



Barwell Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119930
Local Authority Leicestershire
Inspection number 291573
Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007
Reporting inspector Pat Walsh HMI

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Townend Road
School category	Community		Barwell
Age range of pupils	4–7		Leicester LE9 8HG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01455 842310
Number on roll (school)	173	Fax number	01455 845806
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Rosemary Strange
		Headteacher	Jane Sanchez
Date of previous school inspection	17 September 2002		

Age group 4–7	Inspection dates 23–24 January 2007	Inspection number 291573
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

This is a smaller-than-average school. Numbers are declining and the school has therefore had to reduce the number of classes. The school is in an area of some social and economic disadvantage. The numbers of children with learning difficulties and disabilities are broadly average and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds.

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. Its key strength is the way in which it promotes the good personal development and well-being of the pupils. Because of this, pupils behave well, develop positive attitudes to learning and show real enjoyment of their school life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The headteacher's inspirational leadership successfully focuses the school on raising standards. Parents are very pleased with what the school offers. One parent commented, 'Our children are thriving at this school and it is due to the quality of the teachers and the support staff.' The pupils benefit from high-quality care and guidance to support their learning and well-being. They start school with below-average attainment and make good progress to reach standards that are just above average by the time they leave.

Leadership and management are good, with outstanding leadership from the headteacher. She has a clear view of how the school should develop. Her evaluation of the school's performance is rigorous and accurate and has improved since the last inspection. Governors are supportive and well informed. Subject leaders manage their subjects well. The main reason why pupils' achievement is good is because their progress is assessed very effectively. Teachers use this information to plan for the wide-ranging abilities and needs of pupils in each class. Pupils who need extra help with their learning make good progress because of the ready availability of effective support staff.

Pupils learn well because teaching is good and the work is carefully matched to what they need. Provision in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving, although planning does not always show how activities are linked to progressive stages of learning. The development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) is given appropriate priority. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils but does not provide enough exciting opportunities to encourage them to write about all the things that really interest them. Outings to places of interest, visitors such as a puppet theatre, and a variety of clubs all add enrichment and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The strong focus on pupils' personal growth ensures that they are developing their understanding of how to keep fit, healthy and safe. Pupils know that they need to look out for cars when they cross the road, and not to approach dogs unless they ask an adult. The older pupils are developing a sense of responsibility through acting as playground 'squaddies' and by active involvement in the school's recycling scheme. They look after each other well.

What the school should do to improve further

- In the Foundation Stage, ensure that planning takes account of the learning needs of all pupils.
- Improve the quality of pupils' writing by providing even more exciting opportunities in all areas of the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children start in the Reception class with standards that are below those expected for their age, particularly in communication, language and literacy. Their achievement is satisfactory, and they begin to make up lost ground in the weaker areas because of good teaching. By the end of the Reception year, standards have improved but are still below average.

Pupils achieve consistently well in Years 1 and 2. By the end of Year 2, standards are about average. In the most recent national tests, standards were above average in mathematics and about average in reading but a little below that in writing, reflecting pupils' starting points. Pupils achieve well in ICT and some more-able pupils produced presentations to be shared with visitors to school. Pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities benefit from good support so they also achieve well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance has improved and is broadly average. Pupils are eager to come to school; they enjoy lessons and respond to learning enthusiastically. These are major factors in the good progress they make and in the way the school prepares them for the future. Behaviour is good in lessons and around school because the pupils are encouraged to respect and value one another. They are consulted on a range of issues and provide the school with valuable information on how they feel, what they like and what can be improved. They were fully involved in decisions about recent changes to the building, choosing designs and colour schemes. Pupils' support for the community is shown through their enthusiastic response to projects such as fundraising for the National Children's Homes and supporting a child in Uganda.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because of good teaching. A key feature of this good teaching lies in the planning. This is consistent throughout the school and ensures that lessons have clear objectives. Teachers share these with the class, so pupils know what they are meant to be doing. This helps them to realise the relevance of the lesson and improves their learning. Teachers match work to pupils' abilities well and plan together so pupils of the same age in different classes have similar experiences. This offers a good level of challenge for all. In an outstanding English lesson, pupils developed a very good understanding of writing about the characters in the stories they were reading. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils and this fosters positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are encouraged to work in pairs and in small groups, and

this provides good opportunities to develop their social skills. Throughout the school, teaching assistants and volunteers offer valuable support and help to ensure that all pupils learn well.

Teaching in the Foundation Stage is good. Teachers and support staff are beginning to form a strong and committed team. Sometimes, though, the activities planned do not build up children's knowledge and understanding in small enough steps. Learning, although satisfactory in these instances, is slower than it should be.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is well matched to all pupils' needs. This is an important factor in pupils' good achievement and personal development. There is a strong focus on English and mathematics. Pupils greatly enjoy school and the wide range of activities provided. Their enjoyment and interest are enhanced by a very good range of visits to places of educational interest and by visitors into school. For example, as part of a topic on animals, children in the Reception learned at first hand how dogs and ferrets are adapted for hunting. All pupils benefited from a talk by the dog warden accompanied by her pug. The curriculum is becoming increasingly creative and interesting but pupils do not always have enough stimulus to produce writing of a high enough quality. Pupils learn about how to keep healthy and safe, for example, by washing their hands after touching animals. The good range of activities provided is a key factor in helping pupils to become confident learners and well-rounded individuals. This means that they are ready for the next stage of their education when they move on.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for and receive good support and guidance. They feel safe in school because they are well looked after. They make good progress and most reach the targets set for them because they receive positive encouragement and helpful feedback on how to improve their work. The pupils' emotional well-being is closely monitored and additional excellent support is provided when appropriate in the nurture group. There are very positive links with parents and carers and a wide range of outside agencies. Procedures for child protection are fully in place and the school takes health and safety issues seriously.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. Under the excellent leadership of the headteacher, the school seeks to provide the very best that it can for all its pupils. The clear direction that she provides sets the positive climate for learning. She is well supported by key members of staff. Instability in staffing has been successfully managed and the leadership in the Foundation Stage is now more focused on ensuring that the

children are given the best start to their school life. Systematic monitoring and rigorous analysis enable the headteacher, staff and governors to identify accurately areas of strength and priorities for improvement. Pupil assessment information is used very effectively to group pupils for extra help in English and mathematics. Subject leaders are becoming more involved in monitoring how well pupils are learning in all subjects. The headteacher is developing the team well. Governors visit the school regularly and give good support as well as challenge. The good progress made since the school's previous inspection and the strength and skills of the leadership indicate that the school has the capacity to continue to improve, and it gives good value for money.

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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	3
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	3
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?	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	2

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?	2
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?	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	2
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

Thank you for all your help on our recent visit to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and you told us lots of good things about your school. We agree with you and your parents that your school is a good school.

We know that you really enjoy school and work hard. You do well in your lessons so that you make good progress in most of your learning. You behave well and help one another to be happy and safe in the playground. Your teachers take good care of you and help you learn well. The Sunshine room is helping some of you to get even better at the things you find difficult. I really enjoyed my hot toast on a cold, snowy morning! Your headteacher works hard to do the very best that she can for you all.

To make things even better, this is what we have asked the school to do.

- In Reception, give you more chances to know how you can learn better and quicker.
- Make your writing even better by giving you more interesting things to talk and write about.

Your headteacher and teachers tell you what is being done to make school an even better place and encourage you to help. I am sure you will continue to work hard and do your best. I wish you well in the future.