

# Barrington Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	101449
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bexley
<b>Inspection number</b>	307687
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Robin Hammerton HMI

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	216
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr S Richardson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Keelan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	18 October 2004
<b>School address</b>	Barrington Road Bexleyheath DA7 4UN
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8304 0242
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8304 4565

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	307687

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

This is a one-form-entry primary school, serving its surrounding area in the London suburbs, with little social deprivation. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. Most pupils starting the school have attended pre-school or nursery regularly and have better than average skills and attainment. However, a higher than average proportion of pupils are identified by the school as having special needs; these are mainly lower level learning difficulties. Most pupils are White British, although the number from ethnic minority backgrounds has recently increased, as has the proportion whose first language is not English. Most of these pupils are bilingual, though a few are at an early stage of learning English. The school has a number of awards, including the Healthy School Award and Activemark.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Barrington Primary School provides a satisfactory education. It has some good aspects, including the curriculum, the care shown to pupils and their high levels of confidence and personal development. However, the provision made for pupils in their Reception Year is inadequate. By the end of Year 6, standards are a little above average, with most pupils reaching the nationally expected level, although too few pupils reach the higher levels. This reflects satisfactory achievement and progress overall, which the school recognises could be better.

Parents are overwhelmingly satisfied. They particularly appreciate their children's enjoyment of school life and the fact that the school promotes health and safety extremely well. One parent summed up the prevailing view, 'My child has always felt happy and safe.' Many parents are actively involved in the school and feel included but several others, whilst having positive views about the school overall, believe that some communications can be brusque when dealing with their concerns or suggestions. Inspectors consider these parents make a reasonable point.

In the Reception class, children are looked after well. However, the curriculum is not suitable, the teaching is inadequate and the children are not assessed appropriately. As a result, despite being generally well behaved and enjoying themselves, they do not make enough progress.

From Years 1 to 6, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Teachers engage and encourage pupils well and use humour, making lessons fun. However, their expectations of pupils are not always high enough. Teachers tend to do too much of the thinking for the pupils and dominate many lessons. Therefore, pupils have too few opportunities to be active and independent learners.

The headteacher, working closely with her deputy, has a clear and compelling vision for the school. She intends the school to be an exciting place. Using this vision, she has promoted some improvements effectively showing the school's satisfactory capacity to improve. For example, the curriculum from Years 1 to 6 is innovative and interesting to the pupils, promoting their enjoyment and personal development well. Behaviour and attendance are managed well. However, some management systems are not as effective. For example, the setting and sharing of academic targets with pupils is not well enough honed or used to make a significant impact on their progress. Most importantly, the school does not evaluate itself accurately enough. Weaknesses, including those in the Reception Year, are not adequately recognised, leading to low rates of improvement in those areas.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 4

The Foundation Stage is inadequate. In the Reception class, not enough is expected of the children who are, therefore, directed to engage in low-level activities. Curriculum planning is unsatisfactory. The teacher, who moved into this class this year, has had some recent training for working in the Foundation Stage, though this training, along with management support, has had insufficient impact in ensuring that good practice is sufficiently used. Assessment systems, including observations of pupils' activities, are ineffective and do not ensure staff know well enough how well pupils are doing or what their next learning steps should be. Children have to sit listening on the carpet for too long, and can become restless. They are not given sufficient opportunities to make choices that would enable them to further develop their thinking. However, they are safe and well cared for. Staff make parents feel welcome. The

learning environment, including the outdoor area, is well resourced, although it is insufficiently stimulating.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- As a matter of urgency, improve the provision in the Foundation Stage so that the children make the progress of which they are capable.
- Improve and sharpen its self-evaluation.
- Provide challenging academic targets that raise expectations and set out precisely what pupils need to learn next.
- Seek to ensure that all parents feel their opinions and any concerns are taken seriously.
- Improve pupils' opportunities to learn independently and to be more actively involved in lessons.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Children in the Reception class behave well and often enjoy their activities, but do not make as much progress as they should. Their behaviour is good, however. By the end of Year 2, standards are slightly above average, which indicates satisfactory progress from the pupils' starting points. Boys achieve better than girls in mathematics, and girls achieve better in reading and writing.

Standards in Key Stage 2 are also slightly above average with pupils making satisfactory progress from the levels they reached in Key Stage 1. More pupils than average attain the expected levels in English, mathematics and science, but too few attain the higher levels. The school's tracking data indicates improving progress by pupils in Years 3 to 5.

Pupils identified as having learning difficulties make satisfactory progress. However, there is scope for improvement, especially for those with milder difficulties.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and wellbeing are good. They are polite, self-assured, friendly and like coming to school. The attendance rate is above average. Pupils understand very well how to keep safe and look out for each other. For example, Year 3 pupils were very careful and sensible when walking to a swimming session, and when they were at the pool. Pupils know what to do if they get hurt, if they cannot find a friend, or if they feel they are being bullied, although this is rare. During an assembly in the inspection, all pupils were encouraged to think about how Fairtrade products support farmers to get a fair price for what they grow, which supported their moral and cultural development well. Pupils eat healthy food from the school canteen and many lead an active life. The school council provides a forum for pupils to express their views, and as a result, they feel that they are able to initiate some change; for example, in making improvements to the toilets, in the enhancing the outside environment, and in how reading buddies can support others. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Their behaviour is good in all areas of the school. During playtimes, they play safely, care for each other and enjoy using the excellent equipment available to them. Pupils have a good level of basic skills

in computing. They have some opportunities to show initiative and are satisfactorily prepared for their future.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Teaching and learning are satisfactory from Year 1 onwards. Teachers consistently engage the pupils well in lessons. They share learning objectives clearly, so the pupils know what they are expected to learn. Lessons take place in an encouraging and friendly atmosphere. All pupils are included and, consequently, make satisfactory progress. The teaching of pupils at an early stage of learning English is well focused and effective. The pupils concerned are well supported by the specialist teaching assistant. However, more generally, teaching assistants are underused. The expectations of what they should do in lessons are not stringent enough, so they are not always clear which pupils to support and why. In many lessons, teachers dominate so pupils become too passive, making too few decisions for themselves and missing opportunities to assess their own or each other's learning. Pupils are aware of this; their good attitudes and behaviour mean that they are ready to take a more active role. Teachers' planning is satisfactory with different work being provided for groups of pupils, depending on their attainment levels. However, this work is not matched closely enough to their personal academic targets. Work is not always challenging enough, especially for higher attaining pupils.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum from Years 1 to 6 is under constantly thoughtful revision and is good. It motivates and stimulates pupils well. Recently, the school has introduced parts of the 'International Primary Curriculum'. Pupils gain much from the topics studied and like the way subjects are linked together. They also benefit from regular swimming lessons, although a financial contribution is invited from parents for these, and Spanish lessons in Key Stage 2. Pupils have recently been productively involved in finding out about different 'learning styles', assessing whether they like to learn most through seeing, listening or doing. The school holds regular theme weeks. One, based on the 'Dragon's Den' television programme, was taking place during the inspection. It helped pupils to understand aspects of business better but missed opportunities for them to undertake independent work or decision-making. The curriculum for English and mathematics is sound, with additional booster lessons being provided. However, the school is not using the most up-to-date strategies to help pupils to catch up where needed. This reduces the opportunities for some, including those with more mild learning difficulties. Pupils have regular opportunities to use laptops to support their learning in many subjects.

The school provides a good range of popular extra curricular activities and its sports teams have enjoyed recent success. Good use is made of learning outside the classroom, including visits out and the school's own well landscaped grounds.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support for pupils are satisfactory. However, there are good elements, especially in the care given to pupils, which contribute well to their good personal development and well-being. Starting in Reception, and continuing throughout the school, the school keeps

pupils very safe and shows them how to be respectful and kind to adults and one another. One pupil said, 'You can always find a friend at Barrington School'. Arrangements for safeguarding, risk assessment and child protection are robust. Year 6 pupils feel suitably prepared for their transition to secondary school. However, across the school, targets for learning are not sufficiently individualised or well focused. They are stuck in pupils' books but are too broad for pupils to understand what they need to do next to improve. Similarly, the marking of pupils' work does not always provide enough guidance about they might improve their learning.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school, wanting her pupils to have an exciting and enjoyable primary education. She and her deputy have an effective working partnership, and share the vision. This is being achieved in some ways, particularly through their successful ongoing work with staff on developing the curriculum from Year 1 onwards. However, the impact of school leaders in the Foundation Stage is too limited. The headteacher successfully ensures that the school is a caring place, where children are happy. She has also led effectively many improvements recommended in the previous inspection. The school improvement plan is satisfactory. It shows clearly actions which need to be taken and who is responsible. It is less clear, however, about how success is measured.

The school, therefore, has a sound track record in promoting improvement towards its vision, or in those areas suggested by Ofsted. However, the school has a much more limited record in making improvements in weaker areas it has identified itself. This is because its own self-evaluation is not incisive. For example, staff, including senior and middle managers, observe lessons and look at pupils' work across the school. These can be useful exercises but the main strengths and weaknesses they show are not brought together or analysed. Also, the focus of lesson observations is more on what the staff do than how well the pupils learn as a result. The school's self-evaluation statement is out of date in some important areas. It grades the school as better than it actually is. It does not identify plainly enough those areas needing improvement, including the Foundation Stage and the weaker aspects of teaching and learning. Therefore, the school does not sufficiently recognise the need to improve these aspects.

The headteacher has successfully involved many parents in the life of the school, including helping in classes. Many parents feel the school is open to them. One said, 'If we had any concerns we have felt that we can approach the school.' They enjoy parent days in school and some find email contact with the headteacher productive. Several other parents, however, disagree. One summed up this common view: 'I don't think the school is willing to listen to genuine concerns.' The tone of some letters and communications from the school has understandably concerned several parents. They consider these dismissive of their views and as making it more difficult for them to approach the school again. The headteacher keeps all letters received from parents but has not analysed the key messages they contain. However, she has some steps to try to address parental concerns about communications by introducing a parent partnership group.

The governing body is committed and suitably organised. Recently, it has improved its work in the area of challenging the school to improve and has worked hard to absorb the data about pupils' progress.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Annex A

## 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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
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

08 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barrington Primary School, Bexleyheath, DA7 4UN

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and some of your parents. Thank you for telling us about your school in such a friendly and positive way. This letter is to tell you what we found out about the school.

When we had looked at all the information, we found that your school gives you a satisfactory education. That means it is good enough but can improve to help you all to learn even more.

You told us you have 'fun' lessons and are enjoying the new international curriculum. We could see that is going well. You were also enjoying your business theme week. You are well cared for and safe in school and also look after each other very well. We really enjoyed seeing you having such fun together during playtimes. You behave very well in lessons and are always ready to learn. We also liked hearing about your interesting visits out of school and the after school activities. I also enjoyed walking with Year 3 to your swimming lesson, although when we arrived it was very hot by the side of the pool! I remember Crook Log baths from some years ago when they were on the other side of the road, so that was interesting for me.

We have made five suggestions to help make the school better still. These are:

- make some changes to what happens in the Reception class
- improve the way the school checks for itself how well it is doing
- write your targets more clearly, so that they help you to improve your work
- make sure the school always communicates well with parents
- give you better opportunities to learn independently and actively.

Once again, thank you for making us so welcome. I wish you all well for the future. In particular, best wishes to all of you who are moving on to secondary school.

Yours sincerely

Robin Hammerton

Her Majesty's Inspector