

Barkisland CofE VA Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107552
Local Authority	Calderdale
Inspection number	309430
Inspection date	2 April 2008
Reporting inspector	Kath Halifax

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr J Craven
Headteacher	Mrs S Sutton
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2004
School address	Scammonden Road Barkisland Halifax West Yorkshire HX4 0BD
Telephone number	01422 823324
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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 areas: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; personal development and well-being; care, guidance and support; and how well the school leadership promotes high standards. Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons; assessment data; pupils' work; discussion with pupils, the staff and representatives of the governing body. 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 judgements, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified. These have been included where appropriate within the report.

Description of the school

This smaller than average primary school serves a semi-rural area where a high percentage of families are in employment. This is reflected in the low take up of free school meals. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average with a very small number having a statement of special educational need. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award, the Basic Skills Quality Mark and the Activemark.

Major building works were taking place during the inspection. As a result, the mixed Reception and Year 1 class is being educated in accommodation at the nearby village cricket club for a few months.

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. It provides good value for money. It is at the heart of the village community and, as expressed by one parent, 'Here everyone is special and everyone matters.' It is because of the outstanding provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development that pupils make excellent progress in their personal development. Behaviour is impeccable. Pupils demonstrate their very good attitude to school in lessons, by attending the after-school clubs, through homework and in above average attendance. Pupils with playground responsibilities and school councillors undertake their roles conscientiously ensuring that the 'Ten Golden Rules' are adhered to. The arrangements for care, guidance and support are outstanding. Extremely careful attention is paid to all aspects of health and safety and to protecting pupils successfully. They are encouraged to adopt a safe, healthy lifestyle and parents too are involved through initiatives such as the healthy food fair.

Achievement is good overall. Pupils enter Year 1 from an above average starting point. Standards in Key Stage 1 have fluctuated since the last inspection because of considerable staff changes. While the 2007 results for Year 2 are back to above average, pupils' achievement is satisfactory because some are still catching up. Nevertheless, because staffing is now stable and teaching is lively and challenging, there has been a remarkable increase in pupils' rate of progress over the past two terms. Current standards in Year 6 are well above average. Not content to rest on their laurels, leaders carefully analyse which tasks pupils find difficult and focus teaching to remedy this. As a result, many pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, make very good progress; standards have risen year on year for the past four years. This is especially so in English where the emphasis on writing has resulted in the 2007 English results being exceptionally good. Leaders recognise, however, that there is still room for improvement in spelling. Until recently resources for information and communication technology (ICT) were restricted. This did not stop pupils making good progress in aspects of the subject, such as using computers to present their contribution for the community plan to parish councillors or in understanding spreadsheets in a combined leisure and geography project. However, a lack of suitable hardware means pupils' skill in using ICT to 'model and control' activities is not as advanced.

Good teaching and a good curriculum make learning enjoyable. Both of these aspects have excellent characteristics. None of the teaching observed was less than good. This was reflected in pupils' learning. Lessons are fun, humorous and challenging. Teachers know their pupils are keen to learn. Tasks are carefully matched to pupils' capabilities so all make good gains in the knowledge and skills they acquire. Teachers and skilled support assistants work closely together for the benefit of all pupils. Staff are now working on consistency in marking pupils' work more rigorously and providing challenging 'tips' for pupils to increase their rate of progress even further. Good attention is paid to the key subjects of English, mathematics and science, but not at the expense of other areas of the curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that pupils experience a wide range of sports, the creative arts and take part in visits to make learning interesting and meaningful. As pupils commented, 'We are not just good at our academic work, all Year 6 are doing really well playing the violin and you should see our ballroom dancing and street dance.'

Overall, good leadership and management are at the root of the school's success.

The passion and drive of the headteacher and senior management team are inspirational to staff and pupils alike. Alongside the skills and enthusiasm of staff, the school has an excellent capacity to improve. As one pupil commented, 'They make us want to do our very best, and be the very best.' Main subjects such as English and mathematics are very well led, but staff changes and the heavy workload of being a small school mean some subjects are still catching up. Governance is good. Members of the governing body are knowledgeable and fulfil their role in holding the school to account. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The children enter the Reception class with skills that are typical for their age. A few parents expressed concern that children in the Reception class and Year 1 are educated together. Their fears are unfounded, meticulous planning ensures that both age groups receive a rich curriculum. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is good. It is because of excellent management that the move to the cricket club has had minimal impact on both age groups. Despite being in temporary accommodation, children thrive and are making very good progress in all areas of learning because of teaching that is imaginative, challenging and fun. This was especially so in the outstanding lesson linking sounds and letters, where children were agog with excitement when playing a very competitive game blending sounds. Staff have endeavoured to replicate the very good provision that had been available in school but the current shortage of space restricts the range of activities that can be undertaken within each area of learning. However staff have risen to the challenge and ensured that children are able to make choices and take responsibility for their learning both indoors and outside.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in spelling in Key Stage 2.
- Raise achievement in the modelling and control elements of ICT.

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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
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	1

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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?	2
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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
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	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

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

First may I say how much I enjoyed my short time at your school and thank you for helping me with my work. From talking to you and looking at your photographs and displays, I can see how much you enjoy school, especially your sport, productions and residential experiences. You attend a good school. These areas are especially pleasing:

- your headteacher, senior managers and teachers work especially hard to make sure you continue to achieve above average results in the national tests
- you make very good progress because of good teaching and an imaginative curriculum
- you are polite, friendly, courteous and very well behaved
- you enjoy a very good range of clubs and out-of-school activities; many of you mentioned the pottery club as a particular favourite
- adults provide excellent care and give you very good advice
- you are learning to be particularly good citizens by making a considerable contribution to the village through your 'Get Together' singing group, your charity collections and your ideas for the community plan.

There are a couple of areas that I feel could be better. Standards in English are well above average, but some of you could do better in spelling. You make good progress in many aspects of ICT, but your skill in using computers for modelling and control technology could be better. I am sure you will continue to do all you can to help your teachers. I wish you well for the future.