



Barrs Court Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109136
Local Authority South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 288292
Inspection date 9 October 2006
Reporting inspector Helen Barter

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Stephens Drive
School category	Community		Barrs Court
Age range of pupils	4-11		Bristol BS30 7JB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 867799
Number on roll (school)	279	Fax number	01454 867798
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Keith Hartley
		Headteacher	Barbara Fox
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2003		

Age group 4-11	Inspection date 9 October 2006	Inspection number 288292
--------------------------	------------------------------------------	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Barrs Court is a large primary school near Bristol. Most pupils are White British, although there are a small number from other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is higher than average. Children start school in Reception with skills and abilities which are generally lower than those expected for children of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Pupils receive a very high quality primary education in this outstanding school. Parents praise it highly, describing it as 'super' and as 'having a lovely community feel' where 'very dedicated and hardworking staff maintain very good relationships with the children'.

Pupils' achievement is excellent and enables them to reach standards that are exceptionally high by the time they leave the school. A good start in Reception helps children to overcome the communication and language difficulties and low levels of maturity with which many start school. Careful building on this good foundation in Years 1 and 2 enables pupils to gain confidence in using their literacy and numeracy skills and prepares them very well for the excellent progress that they make throughout Years 3 to 6.

Not only are academic standards high, but the school is also highly effective in ensuring that pupils grow into confident, sensible citizens who are very well prepared for life ahead. Pupils' outstanding personal development is testimony to the value the school places on developing them into well-rounded young people who are able to take responsibility, work independently and care for others. They behave impeccably and are a credit to themselves and to their school. Pupils really love coming to school and most attend well. It is disappointing therefore that, in spite of the school's strenuous discouragement, there is an increasing trend of pupils taking holidays during term-time. This prevents some pupils from being able to make the most of everything that the school has to offer.

There are significant reasons why pupils do so well. The quality of teaching is excellent throughout the school, with high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils receive extremely clear academic guidance so that all, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, know what they need to do to reach their goals. The outstanding curriculum promotes a love of learning in every pupil and they relish challenge. Imaginative and stimulating lessons and exciting additional opportunities, including musical productions, residential visits and environmental studies, lead to pupils describing learning as 'really good fun.' High quality care, support and guidance is sustained throughout the school. Pupils are in no doubt that teachers care for them and want them to do as well as they can. They proudly describe their school as 'the best'.

The excellent leadership and management is the main reason for the school's success. Every adult is committed to providing each child with the best possible education and to making sure that the school does not stand still. The school's track record of improvement and the work being done to evaluate continually and develop areas of strength, such as the curriculum, demonstrates that the school has outstanding capacity to develop even further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve attendance by helping parents to understand how term-time holidays can affect their children's achievement and hinder their full enjoyment of the high quality of education on offer.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Pupils' achievement as they progress through the school is outstanding. From Reception to Year 2, pupils make steady gains and build securely on the good start made in the Reception classes. Assessments of Year 2 pupils' work in 2006 for reading, writing and mathematics showed that standards reached were slightly below average. However, careful tracking of these pupils, a very high proportion of whom have learning difficulties and disabilities, shows that they made good progress from their starting points. The Storymaking Project, started in Reception, is helping to improve standards in writing further. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are now confident story-tellers and plan story-maps which help them to improve the quality of their writing.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are rising and are exceptionally high. Pupils who left the school in 2006 made exceptionally good progress to reach very high standards in all subjects and exceed the targets set for them. High quality art work is visible in every class. The performing arts have high status and are greatly enjoyed by pupils, parents and staff. The quality of singing, heard in assembly, is very good. Pupils love learning French and speak confidently and with very good accents.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. They are growing into mature and responsible young people and are very well prepared for their future lives. Their cultural awareness is excellent and they genuinely appreciate the lives of others through art, music and international links. Pupils make a significant contribution to the school and wider community. The school council is very careful to ensure that everyone's views are heard when making decisions. Pupils have a very well developed awareness of the importance of being fit and healthy and of keeping themselves and others safe. The care and attention given by older pupils to the needs of those younger than themselves is particularly good. Behaviour is excellent in all areas of the school. Pupils like their teachers a lot and struggle to find any criticism of their school. They appreciate everything that is on offer to them. The attendance rate is satisfactory, although term-time holidays prevent it from being higher.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

Teaching is outstanding and consistent in quality throughout the school. Relationships between pupils and staff are extremely strong. The purpose of lessons is clear and is shared with pupils so that they know what they are aiming to achieve. Lessons proceed at a very good pace, resulting in pupils having high levels of involvement and concentration. While expectations of the standards pupils are capable of attaining are high, much attention is also given to focusing on the needs of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to help them reach their potential. Teachers use innovative methods to capture pupils' attention. Pupils respond with maturity to opportunities to assess their own and others' work. In an English lesson, for example, they carefully analysed whether the teacher had used all the required elements successfully to write a poem. Pupils quickly develop into enthusiastic and independent learners, take great pride in their work and want to do as well as they can.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The exceptionally wide and creative curriculum brings learning alive for pupils and contributes significantly to their achievement and personal development. Throughout the school, there is a focus on developing a love of learning and the skills needed for life ahead. This is achieved not only through everyday lessons, but also through an excellent and varied range of activities after school, during visits to places such as the Normandy landing beaches and through study of the local historic environment. The school ensures that pupils receive a rich education in art, music, sport and French. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well by teachers to stimulate interest in learning and to develop pupils' very good ICT skills. In Reception, children experience stimulating and imaginative learning activities that entice them to explore and to learn. Plans are in place for children to make even greater independent use of the new garden area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The quality of care, guidance and support for all pupils, including the more vulnerable, is exceptional and is reflected in their high academic and personal standards. Every pupil is valued and cared for as an individual. The support for those who need additional pastoral care, or help with their work, is outstanding. It gives pupils confidence to learn and helps them to make the same excellent progress as others. Pupils really value the help they receive to improve their work. They say that 'teachers are never angry, so you feel that you can have a go and ask for help when you get stuck'. The marking of pupils' work is exemplary in the feedback it provides and the guidance it gives for the next steps towards improvement. The skills that pupils are gaining in independently

assessing the quality of their own and others' work, and determining what needs to be done to make it even better, prepare them extremely well for future study.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher, supported by a very able and efficient deputy and senior team, provides an extremely effective and clear educational direction for the school. All staff share a common purpose and have high aspirations for the school and for each pupil. The school's effectiveness is carefully evaluated and action is taken to improve further even the areas that are already strong, such as the well established, high quality curriculum. The school is outward looking and makes the most of its strong partnerships with other schools and the local and international community to broaden pupils' learning as much as possible.

Staff work exceptionally hard to create strong teams. New teachers are supported remarkably well to develop their teaching practice and gain the skills and knowledge in their roles as subject leaders. Governance is excellent. While being supportive of the school's obvious strengths, it is well informed enough to challenge plans and decisions being made in the best interests of pupils. The culture of open and honest debate between leaders and managers at all levels reflects a school which does not rest on its laurels. It has outstanding capability to drive forward further improvement for its pupils.

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.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	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?	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	1
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.

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

As you know, I spent a day at your school recently to find out how well you are getting on. Thank you for talking to me as I went round the school and being so friendly and welcoming. I really enjoyed hearing about all the things that you think are great about Barrs Court. You told me how proud you are of your school and that you think 'it's the best.' You go to an outstanding school and I agree with you when you say that there are so many things that are really good about your school. These are the things that I found.

- All of the adults in your school work very hard all of the time to make sure that you achieve as well as you possibly can and reach very high standards.
- You are hard workers who really enjoy learning lots of new things. I was very impressed at how hard you concentrate in lessons and try to do your very best. I am only sorry I could not stay longer in each of the classrooms to see even more of what you do.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are growing up into mature and responsible young people. You told me that you are given lots of confidence as you get older. This will really help you when you move to your next schools.
- The school really encourages you to take an interest in your learning and gives you lots of imaginative and fun things to do. You told me that your school productions are great!
- Your school cares very much about you and teaches you to keep safe, be healthy and help and care for others. Your school council is doing a very good job in making sure you all get a say in how to improve your community.
- Your headteacher and all the other teachers and adults make sure that the school is as good as it can be and work really hard to make it even better than it already is.

I have asked the school to remind your parents that it is not a good idea to take you away from school for holidays because it means you miss out on your exciting learning and have to catch up when you get back. You can help by telling your parents, as you told me, how much you love coming to school.