

Barnes Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108755
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	288178
Inspection dates	28–29 March 2007
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	
Headteacher	Miss Hilary Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	1 March 2002
School address	Mount Road Sunderland Tyne and Wear SR4 7QF
Telephone number	0191 5535968
Fax number	0191 553 5970

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Barnes Junior School is larger than average and serves an area which is mainly average to below average in terms of socio-economic advantage. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is relatively low. Most pupils are from a White British background and others are mainly of Bangladeshi origins.

A broadly average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities although none have a statement 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: 3

This is a satisfactory school held in high regard by parents. It has a warm and caring environment and strengths in the enrichment of the curriculum, which support the good personal development and well-being of pupils. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Arrangements to tackle previous underachievement are having an impact on raising the school's performance. Value for money is satisfactory.

Achievement is satisfactory. Although attainment on entry to the school is currently above average, this has not been the case until the past two years; previously, the attainment of pupils starting in Year 3 was average. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school, other than in English where there are weaknesses in writing. The results of the most recent national tests show that standards in English slipped back compared with those in previous years. Pupils achieved satisfactorily in mathematics and did well in science. Those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve satisfactorily.

Teaching is satisfactory with some good and outstanding teaching of more able pupils. Good relationships typify lessons and promote an industrious atmosphere. Occasionally, progress in some classes is hampered by activities which lack the challenge and excitement of the best lessons. Assessment information is not used sufficiently well or promptly to identify pupils making less than expected progress.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good and fostered effectively by the school. The positive attitudes and good behaviour of all pupils stem from the caring and supportive ethos throughout the school. Pupils enjoy school and feel and act safely. Healthy lifestyles are encouraged and pupils understand why diet and physical activity are important. Pastoral care and support are good, although arrangements to use information about pupils' performance to support their progress lack rigour and consistency. The day-to-day curriculum is enriched by visits and visitors, and by popular after-school activities.

Self-evaluation, completed by the headteacher, identifies some of the school's strengths and weaknesses, although it is not always accurate. The school views its effectiveness and pupils' achievement as good when, in reality, they are satisfactory. Key actions taken to improve do reflect the school's most pressing needs; for example, to raise standards in writing, and there is some evidence of their beneficial effect. Governors have a sound knowledge of the school, further enhanced by a programme of monitoring visits developed since the last inspection. The school has a satisfactory capacity to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement and raise standards, especially in English.
- Extend teachers' use of up-to-date information about pupils' performance to track their progress and to help all pupils know and take their next steps in learning.
- Improve the accuracy of the school's self-evaluation.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and pupils reach average standards overall at the end of Year 6. Results in national tests in 2006 were below the national average in English and in line with it for mathematics and science. Given their background and starting points at the end of Year 2,

these results represent satisfactory progress in mathematics and science. Pupils achieved particularly well in science, continuing a trend of year-on-year improvement. More than half of pupils reached the higher Level 5, which is significantly above the national average. In English, too few pupils reached the higher level in 2006, particularly in writing, where their progress is slower than in other subjects. The school's steps to improve writing are proving effective. Although there is still some way to go, school data and inspection evidence show that almost all pupils are on course to attain results expected of them this year and in turn the school is on track to meet its targets set in the national tests. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, those for whom English is not their first language, and gifted and talented pupils achieve similarly to their classmates.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good and this is in line with the school's own view. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural developments are good. They show a particularly good understanding of the need to consider the feelings of others and of right and wrong. They are very welcoming and polite to visitors. Pupils know the benefits of regular exercise and take part enthusiastically in the morning 'basic moves session' (aerobic exercises). They have a good grasp of the need for a balanced diet reflected more and more in the choices they make at lunchtime. Pupils show a good understanding of the reasons for safe behaviour, in the way they conduct themselves in and around the school, and in their awareness of sensible access to the Internet. Above average attendance, enthusiastic participation in many lessons, high levels of participation in voluntary after-school activities, all reflect pupils' enjoyment of school. They enjoy too their sense of accomplishment that comes from sustained effort; for example, when performing in the choir or taking part in collaborative activities during residential visits. Pupils contribute well to their community by taking the many opportunities to hold responsibilities in school and by working through small scale enterprise to support charities locally and further afield. These experiences together with sound basic skills seen by pupils currently in the school, prepare them satisfactorily for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory overall with some good and some outstanding practice, which confirms the school's perceptions of its quality. In the better lessons, the teacher's expertise and enthusiasm hold pupils' attention and encourage them to work very industriously. Good relationships with pupils foster a sense of security and help them contribute to the lesson with confidence. Activities are well-suited to pupils' abilities and proceed at a lively pace, which helps pupils to learn well when working in small groups or on their own. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive effective support that enables them to make similar progress to their classmates. In a minority of lessons, learning is not extended well enough, often because the activities lack the challenge to captivate pupils' interest. Marking is of inconsistent quality and effectiveness. Congratulatory remarks and awards recognise good work but do not reflect the recent school's marking and feedback policy nor help every pupil know what they need to do next to improve

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. Arrangements for teaching all subjects meet statutory requirements. Activities in some subjects, such as history, reflect the change and development of the local community. Personal and social development and citizenship activities, assemblies, visits and visitors enhance the curriculum and contribute effectively to pupils' learning and personal development throughout the school. Many pupils take up and appreciate the opportunities provided in a wide range of voluntary sporting and cultural after-school activities. Links with the local secondary school help extend pupils' learning; for example, through developing teamwork and enterprise skills, and smooth the transition to the next phase of their education.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The caring environment and contribution of all adults in school teach pupils to show respect and concern for others, and provide them with the support that enables them to behave well. Systematic arrangements that meet statutory requirements keep pupils safe and promote their health and welfare. Child protection procedures are securely established and links with outside agencies support work with vulnerable pupils. The very few racist incidents have been dealt with appropriately. Special learning programmes and effective support from teaching assistants help pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress. However, the educational guidance for pupils, based upon information about pupils' performance, is not sufficient to ensure that they reach their full potential. Systematic tracking of pupils' progress, based on annual assessments, is not analysed with rigour nor kept up-to-date during the year in reading, writing and mathematics to provide clear direction for fostering progress and achievement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, gives a high priority to ensuring that pupils are well cared for and happy. She ensures a supportive climate for learning and plays a notable role in promoting the personal development and well-being of pupils. The headteacher's example of care and concern for pupils leads parents to have a high level of confidence in the school. The comments made by one parent reflects their views well, 'My son thoroughly enjoys the time he spends at Barnes ... I am always made very welcome when any concerns or queries have arisen.' The senior leadership team's commitment to promoting an ethos where all adults and pupils are equally valued is reflected in the recent re-award of Investors in People status. The school is making increasing use of its assessment and tracking systems to set targets for improvement in writing, but not yet full use for reading, writing, mathematics and science. The school's approach to evaluating its work has not judged all aspects accurately and has led to an improvement plan with a very broad range of aspects to address. However, its focus is on the priority of raising standards and ensuring every pupil achieves the best that they can.

The governing body is very supportive of the school and, since the previous inspection, has clearly developed its role to monitor the work of the school. However, it does not challenge the leadership sufficiently in relation to the progress pupils make.

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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
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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?	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?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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?	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

30 March 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnes Junior School, Tyne and Wear, SR4 7QF

Mr Watson, Mrs Lock and I really enjoyed our visit to your school recently. Thank you for helping us when we came into your classrooms and your assemblies to see you at work. You were very polite and really helpful. We enjoyed talking to you and we were impressed with those of you on the school council whom we met. It was great to see how much you enjoy coming to school and how you contribute to school life. I know the headteacher and staff are all very proud of you.

Your school has a warm and welcoming atmosphere. We are pleased you feel safe and happy because all the adults in the school look after you very well. Many of your lessons are good and we were impressed with your hard work and the way you like to take part. We have asked the school to improve your written work; it has already started and we thought some of your writing was good. We have also asked your teachers to use the information they get from marking your work and tests to help you all know how to do even better. Your school leaders are also going to look more closely at how well the school is working.

Some of you will leave at the end of this year to join a new school. You have many opportunities at Barnes Junior School to learn about life and these should stand you in good stead for the future. I hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Graeme Clarke

Lead Inspector