



Office for Standards
in Education

Inspection Report

BARLEY LANE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Unique Reference Number: 102840

LEA: Redbridge

Inspection Number: 269333

Inspection Dates: 11-13 MAY 2004

Reporting Inspector: Brian Padgett HMI

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996, and was deemed section 12(3) under the same act

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INTRODUCTION

This inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of the staff of Barley Lane Primary School and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by four of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an independent lay inspector.

Key for inspection grades:

Grade 1	Very good
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Adequate
Grade 4	Not adequate

Description of the school

Barley Lane is a large multi-cultural primary school in the London Borough of Redbridge. There are 417 pupils, aged from 3 years to 11. Since the last inspection, in 1999, the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds has increased from 40 per cent to nearly 70 per cent and the population has become more mobile, with children joining and leaving the school at almost twice the national rate. The school serves families with origins in over 30 countries and about a third of the pupils are in the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils on the special educational needs register is about average, although 12 of these have a Statement of Special Educational Need, and this is a higher proportion than in most primary schools. Economic disadvantage in the area is increasing and the percentage of pupils eligible for a free school meal has risen recently from 14 to 21 per cent.

OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS OF THE SCHOOL

Effectiveness of the school

The school judges its overall effectiveness to be good. However, the inspection evidence indicates that the school is adequate. The pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve broadly average standards in all subjects. Pupils' personal development is good and the school enjoys strong support from parents. Leadership and management are adequate and the school provides adequate value for money.

Grade: 3

Improvement since the last inspection

Standards were average at the time of the last inspection and they remain so now. The pupils' personal qualities such as their attitudes, behaviour and confidence and their moral, cultural, physical and social development continue to be good. All of the key issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with successfully and there have been significant improvements in the involvement of governors in the leadership and management of the school. The school's view that its improvement has been adequate was borne out by inspection evidence.

Grade 3

Capacity to improve

The school's capacity to improve is adequate. The headteacher and senior staff work tirelessly for pupils. They have already shown creativity in overcoming barriers to progress, maintaining standards in the face of increasing mobility of staff and pupils and increasing social disadvantage. However, the school is working on too many fronts and this reduces its effectiveness. The school does not have a fully accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses and this will hinder its ability to improve.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

Governors and senior staff should:

- establish a clear vision and direction against which to measure its performance
- prioritise and reduce the number of initiatives being tackled and ensure that they are rigorously and systematically evaluated
- improve teaching by matching work more closely to pupils' needs
- revise the responsibilities of the senior team to make them more manageable
- improve provision in the reception classes, by planning and providing work that takes account of the early learning goals for pupils beginning school.

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

The school judges achievement and standards to be adequate and the evidence from the inspection confirms this view. Standards achieved by pupils in their last year at school are broadly average in English and mathematics, and a little lower in science. This has been the pattern, with minor fluctuations, since the last inspection. One notable feature is that standards in writing have improved over the past year as a result of a major effort by teachers throughout the school, and standards at Year 6 are now above average. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls.

Overall, given pupils' different starting points, they make adequate progress during their time at school. The one exception is in the reception classes, where pupils are not making sufficient progress because their needs are not properly addressed. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language often make good progress as a result of support from specialist and support staff.

Grade: 3

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

The personal development of pupils is good. Inspection evidence confirms that attendance is good except for a significant minority of pupils who take holidays in school time. Pupils are punctual. They like school and are proud of their work. Nearly all pupils are well behaved in lessons, ready to learn and keen to contribute ideas and suggestions. They have good relationships with their teachers and show respect for the views of others. However, in Year 5 in particular, several pupils are disruptive and they sometimes interrupt the learning of others. Teachers respond to this successfully and quickly deal with the problems.

Pupils' moral, cultural, physical and social development are good. The school judges that pupils understand what is expected of them and why rules are necessary, and inspectors agree. Pupils learn from the rich cultural diversity within the school, and work in harmony with each other. Pupils undertake a wide range of physical activities and sports, especially in extra curricular activities. Throughout the school pupils develop an appreciation of how their actions affect others and are able to understand the feelings of others. Older pupils readily accept the responsibilities placed upon them, but they could do more to look after others, especially younger pupils.

Spiritual development is adequate. Pupils have high self esteem and are confident in this truly multi-cultural community. However, the school does not plan sufficiently for the pupils' spiritual development, for example, in assemblies.

Pupils show care and concern for their environment and encourage their parents to do the same; for example, through re-cycling schemes. Pupils are keenly aware of environmental and health concerns; for example, the benefits of walking to school. They have developed and maintain an orchard within the grounds.

Grade: 2

QUALITY OF PROVISION

Overall, inspection evidence confirms that the quality of provision is adequate. The school believes teaching to be good, but this is not supported by evidence from lessons and other sources collected during the inspection. The quality of teaching is adequate

with some good features. The majority of lessons observed were adequate, nevertheless, some good and very good teaching was seen, especially in Year 4. Teaching was least effective in the reception classes. Features of good teaching include: clear learning objectives shared with pupils; a good command of the subject; a brisk pace, and good use of questions to extend pupils' understanding. In less effective lessons, learning activities were not appropriate to the wide range of needs and abilities of pupils.

The teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) benefits significantly from specialist teaching by an instructor. Support staff make an effective contribution to pupils' learning. They often work with small groups of pupils, reinforcing and explaining concepts.

Assessment is adequate, there are some strengths but also some inconsistencies. Several teachers give high quality feedback to pupils, evaluating the strengths of their work and picking out points for improvement, although this is not done consistently. Teachers assess pupils' work regularly and use this information to record and set appropriate targets. Targets are used well in English, in pupils' writing, but in other subjects they are less effective and some pupils cannot remember what they are.

The curriculum is adequate. It is broad and balanced. Sex and relationships education is taught successfully through science and the personal, social and health education programme. A wide range of extra curricular activities enriches the curriculum, and includes craft, drama, dance, ICT, French, Spanish and sports. The curriculum in the nursery and reception classes is weaker because activities are planned without reference to specific learning objectives and with insufficient regard to the early learning goals.

The care, guidance and support for pupils are good. The great majority of pupils feel safe in school and pupils trust adults to resolve their concerns. There was no evidence of bullying during the inspection but senior staff are following up concerns about bullying raised by pupils in recent questionnaires. Pupils at risk of being excluded are well supported. They value the feedback they receive from teachers on their progress. The school provides a full range of intervention and support programmes to help pupils who have difficulty with their learning, though it does not evaluate the effectiveness of these programmes with sufficient rigour. Child protection and health and safety procedures are clear. The school places a strong emphasis on healthy lifestyles, for example, in its morning food-break programme and recycling project. A number of important policies, including the behaviour policy and the SEN policy have not been updated for some time and are no longer in line with recent government guidance, nor do they reflect the good practice in the school.

Grade: 3

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides adequate leadership and she has successfully gained the support and loyalty of the staff. The members of the senior management team share a commitment to embrace change, to professional development and to working toward the best for the pupils. Many worthwhile initiatives are undertaken to improve provision and the quality of teaching, such as developing an appreciation of how different learning styles suit different pupils. The school's performance is kept under review by regular monitoring activities. There has been very significant improvement since the last inspection set against a backdrop of staffing difficulties. This improvement is wholly down to the quality of the leadership of the headteacher, senior managers and governors. Because of this, the school judges leadership and management to be good.

However, despite this positive picture, the process of planning for improvement is not as effective as it could be. Although aspects of the school's work are evaluated this is not always done sufficiently rigorously, by reference to the impact on standards and pupils' learning. Evidence of success is sometimes anecdotal and insufficiently objective. Assessment data are used effectively to monitor the progress of individual pupils but are not used rigorously enough to provide information about the progress of groups and years of pupils.

Another issue is that although the school has an agreed set of aims and values which are published for parents in the school's prospectus, these do not inform the planning process, nor shape what the school intends to do next. There is no common understanding of what the key priorities for the school are because there are too many initiatives in the school development plan that dilute the energies of staff. For these reasons, the school's evaluation of leadership and management is too high.

The governing body's work is adequate and improving and its members are effectively involved with many aspects of the school's life, both supporting the school and more recently providing it with challenge. However, its role in shaping the school's future direction is not fully developed.

Over the last two years, plans for improvement have been disrupted by the high turnover in teachers. The school has done all it can to recruit and retain them. Much time and energy has gone into supporting new teachers, helping them to settle with their classes.

Not all teachers have been willing to take on responsibilities for coordinating and managing subjects and other activities. This has resulted in the members of the senior management team carrying a disproportionate number of responsibilities and their effectiveness is restricted by this. For example, key stage leadership is adversely affected.

The school runs smoothly and is orderly; clear and well understood routines guide the day. There are good links with outside agencies including providers of further education courses for teaching assistants. The school is working well with local secondary schools to ensure a smooth transition for the Year 6 pupils who are moving on.

Grade: 3