making it hard for teachers to sustain improvement in all the areas set out.

32. Although teachers who are new to the profession take on a heavy workload, the school has very good arrangements to support them. An experienced mentor works closely with each new teacher, for instance initially taking the lead with lesson planning and helping to set development targets. Newly qualified teachers speak highly of this support.

33. The governors are committed, energetic and very conscious of their responsibilities. They have supported the school well through much change, and are very pleased with the new head teacher. The governors have much expertise to offer and this is well used by the school, for example to support work in science and for staff training. Governors know what the school does well and what needs to be improved. They continue to develop their role as critical friends. For example, classroom visits now have a sharper focus, thanks to the introduction of a new lesson monitoring form developed by the headteacher. There are clear lines of management and communication, linked to a range of committees, each of which effectively monitors a different area of the school development plan. Costs of development priorities and time scales for implementation are clear. Financial control is very good. The school's budget is monitored regularly, and action taken to ensure good value for money.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	276592	Balance from previous year	30204
Total expenditure	275731	Balance carried forward to the next	28954
Expenditure per pupil	3244		

34. Over the past two years, the governors carried forward higher than usual amounts of money to fund the planned extension and modifications to the school buildings. This was an appropriate development and a very good use of funds.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

At the time of the inspection, there were nine children in the reception year. They are taught in a class with eight Year 1 pupils. There is insufficient evidence to form detailed judgements about each individual area of learning. What follows is a commentary on the main strengths and weaknesses in the Foundation Stage.

Provision for the Foundation Stage children is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are very good in personal, social and emotional development, and the children achieve well in this area of learning
- Standards are good in communication, language and literacy and in mathematical development
- There are clear strengths in the sound teaching, but assessment is not systematic enough to ensure consistently high achievement

Commentary

35. In their **personal, social and emotional development**, the children are keen and inquisitive. In a mathematics session, for example, the children were anxious to know why a bear in a story ate only fruit and not meat. The shyest children grow in confidence through encouragement from the adults, and successful inclusion in class activities. The children show good levels of concentration in whole class sessions, which are of an appropriate length. They also concentrate well on self-chosen activities, such as pouring activities at the water tray. They readily select activities when they have the opportunity, when working outdoors for example, and know where and how to put things away. They are particularly successful at sharing, saying things such as, 'May I use the spoon?' and 'Can I have some please'. The adults effectively promote this kind of behaviour.

36. In **communication, language and literacy**, nearly all the children have very good knowledge of the letters and sounds of the alphabet, with more than half of them able to spell simple three letter words accurately. The middle and higher ability children use their phonic knowledge well when attempting difficult spellings. For example, one child wrote 'crs' for carrots and 'chl' for chocolate. They have made a good start on reading. They ably sort and match similar words and successfully organise story pictures into the right sequence. Although they readily try to write independently, the children have insufficient, stimulating opportunities for writing for different purposes. Overuse of undemanding worksheets limits the children's achievements here. The children are articulate, using talk well in discussion with the adults around them and for directing their play. When engaged in a gardening activity, the children said, 'We need to dig and delve'.

37. In their **mathematical development**, the children know many number rhymes, and can write numbers 1 to 10 almost accurately. The children can make simple repeating patterns with coloured shapes, and can order objects by size. They competently count to 20 and beyond. They are beginning to understand 'one more' and 'one less'. The most able children can do simple addition sums, can count on from numbers such as 16 and can count in twos and tens. There are some missed opportunities for extending the children's learning, by asking them how they worked something out, for example. The adults also tend to rely on worksheets from a commercial mathematics scheme. These are not always well matched to the children's needs, and lack appropriate practical activities to support learning.

38. In their **physical development**, the children show generally good control of wheeled toys and good spatial awareness indoors and outside. They are learning to use tools such as trowels for digging. In their **creative development**, the children experience a range of media. They paint lively pictures of teddy bears and of 'The Selfish Crocodile'. They make good attempts at observational drawings and patterns, such as the Rangoli patterns they had done. In their **knowledge and**

understanding of the world, the children have made their own 'maps to the duck pond'. They can use the computer mouse competently for very simple actions.

39. Teaching and learning are **sound**. The class teacher plans carefully for the children's learning, making sure that she is meeting the needs of the reception children in this mixed age class. Good teamwork with the teaching assistant supports successful learning. Relationships with the children are very good, so that they are encouraged in their learning and behaviour. The teacher is newly qualified and is rapidly extending her knowledge and expertise in the Foundation Stage curriculum. There is some helpful assessment of the children's progress. For example, the 'My New School Book' enables parents to share the starting points for their children when they join the class.

40. Sensible checklists track the achievement of specific skills. There are some observational assessments, but the outcomes of these are not used to inform teaching. However, assessment procedures do not systematically monitor children's progress in the six areas of learning, and overall are not used well enough to plan the next steps in the children's learning.

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1 and 2

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There are particular strengths in reading, spelling and handwriting in Years 1 to 6
- The older most able pupils do not do as well as they could in their writing
- There are clear strengths in some very good teaching seen during the inspection, but inconsistencies in approach have resulted in underachievement by some older more-able pupils
- Assessment is unsatisfactory
- The subject is well led and teaching and learning are improving

Commentary

41. The teaching is sound. Some very good teaching was seen during the inspection. For example, in one lesson, pupils learnt to spell the split 'ie' sound through holding up letters at the front of the class, suggesting words that fit the pattern and constructing increasingly difficult words by applying phonic principles. This was a result of well-planned and lively teaching. When writing is successfully taught, pupils demonstrate the ability to compose effectively using their very good knowledge and vocabulary. They can organise texts appropriately, for example changing a narrative text to a set of instructions. Spelling and handwriting are taught well throughout the school and work is well presented. The pupils are very competent readers and are able to access a range of texts to increase their understanding, draw inference and make deductions. The majority of pupils are very articulate but opportunities to build on their wide vocabulary and strong speaking and listening skills are sometimes missed.

42. Pupils' standards and achievement by Year 6 are sound, as was the case at the last inspection, but there are above average standards in the younger classes. Lower attaining and SEN pupils achieve well through well-chosen activities and effective, targeted support from teaching assistants. The average ability pupils achieve well because the work is pitched to meet their needs. However, the older most able pupils underachieve in their writing. This is explained by:

- Inconsistencies in practice that have arisen in part because of the enforced change of class teachers at the start of the spring term
- Failure to plan different learning activities based on accurate assessment and to offer sufficient challenge
- The use of undemanding worksheets, which limit opportunities for extended writing

43. Agreed assessment procedures are not yet fully implemented. Assessment is not consistently used to plan lessons that will cater well for the needs of all pupils. Marking of pupils' work is inconsistent and does not always help pupils know how they can improve. New software for monitoring and assessing progress is available but not fully operative.

44. There is now good leadership for the subject, resulting in steady improvements. The subject leader has begun a helpful programme of formal lesson observations, well supported by the county literacy consultant. Areas to improve have been identified and are being tackled appropriately.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

45. The pupils' good literacy skills are developed well across the curriculum. For example, older pupils produced effective writing when producing accounts of the life of a Victorian child in history. In science, the pupils write articulate accounts of their experiments.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The most able pupils in Years 2 and 6 are not doing as well as they should
- Lessons are interesting and cater effectively for pupils of different ages
- Support for pupils with SEN is good
- Swift intervention by the new coordinator has improved the achievement of Year 6 pupils.
- Systems for recording pupils' progress and the use of assessment information to guide planning are unsatisfactory

Commentary

46. Year 2 and Year 6 pupils, except for the small number with special educational needs, are on target to reach at least the standard expected for their age when they take the annual tests later in the year. Pupils with SEN achieve well and those of average ability achieve satisfactorily. However, frequent staff changes have disrupted teaching. Additionally, teachers have relied too much on the use of inappropriate worksheets, which have not matched the pupils' needs. These factors have affected pupils' progress, so that the able pupils do not reach the higher standards of which they are capable.

47. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In lessons seen, teaching was satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 and good in Years 3 to 6, with some successful features. Achievement in the lessons for the junior pupils was good. Lessons are well planned and organised effectively for mixed-age classes. For example, in a Year 1/2 lesson, Year 1 pupils achieved well in making up pictograms to record their favourite party games and ice cream flavours. At the same time, Year 2 pupils conducted a class survey of favourite T-shirt colours and used a computer to draw a graph of their findings. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 behave very well overall, but occasionally a small number of older junior pupils interrupt class discussions. Teachers and support staff know pupils very well and are sensitive to the demands of all pupils with special educational needs. All adults supervise and support these pupils very well, so that they are fully involved in lessons and achieve as well as others in the class. Problem solving, identified in the past as a weakness, now has a higher priority. It adds good variety to mathematics lessons and captures pupils' interest, so that they work hard. In one problem-solving lesson in Years 5 and 6, pupils achieved well. They shared ideas and checked each others' efforts, for instance as they tried to arrange a set of dominoes into a square so that each side contained the same number of spots, decoded secret messages or made symmetrical patterns from a number of oddly-shaped cards.

48. The new coordinator has acted promptly, with some success, to arrest underachievement in Year 6. Tests revealed shortcomings in pupils' knowledge. The group was split into two and additional, focussed teaching support was arranged. This was an effective short-term measure in helping to restore standards to those expected for Year 6 pupils. There has been insufficient time to redress previous underachievement completely, especially by the most able pupils.

49. The use of assessment to guide planning has deteriorated since the last inspection. Records of progress are inconsistent across the school, so that it is hard for new teachers to know how well pupils in their class are doing. Marking of pupils' work is often limited to a brief comment, and pupils have little idea of what they need to do to improve work.

Mathematics across the curriculum

50. Pupils use their sound mathematics skills to support their learning in science, for example recording data in tally charts and drawing graphs when investigating forces and movement, and in art, when investigating symmetry for instance.

SCIENCE

No science lessons could be seen during the inspection. However, evidence from work samples and from listening to pupils shows good standards and sound achievement.

Commentary

51. Standards in the 2003 Year 6 tests were above the national average and in line with those for similar schools. Achievement in the tests was sound overall and good for the more able pupils. Standards in science, particularly in investigative and experimental work have improved since the last inspection. A new scheme of work is ensuring comprehensive coverage of the science curriculum. Support from secondary school teachers is raising the achievement of the oldest pupils.

52. In Years 1 and 2, the pupils cover a good programme of work that deals with forces and movement, light sources, materials and their properties and electrical circuits. The pupils have good knowledge in these areas, which they can record successfully in simple written accounts, observational drawings and basic graphs. They undertake and understand simple investigations, such as the effects of wrapping an ice cube in different materials.

53. In years 3 to 6, the pupils deal very competently with increasingly difficult scientific concepts such as evaporation and condensation, and successfully develop their knowledge of electricity, conductors and insulators. They have produced articulate explanations of the solar system, with some lively arguments for the earth being round, 'Columbus sailed all the way round the world and DIDN'T fall off the edge!' The pupils' work on solids, liquids and gases is of a particularly good standard. Improvement in the pupils' investigative skills is very evident in these year groups. In their writing and discussion, the pupils show that they can make predictions, plan experiments with fair testing in mind, can set up hypotheses and draw conclusions by bringing their knowledge to new investigations. They understand the need to replicate experiments, saying 'we need to do more experiments, just to check. In case it's a one-off!' They can present their findings in increasingly accurate scales and graphs.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In Years 3 to 6, pupils are not taught the full range of the ICT National Curriculum in sufficient depth. Consequently, standards by the end of Year 6 are below what is expected and pupils underachieve
- Teachers use the interactive whiteboard in the Year 3/4 classroom well to explain the work that pupils are to do
- Teachers make some good links between ICT and other subjects

Commentary

54. Standards by the end of Year 2 are in line with national expectations and are similar to those reported at the last inspection. Pupils type short passages of text, changing the colour and size of the type for effect and adding pictures to their work. They use computers to store information and to draw graphs. Standards in Year 6 have fallen since the last inspection, when they were in line with national expectations. There are gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills. Examination of work samples and discussion with older pupils show that their use of ICT to analyse and present data is underdeveloped. They have been taught very little about computer modelling and control technology. This has been compounded by a history of limited access to hardware and software. This has led to underachievement in Year 6. The new coordinator has set as a priority better use of national guidance to redress the current weaknesses in ICT planning. Improved access to the relevant technology is currently underway in the school.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

55. Pupils have good opportunities to use their sound ICT skills in aspects of mathematics and English. For instance, pupils word process modern accounts of the parable of the Good Samaritan. In English lessons they edit passages of writing by replacing adjectives with more interesting synonyms. They frequently use the Internet for research, for instance to find information about life in Victorian times. These aspects of ICT are the best developed, and work is at the standard expected for pupils of their age. Teachers use the new “smartboard” recently installed in the Year 3/4 classroom well to explain work in short demonstration lessons. These sessions support learning well because the board is seen easily by the whole class and it mimics the computer screen exactly. Pupils clearly enjoy these lessons and learn quickly what they have to do in follow-up tasks to be completed over the next week or so. A literacy lesson on converting narrative prose to instructional writing was enhanced well by this approach. In a mathematics-related lesson, Year 2 pupils were excited about learning how to create a branching database to sort vehicles into different sets, using questions such as “Does it have three wheels?” Pupils achieved well in preparing their own questions that they will use later when they have their turn at the computers.

HUMANITIES

56. In both **geography and history**, the pupils’ work was sampled and discussions held with pupils from Years 3 to 6. No lessons were seen in either subject so no secure judgements about the effectiveness of provision can be made. However, the work shows at least sound standards.

57. In **geography**, a focus on local studies included an investigation into the impact of environmental changes in the village of Cambourne and work on improving School Lane. The pupils wrote persuasive letters to local councillors. In discussion, the pupils spoke articulately and enthusiastically of a debate held on Cambourne in which they had taken the roles of chair, scribe and reporter to argue their case. This work provided strong cross-curricular links in both speaking and listening and writing. During the discussions, pupils were able to make connections between India and Britain explaining climate differences with reference to the monsoon season.

58. In **history**, the pupils have studied topics on Toys, Ancient Egypt and the Victorians. Their work shows good knowledge of how people lived in the past and how that differs from today. Pupils can recall significant details of the topics covered and refer to sources of evidence. Work on the daily life of a Victorian child had been drawn from more than one source including the Internet and a television programme using primary sources and reconstruction of the past. Younger pupils visited the Stansted Toy Museum and were able to use artefacts to draw out knowledge of the past by asking relevant historical questions.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Two **art and design** lessons were seen, but none were seen in **design and technology**. In **music**, two school assemblies but no lessons were seen. Two **PE** lessons were observed. Samples of work in art and design technology, as well as photographs of previous work were considered.

Commentary

59. In the **art** lessons seen, pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieved well when they produced high quality Rangoli patterns that were detailed and well controlled. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 showed satisfactory achievement when they used their knowledge of primary and secondary colours to make many different shades and hues. However, the context for their colour mixing work, a pre-prepared Easter egg template, limited their creativity. In Years 1 to 6, the pupils’ sketchbooks show a good range of two-dimensional work, including pencil portraits, pastel pictures, collage work, and some good quality patterns in the style of William Morris. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 produce good perspective, observational and line drawings. Photographs show some lively three-dimensional work, including aeroplanes, animal masks, and large scale flying insects and figures from the Christmas story. This reflects an improvement in provision from the last inspection.

60. The small amount of **DT** work from Years 1 and 2 on display is in line with national expectations. Pupils draw pictures of vehicles they intend to make from card and other components. They list the materials they will need. Once completed, they suggest ways in which their work might be improved. Finished products are robustly constructed, but the absence of decoration detracts from the overall quality of the work. Planning for design and technology has improved since the last inspection. It is now satisfactory.

61. The school is well served by many teachers with musical expertise, and the enthusiasm of the co-ordinator has led to many pupils learning to play instruments. **Music** plays an important part in school life and contributes well to pupils' personal development through opportunities to perform in concerts at Christmas and the end of the school year. Pupils enjoy performing. They sing and play regularly in assembly. Standards of singing are in line with national expectations. Singing is rhythmical, in tune and expressive. Instrumentalists accompany the singing well, playing confidently and with good technique on instruments such as violin, flute and recorder. Their performance is above the standard expected for their age.

62. In **PE**, pupils in Years 1 and 2 reach above average standards in gymnastics and their achievement is satisfactory. Games skills in Years 5 and 6 are very good and the pupils' achievement is good. The pupils know well how to work safely, and have good understanding of the importance of exercise. Successful learning in PE is the result of good specialist input. Direct and accurate teaching of skills in gymnastics and games is a significant feature of this good teaching of PE. The infants can remember and reproduce simple linked actions, such as balances and rolls with increasing control and co-ordination. In the lesson seen, the pupils worked well to their capabilities, improving their performance during the course of the lesson. The less confident, less physically competent pupils achieved well. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 understand tactics, such as those needed in cricket. They apply themselves well to practice, developing good precision and control. Nearly all these pupils are able to evaluate and discuss their own and others' skills and techniques and improve their performance.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in PSHE and citizenship is **very good**.

63. The school follows a detailed syllabus, which includes provision for sex and drugs education. All classes receive regular lessons for PSHE where pupils are taught, for example, to reflect, consider others and learn to consider the consequences of their actions. In a particularly successful lesson, older pupils were asked to work in small groups to consider the consequences of smoking for themselves and others. They then formulated strategies for countering peer pressure. These were subsequently shared with the whole class. Circle time and group discussion is a key feature of these sessions, which also enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	4
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	4
Overall standards achieved	4
Pupils' achievement	4
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	3
Attendance	3
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	3
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The quality of education provided by the school	4
The quality of teaching	4
How well pupils learn	4
The quality of assessment	5
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).