

# Barnston Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105030
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wirral
<b>Inspection number</b>	308746
<b>Inspection date</b>	8 July 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Paul Bamber

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

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<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	305
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr A Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs J Furrie
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 September 2004
<b>School address</b>	Sandham Grove Heswall Wirral Merseyside CH60 1XW
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 3425229
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 3429598

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues: pupils' overall achievement, but especially their standards and achievements in mathematics; standards on entry to Reception and to Year 1; how good behaviour is and how effective is the academic guidance pupils receive. Evidence was gathered from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF), nationally published assessment data, the school's own assessment records, relevant policies, observations of the school at work, including visits to lessons and analysis of parents' questionnaires. Discussions were also held with staff, the chair of governors, the mathematics consultant and pupils. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the SEF, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

Most pupils who attend this larger than average sized primary school come from relatively advantaged backgrounds. The vast majority are of White British heritage. A small number are at the early stage of learning English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is less than average as is the percentage with a statement of special educational need. There are a small number of looked after children. The school has gained the national Healthy School Award and the Sports Activemark.

## 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 well led, managed, and effective school. Good teaching enables pupils to attain well above average standards and to achieve well overall. The pupils' good personal and social development helps them to become confident young people with a social conscience and with a respect for their environment and people of all backgrounds. The rich curriculum enables pupils to acquire very good basic skills and to develop wide interests that prepare them well for their future. They are well looked after and supported. This is particularly helpful in enabling more vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to achieve well.

Children enter the school with skills that are above those expected. They make good progress in Reception and enter Year 1 with well above expected skills in all areas of their learning. This good achievement is maintained in reading and writing in Years 1 and 2, with standards by Year 2 being exceptionally high in reading, and well above average in writing. Although standards in mathematics in Year 2 are above average, pupils' progress is slightly below that found in reading and writing. Progress is good overall in Key Stage 2, especially in English, in which pupils attain exceptionally high standards by the time they leave Year 6. Throughout the school, the strong emphasis placed on promoting good skills in speaking contributes significantly to pupils' excellent standards in literacy. Standards in science in Year 6 have improved considerably compared with 2007. This is because teachers have successfully provided pupils with more opportunities to investigate and hypothesise. A relative weakness remains in pupils' achievement in mathematics. Although standards in this subject in the current Year 6 are above average, pupils' progress is not quite as good as in English and science. The school acknowledges this and has already implemented a variety of strategies to improve pupils' achievement, but without much evident impact as yet.

An example of the school's good overall improvement since the last inspection is that pupils' behaviour, which was judged to be satisfactory at that time, is now good. In lessons, pupils listen well and are keen to learn. They eagerly seize opportunities to work cooperatively and to share ideas, establishing good relationships in the mixed-age classes throughout Years 1 to 6. Pupils take responsibility willingly, acting as house captains, prefects, playground mentors and as school council members. They are proud of their efforts to raise funds for charity and of being a buddy to the younger pupils joining their mixed age classes. They are confident that they are well looked after and that if they have any problems there is an adult in the school to whom they can turn.

Overall, the quality of teaching is good. Strengths in teaching throughout the school include effective use of questions, good use of information and communication technology to gain pupils' interest and to clarify learning, well directed target-setting and the use of humour. Currently, the teaching of mathematics is not strong enough to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they should.

Pupils have many interesting activities both in and out of class that promote their good overall achievement and their effective personal development. The well planned programme to teach them how to stay safe and healthy and to help them form positive relationships is very successful. Pupils have many opportunities to foster their physical development. Many after-school clubs enable them to exercise regularly and to develop games skills and teamwork. The Healthy School Award and the Sports Activemark the school has gained are testament to the good

provision. Pupils also have many opportunities to develop their musical skills through instrumental tuition and their participation in music and drama productions. Classes in French, Spanish and German and residential and day visits, enhance pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social, cultural and academic development well.

The quality of care and support pupils receive is good. The school fully complies with regulations to protect children and to vet adults who work regularly with the pupils. The tracking of pupils' academic progress has improved since the last inspection. This means that the school is now in a much better position to identify pupils who need extra support and to tailor tasks better to match their needs. Systems to ensure pupils' regular attendance, sensible behaviour and good punctuality work well.

Leaders, managers and governors are effective in ensuring that overall, pupils attain and achieve well. They have a good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses through thorough self-evaluation. A team of parents listens daily to younger children read. This strong partnership with some parents has contributed to pupils' high achievement in reading. The close partnership the school has with local secondary schools enhances transfer arrangements and provides gifted and talented pupils with opportunities to extend their learning. The quality of teaching and of pupils' work is regularly checked and usually appropriate action is taken to remedy any identified weakness. The one area where this has proved to be least successful is in raising pupils' achievement in mathematics. Governors keenly support the school and have a good knowledge of its provision by making regular, carefully planned visits to check and report on aspects of its work.

## **Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

The well led and managed provision, together with strong teaching, results in children making good progress in Reception. They achieve particularly well in their speaking skills because adults provide children with many opportunities to talk together, to respond to questions and to explain what they are doing. The very secure foundations laid in Reception contribute very well to the exceptionally high standards pupils achieve in English as they advance through the school. Adults keep a watchful eye to ensure that children achieve a balance between their work and play and between various activities. This allows them to pursue a particular interest, but also makes sure they do not spend too much time on one. Staff compile detailed records of children's achievements which enable them to well match the tasks they set to children's specific needs. Many parents are very pleased with the transfer arrangements between the privately run Nursery that shares the school site and report how quickly their children settle in. The curriculum is imaginative and clearly motivates children's learning. Topics such as the 'seasons' prompt children to dress teddies in seasonal wear, to write postcards from sunny climes, to use computers to match weather to seasons and to make objects, such as kites, that require particular weather conditions for their use. A very strong feature of children's development is how well they learn to cooperate, share resources and to take independent decisions.

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

- Ensure that pupils achieve as well in mathematics as they do in English and science.

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## Annex A

## 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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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?	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	2
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	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

<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>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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



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**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for your warm welcome when I visited your school recently. Many of you were keen to tell me how much you enjoy school and that you were well cared for both in and out of the classroom.

Your representatives on the school council told me in no uncertain terms that they thought Barnston was a good school. It is, and it helps you to do particularly well in English and in science. The younger children get off to a good start in Reception. What is not quite so good is the progress you make in mathematics. It is this that I have asked the school to improve.

You obviously have lots of interesting things to do out of class. The many clubs you can join, both at lunchtimes and after school, help you to develop skills and interests that you can use when you are older. Most of you behave well and you were obviously keen to learn when I visited your classrooms. I was particularly impressed with how clearly you spoke and the wide vocabulary you use, even the younger ones. The adults who run the school have a clear idea about how to make the school even better.

I hope you will continue to work really hard and to enjoy all that the school offers you.