



Barmston Village Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 108835
LEA Sunderland
Inspection number 278056
Inspection dates 14 September 2005 to 14 September 2005
Reporting inspector Geoffrey Cooper

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Barmston Centre
School category	Community		Washington
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Tyne and Wear, NE38 8JA
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0191 2193700
Number on roll	315	Fax number	0191 2193702
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Linda Wanless
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Ann Henderson

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors with the cooperation of staff, pupils and governors of the school.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school for boys and girls aged 3 to 11, serving a disadvantaged area with high levels of unemployment. A higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to a free school meal. A similarly high proportion has special educational needs. Most pupils come from a white British context. There are children from a range of other ethnic backgrounds, a few learning English for the first time, some from families with asylum seeker or refugee status and a number of looked after children. When children start school, their existing knowledge and skills are well below those expected.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

The school believes its overall effectiveness is good and inspectors agree that this is so. There are good features but also some weaknesses, including some in standards and achievement. Parents have confidence in the school. It cares for, supports and guides its pupils extremely well. Pupils behave impeccably and work hard. Because the teaching is good and pupils learn well, standards are above average overall by the time pupils leave the school. The progress made by pupils up to the age of seven is satisfactory. Progress accelerates rapidly up to the age of 11. However, the more able pupils do not perform well at the age of seven. An often innovative curriculum encourages good learning.

The school is well led and managed. The head and senior staff effectively promote improvement, through a range of valuable partnerships, and through their ability to support well-conceived initiatives through the imaginative use of funding. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored, and continues to rise. Adults and pupils work together in an enthusiastic, confident and happy manner. The leadership of the headteacher, well supported by that of senior staff, is frequently inspirational in creating an atmosphere of eager learning. The school is very well placed to improve further, and gives good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the standards pupils achieve by the time they are seven; in particular, the school has not yet realised the potential of its brighter seven year olds.
- Improve standards in writing throughout the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

- School data shows, and inspectors agree, that pupils' standards are high overall by the time they are 11. Compared to 2004 national averages, standards in mathematics were good, science exceptionally good, but those in English were below average. The school acknowledges a decline in its as yet unpublished results for 2005, particularly in writing. Progress is satisfactory in nursery and reception where many early barriers to learning are overcome. It remains satisfactory in Years 1 and 2. Progress then picks up rapidly from Year 3 to Year 6 with highly successful outcomes for 11 year olds. However, progress in writing is not good enough throughout the school and there has been a recent decline in English results overall. Although seven year olds make satisfactory progress, their standards remain below average. The data shows that while many pupils achieve the expected standards for their age, few do better, and a minority achieve grades below those expected. Higher attaining seven year olds do not work up to their potential. The school is highly successful in converting the relatively modest grades of seven year olds to comparatively better grades for 11 year olds. This is particularly the case in mathematics, often dramatically so in science, but less successfully so in writing.

Overall, from entry to leaving, pupils achieve very good added value scores. Learners from different backgrounds and abilities make progress that is similar to that of others in their year group, given their starting point. Differences between the achievement of boys and girls are relatively small. The school, in association with the local authority, sets realistic and challenging targets. These targets are usually met and frequently exceeded, except in English.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The school believes that pupils' personal development and well-being are good. The inspection team finds them to be exceptional. The school ensures that pupils are happy, confident and enthusiastic learners, who know how to behave properly and care well for each other. Pupils have very mature attitudes and take every opportunity to use the skills the school promotes. Examples of this are the devoted care shown by Year 6 girls for reception children during a wet lunchtime and the skill of the pupil lunchtime 'receptionists' manning the school office. Pupils have a high regard for their own culture and past cultures and learn to respect the culture and beliefs of others. A particular feature of pupils' attitudes is the improvement in attendance in recent years. At the time of the previous inspection, attendance was unsatisfactory; it is now above the national average. Persistently good behaviour is a characteristic of the school. Pupils are quick to respond to the high-quality role models presented by all staff. As a result they are happy and courteous. Pupils openly enjoy their lessons and their activities out of class. The school has a policy of displaying notices reminding everyone, staff and pupils alike, of their responsibilities to ensure safety, good health, contribution to all school life and the development of skills preparing for adult life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The school believes that its teaching is good and inspectors agree. Outcomes for the learners in the school are mainly successful. They overcome many barriers to learning. Through their years in the school they make good progress and acquire good life-long learning skills. The school insists that teaching begins with the learner and his or her needs. The school's philosophy works because learners quickly become good listeners. For example, this was overheard in the nursery class: 'You are such good listeners already and you have only been in school two days'. This quality of listening is typical. There is a whole school commitment to learning by the pupils. They are responsive, want to try and do well. Adults frequently talk about a 'can do' attitude and a willingness to 'have a go.'

This quality of learning stems from good teaching. Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. This is due in no small measure to the openness of the teaching team to a rigorous process of review, evaluation and development of lessons. Lessons

are interesting, challenging and briskly taught, though occasionally, introductions are long. However, the inspection took place very early in the school year when teachers and pupils were getting to know each other and when teachers were making their expectations crystal clear. This inevitably takes time. Relationships between adults and pupils are exceptionally good. Where available, the support of learning mentors and learning support assistants is an invaluable aid to effective learning.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

- The school believes it provides a good curriculum that stimulates the interests of learners. The inspection team agrees. In nursery and reception, the school provides well for the Foundation Stage curriculum. A coherent and comprehensive curriculum is provided from Years 1 to 6. Pupils are enabled to learn about the importance of a safe and healthy lifestyle. Considerable enrichment to the curriculum is made through initiatives that enhance opportunity for pupils. For example, the school provides specialist learning space for dance, drama and other presentations, for the stimulation of speaking and listening in the outdoor environment and for learning in music, science and information and communications technology (ICT). Many of these initiatives are the result of imaginative and energetic acquisition of additional funding. Good enhancement to timetabled lessons is provided through the school's effective partnerships with parents and the community and through provision before, after and beyond school. The school caters well for the learning of all pupils according to their age and ability. The one caveat is that, despite initiatives, progress in writing does not match progress made in other areas of the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

- The care, guidance and support of pupils are outstanding. The school's own evaluation of care, guidance and support is that it is good. Learners and parents say that they have every confidence in the way the school approaches care. The school is rigorous and thorough in the way it makes provision for each individual's welfare. All relevant legal procedures for safeguarding pupils are strictly adhered to. Individuals are very well known and know that they are watched over carefully. Every child is valued. A common comment of governors and parents is that the school's care, guidance and support gives hope and aspiration to pupils from a disadvantaged start to life. The school gives pupils the opportunity to become effective learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school evaluates its leadership and management as good and inspectors agree. There are some outstanding features. Leadership and management have a strong

impact on the progress pupils make. The effective strategies for reviewing, evaluating and developing the quality of lessons are well linked to the performance management and development of staff. The school knows itself well, builds effectively on its strengths, but has yet to find the solution to some of its weaknesses. In seeking to develop further, good account is taken of the views of staff, parents, pupils and outside agencies. The school provides equality of opportunity for all, though the more able pupils do not realise their potential by the age of seven. Resources and accommodation are good and provide well for a stimulating curriculum. In no small measure, this is the outcome of the imaginative and innovative thinking of the headteacher and her determination to find sufficient funding to provide well for the pupils in her care. Leadership qualities are found throughout the school, at all levels of staffing and governance. School administration is very well managed. The school is very effectively led and well placed to make further improvement.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

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Barmston Village Primary School
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16 September 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for helping with the inspection of your school. You gave us a lovely welcome. It was really helpful that you were willing to speak to us. Sorry we could not find time to join in the yoga and dance activities.

You think your school is a special place and we agree with you. Here are some of the things we think make your school special.

It is a fun place! Teachers and children laugh together.

Your lessons are interesting and lively and you are good learners; your behaviour and willingness to have a go are especially good.

Teachers work hard to make lessons good.

Many of you make really speedy progress.

You are particularly good at science.

You have some splendid facilities; the nursery and reception indoor/outdoor area and the studio are very exciting.

The school cares for you and looks after you especially well; you look after each other well, too.

You told us you have great respect for the adults who work in the school and for your headteacher; we agree that they make a great team and think Mrs Henderson is a very special person.

Among all the things that make your school special, there are one or two things we have asked it to try to make better. You already work hard in school, but you can help by trying even harder with these things.

Writing is not as good as other subjects right through the school.

Although older children make really fast progress, progress is not as good for younger children.

Thank you for making our time in your school so happy.

Geoff Cooper and the inspection team

(Lead inspector)

Annex B