



Barrow School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119397
Local Authority Lancashire
Inspection number 291407
Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007
Reporting inspector Kathleen McArthur

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Old Row
School category	Voluntary controlled		Barrow, Clitheroe
Age range of pupils	4–11		Lancashire, BB7 9AZ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01254 822338
Number on roll (school)	121	Fax number	01254 822408
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr John Strong
		Headteacher	Mrs Christine Marchi
Date of previous school inspection	1 June 2002		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 10–11 January 2007	Inspection number 291407
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This small village school stands on the outskirts of Clitheroe in an area that is socially and economically advantaged. Most pupils live locally, and the school's good reputation attracts a considerable number from outside the immediate area. A very low number of pupils receive a free school meal. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. A much higher than average proportion of pupils has a Statement of Special Educational Need. When children start school, the great majority demonstrate knowledge and skills above those normally seen at their age. The school offers before and after school care, and provides accommodation for a private nursery each morning.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school with outstanding features in personal development, the curriculum and care, guidance and support. Outstanding leadership from the headteacher has inspired the successful drive for improvement since the previous inspection and created a caring ethos of shared partnership between school and home. This has benefited every pupil. Parents are very pleased with everything the school provides. One parent summed this up as 'a school continually striving to provide the best possible education for each child'.

Pupils achieve well and make good progress throughout the school. Standards are well above average in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave the school. This is due to good teaching and the excellent range of stimulating learning activities. Standards for the older pupils are continuing to improve as a high proportion reaches the higher levels of attainment in all three subjects. In Key Stage 1, reading skills are stronger than writing and pupils would benefit from more opportunities to broaden their skills by writing freely and at length. Pupils speak confidently and articulately. They listen carefully to the teacher and to each other, so that they have a good understanding of their tasks. Provision in the Foundation Stage is good and children get off to a good start and make rapid progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities participate fully in all activities. They progress well in relation to their capabilities because they are supported effectively by skilled and knowledgeable staff and by their peers.

Personal development is excellent and every pupil is welcomed and valued, ensuring that they become mature and responsible members of the school and wider community. The very high level of care and support that pupils give one another is a joy to behold. Excellent behaviour, pupils' enthusiasm for school and their obvious enjoyment of learning make a great contribution to their progress, as does their good attendance and punctuality. As one pupil said, 'Learning is fun!' The school successfully ensures that pupils follow a healthy lifestyle and take part in many physical activities. Pupils clearly feel safe and well cared for, and were pleased to report that there is no bullying. Older pupils relish their roles as 'buddies' caring for the younger ones, and all ages play happily together. Good academic standards, guidance and mature attitudes ensure that pupils are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Commitment to further improving the quality of education has led to the successful implementation of an outstanding curriculum that provides an excellent range of enrichment activities. Children in the Foundation Stage also enjoy a very rich curriculum, despite the lack of a separate area for the children to extend their learning outdoors.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is ably supported by a good senior management team and a skilled, effective governing body. Staff and governors form a determined school improvement team, fully committed to the education, personal development and care of all pupils. The school carries out rigorous evaluations of its effectiveness and this has led to good improvement since the last inspection.

The school has set a clear direction for the future and has good capacity for further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Further improve writing skills where there is potential for even higher standards.
- Provide a separate outdoor area for children in the Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and make good progress. They attain well above average standards by the end of Year 6. From an above average starting point, children make good progress in the Foundation Stage, with many exceeding the learning goals expected at the end of the Reception class. They progress most rapidly in personal and social development because of the caring staff and the focus on learning to become independent.

Results of assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 show standards have been consistently above average in reading, writing and mathematics. Reading skills are stronger than writing, mirroring the national trend. In Key Stage 2, results of national tests up to 2005 have remained above average, although have fluctuated in recent years. The 2006 unvalidated results showed considerable improvement on recent results, particularly in science. Nearly two-thirds of pupils met challenging targets and exceeded the nationally expected level in all three subjects, representing good achievement. Tracking systems and the work of the pupils currently in Year 6 show they are on course to maintain this improvement. Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are good because provision has greatly improved since the last inspection. Boys and girls do just as well as each other. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those more vulnerable, are well supported so they too make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Personal and social development is outstanding, as is pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and very well mannered. They show genuine concern for others and help each other spontaneously. The 'buddies' happily give up their free time to assist the younger ones at lunchtime. Real enjoyment of school is clearly shown in excellent behaviour and good attendance, which supports learning most effectively. One pupil said, 'School really looks after us and keeps us safe'. Pupils are adamant there is no bullying and they would be happy to approach any member of staff for help. They become mature, reliable members of the community, with a strong code of values and sense of right and wrong. School councillors believe their work helps everyone by, for example, organising charity events. This contributes to the excellent links the school has with the community. Pupils regularly participate

in local events, including the annual Sheep Fest. Gaining the Healthy Schools award underlines the school's commitment to pupils' health and well-being. Pupils make healthy food choices and enjoy many physical activities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Consistently good teaching throughout the school ensures that pupils achieve well and attain high standards. Teaching for the older pupils is especially challenging and imaginative and accelerates learning for these pupils. Teachers expect pupils to do well and pupils rise to the challenge and are keen to learn. Effective teaching in Key Stage 1 also promotes the pupils' learning well, although there is scope to provide more opportunities to write freely and at length. Throughout the school, lessons are planned carefully and pupils really appreciate the way teachers make learning fun with interesting and meaningful activities. The pace of learning only slows occasionally if the amount of time spent listening causes pupils' attention to wander. Good use of the ICT equipment really captures pupils' interest. For example, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils filmed themselves debating traffic pollution and viewed the recording to assess how well they had presented a balanced argument. Assessment information is used effectively to tailor work to pupils' different needs and abilities. As a result, all groups of pupils progress at a good rate overall.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum provides an excellent range of well planned, balanced learning experiences for all pupils. It is adapted well for all learners so all groups of pupils achieve well. Literacy and numeracy receive appropriate priority. Staff skilfully link subjects to make learning meaningful and relevant. For example, lessons in all areas of learning in the Reception class were linked by the story of the Little Red Hen and this helped to sustain children's enthusiasm. Enrichment activities are a very strong feature of the school. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching in French and physical education, and from visits, visitors and residential experiences. Events provided by the local business community give pupils a real taste of the world of work. The many and varied after-school clubs are very popular and pupils were keen to sign up for the new Film Makers club. Good arrangements for personal, social, emotional and health education enable pupils to explore their emotions and feelings and to learn about making good choices in life. This adds to their knowledge of keeping safe and healthy. Foundation Stage staff have a good understanding of how young children learn, and provide stimulating activities that appeal to their natural inquisitiveness, despite the lack of a dedicated outdoor play area.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Outstanding care, guidance and support ensure that pupils develop self-confidence, enjoy school and progress well. Parents appreciate the quality of care and are welcomed as partners in their child's education. Many commented that the school is open and welcoming. Staff work hard to ensure pupils' happiness and welfare, knowing this is vital to their progress. All systems to safeguard pupils are fully implemented. Well trained and knowledgeable support staff provide skilled assistance. Good induction procedures in the Foundation Stage give children a happy, secure start to school. Good transition arrangements ensure that pupils move confidently to the next stage of education.

High quality assessment and tracking systems ensure that pupils' progress is monitored very closely. Staff spot any underachievement and swiftly direct additional support to help pupils catch up. Pupils are provided with good academic guidance and know what they have to do to improve. They enjoy using the 'traffic lights system', which enables them to assess how well they have understood what has been taught.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding leadership of the headteacher has raised the quality of teaching and learning, increased ICT resources and greatly enhanced the building. Her clear vision, commitment and enthusiasm have the full support of all staff and governors.

There is a clear, developing management structure, which enables staff to carry out their many subject management roles. They regularly undertake professional development to increase their professional skills and knowledge. Governors are very supportive. They are knowledgeable about what is happening in school and confidently challenge decisions and initiatives. The budget is astutely managed to support improvements; for example, the ICT suite. Self-evaluation is collaborative and has nurtured a willingness to seek even more ways of promoting the academic and personal development of all pupils. The school's performance is rigorously evaluated. Good quality teaching is ensured through regular monitoring by the headteacher, senior management and the local authority. Areas identified for development form the basis of improvement planning and the school is clear about the way ahead. The school has built well on previous successes and there is good capacity for further improvement.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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	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?	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.

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	1
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

Barrow School

Old Row

Barrow

Clitheroe

Lancashire

BB7 9AZ

15 January 2007

Dear Pupils

After visiting your school this week, I want to thank you for making me so welcome and helping me with my work. It was a real pleasure to visit Barrow School because everyone was so friendly, polite and helpful.

Barrow School is a good school. I could tell you are very happy and enjoy school because you smile so much and work really hard to reach your targets. Your behaviour is excellent and you care for, and help each other, whenever you can. I am pleased you feel safe and secure. The buddies do a very good job looking after the young children and the school council aim to make school better for everyone.

The staff all care for you and they work well together to make sure you do your best. It is clear that you enjoy learning with so many exciting things to do. You are fortunate to have such a wide choice of clubs and I was impressed by how many of you attend them and try to keep healthy.

I was very pleased with your high standards and think they could be even higher if you practise writing lengthier pieces. It is also clear that the children in the Reception class really enjoy themselves and this could be even better with a special, secure outside area.

I know you will want to help the staff by continuing to work hard, care for each other and enjoy your time at Barrow School.

With best wishes to you all.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kathleen McArthur

Lead inspector