

Barlby Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100478
Local Authority	Kensington and Chelsea
Inspection number	285809
Inspection date	25 June 2007
Reporting inspector	Keith Williams

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	315
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Rima Horton
Headteacher	Ms Karyn Ray
Date of previous school inspection	24 February 2003
School address	Barlby Road Ladbroke Grove London W10 6BH
Telephone number	020 8969 3988
Fax number	020 8968 1805

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This larger than average primary school serves an area containing significant deprivation, and the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. Pupils are drawn from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. Over half of the pupils are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Almost a third are from refugee families or those seeking asylum. A larger than usual proportion of pupils join or leave the school at other than the usual point of entry. An above average proportion of pupils have been identified with learning difficulties or disabilities, although the percentage with a statement of special educational needs is similar to that in most schools. The school has the Gold Artsmark, Activemark, Healthy Schools and Sustainable Travel awards and the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school because the highly effective leadership team and staff successfully ensure that pupils make excellent progress in their academic and personal development. A very high priority is placed on providing first-rate care and support to enable pupils, whatever their ability, or social and ethnic background, to fulfil their potential. As a result, from well below average starting points, pupils achieve outstandingly well to reach above average standards by the end of Year 6.

Central to the school's success are the high expectations that staff have of themselves, each other, and their pupils. This is appreciated by pupils, one of whom said, 'Teachers know what we are capable of and they push us to get even better.' Considerable efforts are made to raise pupils' self-esteem and aspirations, and pupils are keenly aware of the importance of 'getting a good education.' Children get off to a flying start in the Foundation Stage. They settle quickly into the calm, supportive and very well organised setting. Many children have little or no English when they first start school. They, too, soon gain confidence and make rapid progress, although standards remain well below those expected by the end of Reception. One parent noted that her child 'enjoys going to Nursery so much he's sad every weekend and can't wait until Monday morning.'

The excellent headteacher, in tandem with the very capable senior leadership team and governors, keeps a very close check on the school's performance. They have a very clear, if modest, view of the school's effectiveness. Teaching and learning are outstanding because every effort is made to review and improve practice and staff share the drive to provide only the best for pupils. Work in classrooms is monitored closely and pupils' progress is tracked rigorously, so that any at risk of underachieving are identified and given the support they need. The outcomes of the careful scrutiny of test results are used very well to identify areas needing improvement, and these are tackled robustly. For example, recognising that standards in mathematics could be higher, the way that groups are organised and taught has been reviewed and improved. Consequently, considerably more pupils in Year 6 are on track to reach the higher Level 5 than in previous years, despite them having similar starting points. Similarly, staff have successfully raised standards in writing, which was a weakness highlighted in the last report, particularly by providing more challenging opportunities for gifted writers. Their track record of identifying and tackling weaknesses and raising standards means that school leaders have excellent capacity to continue to improve.

Pupils rise to the challenge of meeting the high expectations that staff have of them. They enjoy school enormously, behave extremely well and are eager to learn. The excellent curriculum and out-of-school activities contribute to their enjoyment and personal development. Pupils have a very secure understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and are very well prepared for their future economic well-being. They play a full part in school life by taking on extra responsibilities and contributing to the influential school council. Pupils' excellent attitudes to school are not yet reflected in attendance levels, but the school has been working successfully to tackle this. As a result, the attendance rate has risen significantly in the past year and is now close to the national average. The highest incidence of absence is amongst younger pupils, who are mainly reliant on their parents bringing them to school. The school is rightly determined to deal with this. The vast majority of parents are very supportive of the school's efforts, one summing up the views of many in saying, 'Barlby is a great school that has been thriving due to the great leadership being provided...a fantastic place to educate children.'

What the school should do to improve further

- Work with parents, particularly those of younger pupils, to increase the rate of attendance.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve outstandingly well regardless of gender or background. Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and are higher than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils' attainment when they start school is well below what is normally expected of three year-olds. They make an excellent start in the Foundation Stage, and just over a half reach the goals expected of them by the end of Reception. Standards in Year 2 are below average, but the school's detailed assessment data show that Key Stage 1 pupils achieve very well from their starting points. The results of the national assessments for seven year olds have risen since 2004, when they were exceptionally low. Pupils' progress accelerates in Key Stage 2. This is largely because the many pupils who are at an early stage of learning English become more confident in using the language. Year 6 test results have steadily improved in recent years, and standards amongst the current Year 6 are above average. Pupils make particularly impressive progress in science because of the very high profile given to the subject and the emphasis on practical activities. This means that pupils across the school have a very clear understanding of how to devise, conduct and evaluate experiments. Standards have risen considerably in mathematics, because of improved provision and increased challenge for more able pupils. Those pupils who are potentially vulnerable, and those from the families of asylum seekers or refugees, achieve as well as their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils are very well prepared to be the citizens of the future. This has a significant impact on their attitudes to school and the progress they make because they thrive in its calm, supportive, yet challenging environment. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on remarkable people in their own lives and have a good understanding of the spiritual and moral impact of inspirational world leaders. They are intent on improving the lives of those across the world who are less fortunate than themselves, raising considerable funds, for example, for international charities. Closer to home, the school council is justifiably very proud of its efforts to secure improvements to the playground and toilets and act as a focal point for pupils' views and opinions. The school works hard, and successfully, to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions and pupils' behaviour is generally excellent. The few incidents of challenging behaviour are dealt with very effectively by staff. The school has made considerable efforts to raise attendance levels and has had significant success, raising the overall rate by three percentage points this year. The school is rightly focused on improving the attendance of younger pupils. Excellent progress in basic skills prepares them very well for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding and, as a result, pupils make excellent progress. Staff have very high expectations of pupils, who benefit from teaching that is very rarely less than good and is often excellent. Teachers plan interesting and exciting lessons that take very good account of pupils' differing needs and capabilities. Higher attaining pupils are challenged by increasingly demanding work and opportunities to extend their skills, for example, by writing for the 'Barlby Bugle.' Consequently, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has increased, particularly in Year 6. Teaching and support staff, including those in the Foundation Stage, work very well together to ensure that those with learning difficulties, or who are unfamiliar with English, achieve well. Lessons, typically, run at a very brisk pace and teachers use questioning very well to check on pupils' understanding and tackle any misconceptions. They mark pupils' work conscientiously and, particularly in English, give pupils a very clear idea of how well they are doing and what they can improve. Teachers have a very secure understanding of the subjects they teach and those with particular expertise have good opportunities to share their strengths with other staff.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The school provides an excellent curriculum that gives pupils a rich experience and plays a significant role in their outstanding achievement. A strong emphasis is placed on promoting pupils' personal development. Staff in the Foundation Stage have a very good understanding of how young children learn. They provide a good balance of opportunities chosen by the children and those led by adults. Across the school, subjects are linked together very well to enhance pupils' understanding and make learning enjoyable. For example, Year 4 pupils used their mathematical knowledge and understanding to record and interrogate tables of results in a science lesson. Staff review and improve the curriculum regularly and try out new ideas to raise standards and make it more challenging. Planning for literacy and numeracy is excellent. Provision for writing has improved since the last report and revised setting arrangements in mathematics are contributing to the rising standards. The emphasis on practical activities in science underpins pupils' excellent achievement in this subject. A very good range of out-of-school clubs and enrichment activities add to pupils' enjoyment. These are very popular with pupils, even when torrential rain threatened to jeopardise the Year 6 school journey! Homework clubs are particularly appreciated by pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The school takes exceptional care of its pupils and this is central to their excellent academic and personal development. Pupils start school faced with a range of personal and learning challenges, and every effort is made to enable them to overcome barriers to their learning. This starts before pupils join the school, through the very popular 'parent and toddler' groups, which help children to settle into school life, and through timely home visits to establish individual needs. Across the school, a very close check is kept on those pupils identified as potentially vulnerable. Links with outside services are excellent and complement the wide-ranging support offered by the school. This often includes the involvement of the learning mentor, whose

support is much appreciated by pupils. Support for those learning English as an additional language, and for pupils with learning difficulties, is equally well organised and effective. Careful tracking of academic and personal development means that the needs of pupils of different backgrounds, including those from refugee families or asylum seekers, are very well met. Pupils receive very good academic guidance, which contributes to their clear understanding of how well they are doing and what they should focus on next. The school takes pupils' health, safety and welfare very seriously and has established very secure procedures for child protection and identifying the potential risk of activities such as school visits. Pupils report that they feel very safe in school and would have no hesitation in turning to an adult should they have concerns.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the school's success. The inspirational drive and determination of the headteacher are shared by staff at all levels. Together, they are firmly focused on valuing all pupils, regardless of ability, gender or background, and providing them with the best possible care and welfare, so that they can fulfil their potential. Their success can be measured in the excellent progress pupils make in their all-round development and the above average standards by the time pupils leave the school. The senior leaders form a highly effective team who monitor the school's work very closely. They are very well supported by subject coordinators, other middle managers and governors, who have improved their role in evaluating the school's effectiveness. This provides governors with the information they need to hold the leaders to account for the school's performance. Aspects of teaching and learning needing improvement, such as the need to improve writing, an issue in the last inspection, are identified and tackled relentlessly. Improving attendance has been a more stubborn challenge, but a wide range of strategies to promote good attendance and follow up absences has successfully raised the level of attendance in the past year. The leaders recognise that there is still more to do. Resources are managed very well and are targeted to where they are most needed.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

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

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

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

6 July 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barlby Primary School, London, W10 6BH

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave me when I visited your school recently. I am writing to tell you what I found out. A special 'thank you' goes to those of you who spoke to me, or met with me to give me your opinions. You gave me lots of helpful information.

Many of you, and your parents, told me how much you enjoy school and feel you are doing well. I agree. Your school is outstanding and there are lots of things that you can all be very proud of. Your headteacher and staff are excellent. They make lessons interesting and are always trying to improve how you learn. I saw for myself how hard you try and that you always do your best. Your behaviour is excellent and this means that your teachers can concentrate on teaching and you can concentrate on learning. Because of this, you are learning very well and I was pleased to see how much your writing and mathematics have improved. I especially enjoyed visiting your science lessons.

The staff take excellent care of you and, because of this you told me that you feel very safe in school. Although it rained, so I could not see you playing outside, lots of pupils told me how much they enjoy playtimes. Well done to the school council for helping to improve the equipment you have to play with. Although you enjoy school very much, some of you do not come to school as often as you should. I have asked your teachers to work with your parents to improve this, because it is really important that you attend every day, so that you can learn as well as you can.

Once again, thank you for your help and I wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Williams Lead inspector