

Barnfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101258
Local Authority	Barnet
Inspection number	286010
Inspection date	22 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Sean O'Toole

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	475
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Allan Turner
Headteacher	Mr Paul Wiggins
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2002
School address	Silkstream Road Edgware HA8 0DA
Telephone number	020 8952 6026
Fax number	020 8951 4117

Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Barnfield is larger than most primary schools. The school is located in an area of socio-economic disadvantage and over half of the pupils are entitled to free school meals. The proportion with learning difficulties is above average. About 60% speak English as an additional language. Twelve pupils are at an early stage of learning English and most of these pupils come from homes where Portuguese, Romanian or Somali are spoken. The school also has a substantial number of pupils from refugee families. Attainment on admission is very low. The school is part of Barnet's Excellence in Clusters and holds several awards including Investor in People, Basic Skills Quality Mark, ICT Mark, Arts Mark and Healthy Schools.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

'This school is excellent at meeting the needs of all the children wherever they come from,' commented a parent. At the heart of this outstanding school is the ambition of the headteacher and staff for everyone to succeed academically and to develop excellent personal qualities. It is highly successful in meeting its aims because the headteacher provides determined and focused leadership. As a result the staff are a high performing team who show total commitment to pupils of all abilities and backgrounds.

Children start school with very poor skills and knowledge. The school compensates very well for these barriers to learning. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and achieve well although by the time they start Year 1 their skills are still a little below those of children of a similar age. Although they grow in confidence in communicating, staff do not always make the most of opportunities to extend children's speech and vocabulary. Nonetheless, the children become keen and interested learners. This stands them in good stead and their progress accelerates in Year 1. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are broadly average at the end of Year 2 as a result of some high quality teaching and a challenging curriculum. This momentum is maintained in Years 3 to 6. Most importantly, pupils from all backgrounds and abilities achieve outstandingly and this enables them to attain average standards by the time they leave the school.

These successes are due to excellent teaching which stimulates in pupils a desire to learn. Pupils work confidently together, behave impeccably and value their own and others' contributions. Their outstanding personal qualities include care and consideration of others, a willingness to listen and a commitment to working hard. Teachers and support staff plan and prepare thoroughly, make lessons imaginative and set challenging work. Although the teachers always mark the pupils' work and include positive comments they do not always include enough guidance about how the pupils might improve. Pupils enjoy the excellent curriculum and opportunities to take part in wide ranging activities and visits. These contribute much to their awareness of healthy living and keeping safe. As one boy said, 'This is a fantastic place because we do lots of different work and it is fun.'

The ways in which staff show care and provide support for everyone mean that even the most vulnerable grow in confidence. Parents were full of praise for the way their children's needs are met and one commented that, 'This school is about the whole family, everyone is so helpful and my children could not be happier.' Leadership and management foster these excellent qualities and also promote effective learning through their rigorous monitoring, support and challenge for all staff. This school has moved on substantially since the previous inspection and has outstanding capacity to build on its strengths.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen up marking to provide more guidance for pupils on what they need to do to improve.
- Provide more opportunities for children in the Foundation Stage to develop their speaking skills and to broaden their vocabulary.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Achievement is outstanding. Standards at the school have improved well over several years and are average at the end of Year 6. This represents substantial success given children's very low skills when they start in the Nursery. Children make a good start in the Foundation Stage and grow in confidence academically and socially. Teachers in Years 1 and 2 build on these foundations and most pupils are working at levels which are close to average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2. Throughout the school, standards in writing have improved this year because staff provide stimulating opportunities for drama and link pupils' literacy skills to work in other subjects. The use of information and communication technology (ICT) has also contributed much to motivating boys as writers.

Pupils who are at the early stages of learning English progress at an excellent rate because of the intensive support they receive. Similarly, the way that staff pinpoint the needs of those with learning difficulties brings success. The school sets challenging work for the more able and this has resulted in improved standards. Targets are ambitious and the school is on course to meet them.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural qualities contribute much to the happy atmosphere. They talk excitedly about all the school offers and are excellent ambassadors. They take much pride in their achievements and value everyone's contribution. Pupils take responsibility seriously as school councillors, mediators and acting as the playground squad. They also love the opportunities to join in residential visits, take part in community events and raise funds to support a wide range of charities. Because of their kindness and exemplary behaviour everyone works and plays in safety. Pupils say they feel well cared for; they trust and respect their teachers. One illustration of their enjoyment of school has been the significant improvement in attendance.

Personal development and well-being are outstanding and pupils have a strong commitment to fairness and justice. One girl said, 'I love it here because I have friends from all over the world.' Racial harmony and the enjoyment of similarities and differences in traditions and cultures add much to pupils' sense of community. They are prepared exceptionally well for the future because they have secure academic skills, the ability to work together and the confidence to find solutions to problems.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching and learning are outstanding. Because assessment is focused and accurate staff are able to plan lessons to meet the needs of all. Foundation Stage staff plan a good balance of activities and children quickly adapt to working with others and making choices. In Years 1 to 6, year groups plan together and make sure that pupils of all abilities have work set at their level. One girl said, 'Sometimes I find the work hard but the teacher always helps me.' This balance between setting challenging tasks and providing support for those who need it is a hallmark of the school's success. Those at an early stage of learning English benefit from

working in small groups, intensive practice of basic skills and opportunities to learn through practical work. Those with learning difficulties also thrive because staff use specific targets to help the pupils achieve success step by step.

Most lessons have brisk pace. Opportunities to discuss work in small groups adds much to pupils' confidence. Support staff make an excellent contribution. Teachers are careful to include everyone and their well focused questions are used to test understanding. They mark the pupils' work carefully but guidance for pupils on how to improve is not clear enough. The excellent rapport between staff and pupils ensures that learning is enjoyable and that pupils work hard.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

One reason why pupils are successful is the vibrant curriculum. Staff effectively make links between subjects which encourages pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. A particular success has been the use of drama to extend pupils' competence in using expressive language. This has had the knock on effect of raising standards in writing. In the Foundation Stage, children enjoy the good range of practical experiences. Throughout the school, the broad range of opportunities including visits, visitors and special events add much to pupils' positive feelings about learning. The International Evening when parents share their food and traditions help to create a harmonious community. Excellent provision for vulnerable pupils means that those with learning difficulties are fully included in all activities. The excellent provision for personal development boosts pupils' self confidence. It also contributes much to their understanding of relationships and the beneficial and harmful effects of drugs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding levels of care, guidance and support, which fully involve and include parents, help pupils to grow in confidence both academically and socially. Parents speak highly of the support they receive and value the opportunities provided through family learning. One said, 'I cannot speak highly enough of this school, it means so much to know that my child is cared for in every way.' There are excellent procedures to ensure the safety and protection of the pupils. The school has first rate systems to track pupils' progress and to ensure that work is set at the right level to challenge them. The school provides exceptionally well for those at an early stage of learning English.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

Parents say that this school is led exceptionally well. Factors which contribute to the outstanding leadership and management include the visionary headteacher who inspires his staff and the intense focus on meeting the needs of individuals. All staff are clear about the school's strengths and areas for development because of rigorous self evaluation. Priorities are sharply focused and staff are held to account in meeting challenging targets. Data analysis, high quality monitoring of pupils' work and lesson observations also provide senior staff with evidence of where support is needed. Middle managers play a significant role in raising standards and the regular meetings to analyse pupils' work and identify any gaps in learning contribute excellently to improvement. The school complies with all requirements including those in racial equality

legislation. High quality leadership, including the good part played by governors in checking on the school's work, have led to excellent achievement, improved standards, better attendance, high quality teaching and a learning environment where every child can succeed.

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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	2
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	3
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	2
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	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

11 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnfield Primary School, Edgware, HA8 0DA

What a great day I had at your school! Thank you so much for making me so welcome. You help to make it a very special place and it was obvious that you are all proud to go to such an outstanding school. I would have liked to spend more time with you but I did find out lots about the school.

It was great to see how well you get on with each other and how the playground squad and mediators help everyone to feel happy and safe. Your school councillors do a good job in helping to make the school a better place for everyone. They were very proud of how their ideas had been used to improve the playground, school meals and the toilets. But you all play a part in helping to make everyone feel happy. It was lovely to hear you talk about all the different nationalities in the school and how you enjoy finding out about their languages, foods and celebrations.

The teachers work very hard to make lessons interesting and you all concentrate well and do your best. Even though some of you find the work quite hard at first you improve really quickly and by the time you leave the school you are confident not just in reading, writing and mathematics but in working together and having lots of fun. Your headteacher and staff do a super job of looking after you. Your parents said how much they appreciate their work. Some of them said that they would like to come to your school.

In order to make the school even better I have asked the teachers to give you a bit more guidance when they mark your work. I have also asked the teachers in Nursery and Reception to find more ways of helping you to practise speaking. You can help by continuing to do your best and remembering to answer the questions the teachers ask when they mark your work.

I hope that you will always be as happy as you are at Barnfield.

Yours truly,

Sean O'Toole Lead inspector