

Barrow Hill Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101107
Local Authority	Westminster
Inspection number	285970
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2007
Reporting inspector	Jane Chesterfield

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	229
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Lucinda Greswell and Mrs Tina Neuman
Headteacher	Mr Michael Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	30 April 2001
School address	Bridgeman Street London NW8 7AL
Telephone number	020 7641 5005
Fax number	020 7641 5014

Age group	7–11
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2007
Inspection number	285970

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is situated close to Regent's Park and draws its intake from a very wide range of social and ethnic backgrounds. Almost a third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, and more than three quarters come from minority ethnic groups. Most of these pupils are learning English as an additional language, with just under half at the earlier stages of doing so. About a third of pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities (LDD) though very few have statements of special educational need.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Barrow Hill Juniors is a good school with outstanding features. Parents are very pleased with what it offers their children. As one commented, 'Barrow Hill has a great ethos and is a very caring supportive environment.' The headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior staff work together successfully to provide a broad all-round education in surroundings where pupils can flourish and discover their own particular skills and talents.

Pupils make good progress in the school, because they are well taught. When they arrive their attainment varies from being in line with to above expectations for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, they reach standards which are above average. Although pupils achieve consistently well in English and science, they currently perform better in reading than they do in writing. Also they do not always perform as well as they could in mathematics. The main reason for the difference in achievement is that currently pupils do not have enough opportunities to write at length, either in English or in other subjects of the curriculum. In addition, the support they receive in mathematics has not always been targeted to where it would most be effective. Teachers have excellent relationships with their classes and make very good use of resources to interest and challenge pupils, and this motivates pupils to learn.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school because of all the exciting activities and opportunities awaiting them. The curriculum is outstanding, giving pupils a solid grounding in basic skills and an imaginative, creative approach to other subjects, through topic work and special events. Thanks to the school's emphasis on developing pupils as individuals, all have the chance to learn a musical instrument, for example, and the teaching of Italian gives everyone an excellent opportunity to try out their language skills. As a result of this first class provision, pupils' personal development is outstanding. They are very eager to get involved in activities in the school and the wider community, and adopt thoughtful and considerate attitudes to others.

The school does its best to make pupils feel safe, secure and able to thrive. Pastoral care is excellent and pupils are very well looked after during the school day. Pupils say that all staff are helpful and kind, and they particularly value the support of the learning mentors. Provision for pupils with LDD and those learning English as an additional language is excellent, and this means that they are able to make similar progress to their classmates. Academic guidance for all pupils is good so pupils feel confident about how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

The hard work and commitment of all staff have enabled the school to make good improvement since the last inspection. The school is very outward looking and keen to work with others for the benefit of its pupils. Its self-evaluation is good, and it has a clear understanding of its many strengths and the areas it wants to develop. Consequently it has a good capacity for future improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase opportunities for pupils to write at length in English and in other subjects of the curriculum.
- Accelerate planned improvements in mathematics for all pupils so that they achieve as consistently well as they do in English and science.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils' achievement is good and their standards are above average. Boys and girls both make good progress through the school and pupils from all ethnic groups do as well as one another. Pupils' achievement, based on their individual starting points, is good, particularly in English and science. Their results in national tests are usually above average, especially in English. Results for this year indicate a slight dip across all three subjects, though this particular Year 6 group's starting points were at a lower level than the previous year. However, attainment in English and science is still above average, while mathematics is broadly average.

As pupils reach higher levels in reading than in writing, the school has recognised that they need more opportunities to practise writing at length whenever possible. In mathematics, the school has identified that middle attaining pupils have not always had the level of support they need. Consequently, it is focusing on increasing the pace and intensity of support for specific groups of pupils so that above average standards can be consistently maintained. The presentation of pupils' work is sometimes untidy and the school is working to improve standards here.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

The personal development and well-being of pupils are outstanding. Pupils enjoy school with its rich variety of experiences beyond the mainstream curriculum. This is reflected in pupils' positive attitudes to learning and their confident relationships with adults and one another. Their behaviour is excellent and they attend regularly. Through the school council, pupils voice their views on issues affecting them. 'We really like school because teachers listen to our views', commented several. Pupils are rightly proud of their part in setting up a healthy eating tuck shop and in establishing an after-school cookery club.

Pupils feel safe in school and understand their own role in preventing bullying and racism. They trust staff and are clear about what to do if they need help. They are very positive about the role of the peer mentors or 'worry wipers' in solving problems. Pupils know the importance of healthy lifestyles, enjoy the healthy menus and are eager to take part in physical activities, especially swimming.

The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. They are interested in the beliefs and traditions of others, are thoughtful in assemblies and participate enthusiastically in a range of international events. Pupils are happy to support their own school community and to contribute to the wider community through their music making and contributions to charities. Their involvement in financial activities such as managing tuck shop finances and their good progress in basic skills mean that pupils are well prepared for their future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good overall, and as a result pupils achieve well. In most lessons, teachers use the interactive whiteboards very successfully to capture and keep pupils' attention,

and make their activities lively and interesting. Good links are made with other subjects to develop pupils' skills more broadly. In a history lesson on the Olympics, for example, pupils were given the chance to put their knowledge of information and communication technology (ICT) into practice to carry out some work of their own, and they found this very stimulating. Teachers and other staff work alongside one another well, and more senior members of staff are able to support less experienced ones.

In some lessons teachers do not always use their assessment information well to plan the right work for the whole range of abilities in the class. Also some do not allow enough time for pupils to tackle their tasks, which often limits their opportunities for writing. Marking does not always refer to how well pupils are doing in relation to their targets.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding. It is meticulously structured to ensure progression from year to year and is exceptionally well enriched by a wide range of sporting, musical and drama activities. The school takes full advantage of where it is situated, using the museums and other facilities of London, such as Lord's Cricket Ground, to support pupils' learning very imaginatively. After school clubs are varied and exciting and make the most of modern technology. The 'art blog', for example, has recently made a significant contribution to overseas links as well as involving the pupils very actively in using ICT. High priority is given to personal, social and health education, with a special emphasis on safety because of the school's busy location. The outdoor play area has been thoughtfully planned to provide a good range of purposeful activities for break times.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support for pupils are outstanding. Pupils are very well looked after so they feel secure and confident at school. Measures for protecting vulnerable children are robust and there are very close links with external agencies. Teachers, learning support assistants and learning mentors know individual pupils very well and manage their emotional and social needs exceptionally successfully. The moves from infant school and on to secondary are carefully managed, and so are induction arrangements for new arrivals to the school.

The academic guidance of pupils is good. Half-termly checks monitor how well pupils are doing in English, mathematics and science, and their progress is tracked year on year. This information is generally used well to plan where extra support or challenge is needed. The school is currently adapting its plans to make this support more effective in mathematics. Parents receive regular information on the progress their children are making.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, capably supported by the deputy, is committed to developing the leadership and management skills of the staff and giving them the chance to contribute to the running of the school. The different management teams work well together and co-ordinators give their subjects good direction. New co-ordinators are well supported by senior staff.

Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are thorough and accurate, enabling senior staff to have a clear view of the school's strengths and to focus on the areas that they want to develop. They are committed to ensuring that every child has the chance to do as well as possible in a positive and encouraging environment. The governors fulfil their duties well and give the school the support and challenge that it needs.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

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

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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

19 July 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Barrow Hill Junior School, London, NW8 7AL

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school. We really enjoyed meeting you and talking to you. We agree with you and your parents that Barrow Hill is a good school with many strengths, and we know that you enjoy going there very much indeed. You are doing well in your learning and making good progress, because your teachers plan your lessons carefully to make them interesting and exciting. You are very lucky to have such a wonderful range of things to do at your school, like the music and the art and all the other great activities.

We were very impressed with your behaviour in class and in the playground, and we thought that everyone got on together very well. The staff take excellent care of you, and those of you who need extra help are very well supported, so that everyone has the chance to do their best.

Your headteacher and his staff run the school well and know how to make it even better in future. We have agreed that you are going to get more support with your mathematics, and that you will have more opportunities to do written work in English and in other subjects. You can help by making sure that you present your work as neatly as possible in all your lessons.

Well done to you all and best wishes for the future.

Jane Chesterfield Lead inspector