



# Barnard Castle Church of England Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 114219  
**LEA** County Durham  
**Inspection number** 279335  
**Inspection dates** 20 March 2006 to 20 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Sue Hatton HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools the authority to inspect any school in England. The inspection is to be treated as a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Green Lane
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Barnard Castle
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		County Durham, DL12 8LG
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01833 690298
<b>Number on roll</b>	307	<b>Fax number</b>	01833 690316
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs. S. Bailes
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	1 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Dr. M. Grainger

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4 to 11	20 March 2006 - 20 March 2006	279335

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector had discussions with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. She talked with groups of children, staff and governors and with parents as they collected their children at the end of the day. The responses to a parental questionnaire were analysed. Several classes were visited and playtime, lunchtime and assembly were observed. The inspector looked at a range of documents including the school's self evaluation and improvement plan. The inspection also takes account of national data to compare the achievement and progress of this school's children with those in similar schools.

## Description of the school

Barnard Castle CE Primary School is a larger than average sized primary school, although numbers are falling. Virtually all the pupils are from white, British families. The school has a smaller than average number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. One in ten children claim free school meals. When children start in the reception class, their levels of knowledge and understanding vary widely but are generally in line with those expected for their age. The school is housed in a three storey ex-secondary school building. It shares a site with part of the local secondary school and with a nursery and childcare centre.

The school leads a partnership of 15 primary schools which provides primary teacher training for 30 graduates each year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

The school judges itself to be outstanding and it is right to do so. It is a school where the achievements, personal development and well being of children are the first priority for everyone involved. It provides a safe, supportive yet challenging environment in which children flourish as individuals, make excellent progress and reach very high standards. Strong links with parents, other schools and other agencies contribute to the excellent provision it offers.

The school understands its strengths and knows what must be done to maintain, and in some cases improve on, current high levels of performance. Furthermore it is looking ahead and preparing for the challenges that falling numbers of children and the resulting reduction in resources might bring. The school provides good value for money and its capacity for further improvement is strong.

Responses to the parental questionnaire show that the vast majority of parents are very pleased with the quality of education provided by the school. Parents appreciate the commitment of the staff in providing a wide range of high quality out of school clubs and activities. One parent approached the inspector and stated 'This school is brilliant!' Another parent wrote 'This is an excellent school with all teachers putting in a great deal of effort into giving our children a high standard of education.' One class has experienced an unavoidable succession of supply teachers this year. The school shares the concerns of parents. It is monitoring the situation very carefully and taking all reasonable steps to minimise any disruption.

The standards achieved by children in this school and the progress that they make are outstanding. The school is determined to provide children with what it describes as a 'passport for life' in the form of high levels of basic skills and the ability to learn and work effectively both independently and as part of a team. It is successful in this.

The school is among the top 10% in the country for mathematics and science. The school wants standards in English, which are already well above average, to be as good as those in these two subjects. It has evaluated its practice and has put in place credible steps to achieve this improvement. The school has a good track record in bringing about improvement: it sets itself and the children challenging targets which are generally met. Results show a year-on-year improvement both in comparison with national results and in comparison with similar schools. The relatively small numbers of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress.

Children make a very good start to school and by the end of Key Stage 1 standards are consistently above or well above average. More children achieve the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics than is the case nationally and the proportion of children reaching higher levels is also well above average. This excellent progress continues. At the end of Year 6, standards are well above average. Of those children transferring to secondary school in 2005, all had reached the expected levels in maths and science and the vast majority in English. Furthermore, well above average proportions of children attained a higher level, particularly in mathematics and science.

The children's personal development and well being are outstanding because the care, guidance and support provided by the school are also outstanding. Both rely on the very thorough monitoring which results in teachers knowing children exceptionally well and therefore being able to quickly identify, and make provision for, their needs.

Children of all ages express their views articulately and with confidence. They are socially very adept: they work together effectively in pairs and in small groups. They play together amicably. They know how to behave and they show good manners. The majority can be trusted to move around school in a sensible, self disciplined way without the need for constant supervision or regimentation. In the assembly seen, children showed a real sense of pride in the achievements of others. They have a well developed sense of fair play and a good understanding of the difference between right and wrong. Attendance is above the national average and the majority of children arrive at school on time.

Children enjoy school and feel safe there. One child said that 'This school is perfect just as it is!' Most found it difficult to think of any improvements that needed to be made. They report feeling trusted and listened to and quote the improvements in school meals and the introduction of the 'buddy' system in the playground as evidence of this. They are able to explain the benefits of healthy living and their participation in physical activities, both within the school day and at out-of-school clubs, is high. They are keen to help others and to take on a wide range of responsibilities such as being a 'buddy'. The school council has its own small budget and is currently involved in improving the playground environment.

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Strong teaching secures the very good progress that children make. Teachers share a common sense of purpose related to high standards, enjoyment and meeting children's personal and emotional needs. One teacher spoke for others when she said 'We want children to want to come and learn'.

Teachers work together to plan, carry out and evaluate the effectiveness of lessons. They share their subject knowledge and expertise with each other. In the Foundation Stage, teaching assistants were seen to effectively reinforce and support learning. In lessons children are alert and attentive. The school's monitoring of academic progress is very good. Children understand the purpose of setting targets about what they will learn next and they value the feedback they receive from teachers about the quality of their work. One child reported that lessons are 'exciting - because we don't do the same things all the time'. Another stated that 'teachers really know what they are talking about'.

The school provides an outstanding curriculum which is very well matched to children's needs and interests. It is enhanced by an excellent range of additional activities and out-of-school clubs and participation levels are high. It is enriched by visits to local places of interest and by visitors such as the local MEP. Year 6 children, in particular those who might find transition difficult, are provided with a good range of opportunities to visit and become familiar with the nearby secondary school.

The school ensures that children are introduced to cultures other than their own through its developing links with schools in Europe, Lesotho and India and through

its religious education programme. It is also careful to select contrasting locations to study in geography.

The high standards achieved in the basic skills of literacy, numeracy and ICT and their well developed ability to work in teams prepare children very well for the next stage of their education and for life after school. The school has good links with the main local employer: children's understanding of the world of work is enhanced by visits to and visitors from this company. The school is currently planning a production of the Wizard of Oz, in which large numbers of children will take part. There are also roles related to set design, promotion and finance.

Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders and managers at all levels are focussed upon raising standards and promoting the personal development and well being of children within, as a governor put it, 'a context of achievement, inclusion and equality of opportunity'.

The school has a very accurate picture of its own performance based on the outcomes of its genuine commitment to quality assurance and self review. Performance is monitored rigorously in order to maintain the existing high standards, meet challenging targets and bring about further improvement.

Governors discharge their responsibilities well. Resources are deployed efficiently and effectively to achieve value for money. The school is preparing itself for the effects of falling rolls by, for example, ensuring that the breadth of subject expertise is maintained through on-going staff development.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 1**

Achievement is outstanding

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

This is outstanding

## **Quality of provision**

## **Teaching and learning**

### **Grade: 1**

This is outstanding

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 1**

Provision is outstanding

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

This aspect is outstanding

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The schools leadership and management are outstanding

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

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

### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	1	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	1	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	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	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

Alexandra House  
33 Kingsway  
London WC2B 6SE  
T 0207 421 6800  
F 0207 421 6707  
[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

Barnard Castle Church of England Primary School  
Green Lane,  
Barnard Castle  
County Durham  
DL12 8 LG

21 March 2006

Dear Children,

Thank you for making me so welcome when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed being in your school very much. You helped me to understand how it works and what makes it such an outstanding school.

You are all doing exceptionally well at school. The teachers always encourage you to do your best. They tell you what you need to learn next and help you to understand how you can improve. You enjoy your lessons. You told me that the teachers make them fun and that they really know what they are talking about. I agree with you. You also enjoy the many clubs and activities that happen at lunchtime and after school.

You and your parents told me that this is a very caring school where all the staff work hard to make sure that you are safe and secure. I could see that you are very well behaved and that you get on happily with one another.

The main aim of all the adults in your school is to give you a good start in life. They listen to what you have to say. They take your views into account when they are making decisions. Your headteacher and deputy headteacher have excellent ideas about how to make the school an even better place for you to be.

With very best wishes for your future

Yours sincerely

Sue Hatton HMI