



Barford Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 103162
Local Authority Birmingham
Inspection number 286577
Inspection dates 16–17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Barford Road
School category	Community		Edgbaston
Age range of pupils	3–11		Birmingham B16 0EF
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	0121 4643765
Number on roll (school)	482	Fax number	0121 4558882
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	F Duncan
		Headteacher	E Carriban
Date of previous school inspection	19 September 2001		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an inner-city school where the number of pupils who join or leave at other than the usual times is higher than average. Almost all pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high and has increased since the last inspection. When children start school in the Nursery, their attainment is well below that expected for children of this age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school that has successfully placed itself at the heart of the local community. Parents are very pleased with the school and especially the way that pupils are cared for. Pupils' personal development is good. The school works very closely with outside agencies to safeguard the well-being of all pupils. Members of staff rightly place a high priority on ensuring that pupils enjoy school and the success of this is shown in the way that smiling faces can be seen throughout the day. Pupils are polite and courteous and work hard in most lessons. There is a satisfactory curriculum that includes good opportunities for pupils to contribute to the local community through projects such as making an award-winning film about where they live. These activities significantly enrich the experiences of the pupils. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Provision in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception classes) is satisfactory, although standards remain lower than those found nationally by the end of the Reception year. Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in Years 1 to 6. By the end of Year 6, standards remain below average. Pupils make the best progress in reading because a large amount of time is allowed for pupils to read to teachers in small groups. However, in mathematics, skills do not improve as quickly, especially for the most able. This is because teachers do not always expect enough of pupils, slowing the pace of learning. Teaching is satisfactory; there is some good teaching, especially in Years 5 and 6, but there is too much variation across the school. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils but the pace of learning is sometimes too slow and behaviour is not always managed well enough. Pupils with limited spoken English are supported well and quickly improve their speaking skills.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is passionate about the school and rightly acknowledges that more needs to be done to improve pupils' achievement and to iron out inconsistencies in teaching. Senior managers have worked very effectively to break down the barriers between home and school, ensuring that parents are fully involved in their children's education. Over the last two years, the school has gathered a wealth of information about individual pupils' progress. However, this is not yet analysed rigorously enough to find out whether all groups of pupils are doing as well as they should, making it difficult to respond quickly to dips in achievement as they arise. Recent initiatives such as changes to the curriculum are having a positive effect on provision and there is a sound capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress in mathematics by ensuring that there is always sufficient challenge for all pupils, especially the more able.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by increasing the pace of learning in lessons and ensuring that behaviour is always managed effectively.
- Make better use of information about how well pupils are doing to identify and tackle any underachievement as soon as it arises.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. In the Foundation Stage, children make satisfactory progress, although by the end of the Reception year, standards are well below nationally expected levels. Children in Nursery and Reception classes make good progress in personal, social and emotional development and they settle quickly into school life. By the end of Year 6, standards continue to be below average. Progress is satisfactory overall. Pupils make generally good progress in reading but in mathematics there is some underachievement, especially amongst potentially higher-attaining pupils. In mathematics, teaching is not yet ensuring that all pupils do well enough and too many pupils lack confidence in using basic skills.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy school, as shown by their good rates of attendance. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well together, and they say they respect other cultures and faiths because, in the words of one pupil, everyone 'has the right to believe whatever they want'. Newly arrived pupils who join during the school year settle quickly because of the friendly way they are welcomed by other pupils. Children in the Foundation Stage quickly learn to play and work together well. These positive attitudes to learning are generally maintained throughout the school, and pupils' behaviour is good. Some become restless and inattentive in a small number of lessons, though, when teaching does not interest them or when behaviour is not managed effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils develop a good awareness of their own and other cultures through activities such as 'Black History' month. Pupils make a good contribution to school life through the responsibilities given to them, for example, as monitors and school councillors, and in the paired work between younger and older pupils. Activities such as these prepare pupils soundly for the next stage of their education, despite weaknesses in their basic literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils have a good understanding of the importance of staying healthy and safe. They explain in graphic detail the exact procedures to follow if the fire alarm goes off and told inspectors that they try to avoid eating too much 'junk food' because 'you won't have enough energy to help you learn'.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Good relationships between members of staff and the pupils lead to good levels of enjoyment in most lessons. Activities are well resourced and teachers make good use of additional adult support, especially to work with small groups of pupils. This has a particularly good effect on the learning of pupils in the early stages of learning spoken

English, who benefit enormously from this skilled help. Teaching is good in Years 5 and 6 because teachers consistently expect a lot of the pupils, and this leads to good progress being made in improving language and number skills. However, in other years the pace of learning is sometimes too slow because teachers spend too long talking to pupils at the start of lessons. In some lessons, teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils should achieve, especially the more able pupils in mathematics. This means that there are missed opportunities to extend skills. Teachers generally manage pupils' behaviour very successfully so that learning is able to proceed smoothly. However, there are occasions when poor behaviour is unresolved by the teacher and this slows progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is soundly planned and enables pupils to make satisfactory progress. Engaging and well-planned activities in the Foundation Stage give children good opportunities to make choices in their learning, helping to improve self-confidence and social skills. In the last year the school has revised the curriculum in Years 1 to 6 so that there are now more practical activities and closer links between different subjects. This has helped to make work more appropriate to the needs and the interests of different groups. The school has rightly identified that pupils now need more opportunities to take part in competitive sport and creative activities such as art and music. Good use is made of visitors and work in the local community to make learning interesting and to bring subjects alive. For example, Year 6 pupils talk enthusiastically about how they learnt a lot about Victorian life through their recent visit to Shugborough Hall.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Parents rightly feel their children are well cared for, and they are confident that any problems they have will be resolved. In the words of one parent, 'teachers are always approachable and willing to listen and help with any concerns at any time', while another parent said that teachers 'treat the children as well as parents with a lot of respect'. Newly arrived pupils who join during the school year are well supported, helping them to integrate quickly. Academic support is satisfactory. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties or those at the early stages of learning English, are given clear guidance by teachers on what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are learning how to improve by evaluating their own work against targets set for them, although this is not yet consistent across the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Senior managers are hardworking and enthusiastic and they are moving the school in the right direction. There is a strong sense of teamwork across the school and successful recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect. For example, teachers are now better informed about individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses because of improved systems for tracking pupils' progress. There are satisfactory systems for evaluating how well the school is doing, although some judgements are over-generous and do not match the findings of inspectors. This is because senior managers do not analyse performance information well enough to identify whether all groups of pupils are making enough progress. This makes it difficult for the school to respond to dips in achievement as soon as they arise.

The headteacher has established a very strong caring ethos that is reflected in the school's commitment to providing a secure and happy haven for all pupils, whatever their background or need. Governors are supportive. They have successfully managed significant improvements to the school environment by providing space for a library and additional classrooms. New meeting rooms have helped to extend further the use of the school by parents for activities such as adult literacy support and a wide range of community meetings. Governors have rightly identified that further training about their responsibilities would help them to do more to hold the school to account.

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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were very polite and friendly. We found lots of good things in the school and also some things that need improving.

What your school does best

- You enjoy school and are polite and courteous.
- The school council helps you to take responsibility and you take a very active part in local events.
- Your teachers are very kind and caring and they look after you well.
- You have a clear understanding of the importance of staying healthy and safe.
- There are lots of interesting visits and visitors.
- Members of staff are working very hard to make sure that you learn even more quickly.
- Most of your parents and carers are pleased that you come to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you do better in mathematics by making sure that the work they give you is not too hard or too easy.
- Make sure that the activities given to you in class move on quickly enough to help you learn and keep you interested.
- Use information about how well you are learning to check that you are all doing well enough.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn. We wish you all well for the future. You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard and trying to behave well in every lesson.