

Barley Close Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109047
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309859
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Kerly

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	162
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	108
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	12
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Geoff Howell
Headteacher	Nicola Antwis
Date of previous school inspection	17 January 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barley Close Mangotsfield Bristol BS16 9DL

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	15–16 October 2008
Inspection number	309859

Telephone number
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Age group	4-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school has an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) unit providing separate nursery and reception classes, as well as Wrap Around Care (WAC) for children aged 2 to 4. There is also an out of school club for 4-11 year olds before and after school. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average but there are more pupils with a statement of special educational needs than expected in a school of this size. The school has had an acting headteacher since January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. It is now improving after a period of decline during which pupils' progress slowed and standards fell. This year the decline has been halted, and although there remain continuing uncertainties, standards have begun to rise, morale is good and pupils are making satisfactory progress. These improvements are appreciated strongly by the parents. One reflected the views of many in writing, 'Barley Close is now a happier school.' Others reflected on the good care of their children with comments such as, 'Everybody has the children's best interests at heart', and many wrote positively about the impact of the acting headteacher, with such comments as, 'She should be congratulated.' Throughout the uncertainties, all staff have continued to provide good care for all the pupils, and this has contributed to pupils' good personal development and well-being.

Standards have improved this year and are now broadly average. However, whilst most pupils are working at levels expected for their age, relatively few are above these levels in reading, writing, mathematics or science. Progress has improved, but many pupils, especially in the older years, are working at levels lower than previously predicted. This is particularly the case in mathematics, because they have not caught up from periods of slow progress in the past, and have considerable gaps in their computation skills. Although there are significant elements of good teaching, teaching is satisfactory rather than good because the pace and level of challenge is not always high enough, especially for more able pupils, and some of the improved practices introduced this year are not being applied consistently. In the EYFS, children enjoy the many opportunities to learn through outdoor independent play, but the adults do not intervene sufficiently, so opportunities to extend the children's learning are missed. Care and support for pupils are good throughout the school, but care, guidance and support are only satisfactory because academic guidance does not always ensure that pupils are fully aware of what they need to do next to improve their work. The curriculum is developing and at present is satisfactory with some good enriching experiences.

Leadership and management are satisfactory and improving. The acting headteacher has successfully improved relationships and made a good start at ensuring that staff expect more of their pupils. The staff are working as a united team committed to improving provision for the pupils. Some of the school's judgements about its performance remain over generous because some systems for checking its work, particularly teaching, are not sufficiently rigorous. However, significant improvements have been put in place this year, particularly the good systems to track pupils' progress, and these are being used well to target specific pupils with additional support. These tracking systems, along with better liaison with parents and improving practices by the governors, are enabling the school to become more effective, and have helped give it sufficient capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision in the EYFS is satisfactory with good aspects, including the good provision in the WAC where staff interact very well with the children. Throughout the EYFS, children are happy and well cared for by all staff. Key workers ensure the children's welfare is good and they work closely with parents. Children settle quickly and an emphasis on developing independence contributes to their good personal development. They are taught how to look after each other and learn to behave well. An example of this is the way they sensibly use the 'snack bar' in each

class for their fruit, water and milk. Many children start school with skills below the levels expected for their age, especially in communication and understanding of language. The children make satisfactory progress but fewer than usual reach the goals expected by the end of the EYFS. The stimulating and safe environment in the WAC is developed throughout the EYFS. Teachers provide a good range of experiences in and out of doors in a curriculum that has improved significantly since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory with a number of good features. Children frequently make rapid gains when working directly with an adult, especially in the Reception Year. However, at times, adults miss opportunities to extend thinking and support language development through careful questioning and interventions. This is particularly evident during the lengthy outdoor independent play sessions when children from Nursery and Reception often mingle with insufficient adult contact to extend their learning. Leadership in the EYFS is satisfactory and for the WAC it is good. Adults work well as a team and link successfully with other settings and groups in order to share ideas.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase pupils' progress in mathematics, especially in Years 3 to 6, by overcoming the gaps in their understanding and computation skills.
- Improve learning by ensuring all teachers have high expectations of pupils, especially those who are more able, and help pupils be clear about how to improve.
- Find ways for adults to extend children's learning in the EYFS during the periods of independent play, particularly when out of doors.
- Ensure there is a clear programme of monitoring the work of the school, especially the quality of teaching, with accurate judgements and clear feedback about how to improve.

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

Progress has improved this year and is now satisfactory. However, a significant minority of pupils, especially those in the older classes, are working at levels below those expected for their age and below targets previously set for them by the school. This is partly a reflection of the relatively low starting points for some pupils, as attainment on entry is generally a little below average. However, more significantly, it reflects slow progress in previous years, particularly in mathematics, where there are gaps in pupils' computation skills and understanding of place value. Evidence from recent tests in reading, writing, mathematics and science in Years 2 and 6 shows standards are rising again after a significant decline in the previous two years. Whilst being broadly average, very few pupils are exceeding the expectations for their age in all subjects. This pattern is set to continue in the short term, with few pupils currently in Year 6 set to exceed national expectations, although the new targets set are challenging given the current levels of pupils' work. Pupils with learning difficulties and or disabilities make satisfactory progress. By the time they leave, pupils have gained satisfactory levels of skills needed for secondary education and adult life.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is an enduring strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school. Attendance is satisfactory and improving slowly. Pupils are clear about how to keep themselves safe. They feel confident that all the adults at school ensure they are safe and would help them if they have a problem. Behaviour is good, with almost all pupils behaving well as a result of an effective behaviour management policy. Pupils appreciate that inappropriate behaviour is dealt with firmly and sensitively. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and they reflect thoughtfully about global variations in cultures discussed in assembly. They have a good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, evident, for example, in the enthusiasm for the fruit kebabs in the out-of-school club. The school has Healthy Schools and Activemark awards in recognition of its work in promoting health and fitness. Pupils are keen to help around the school with tasks such as being buddies and register monitors. The school councillors are proud of their ideas for improving the school, including the recycling and the allotment. Pupils keenly participate in the Mangotsfield Festival and contribute to local and national charities.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

There are good features of teaching, but they are found more frequently in some classes than others. In almost all lessons teachers manage behaviour well. They are developing techniques to make sure all pupils are actively involved by the use of 'talking partners', for example as seen in a Year 6 science lesson when considering how to set up an investigation. This promotes good learning. However, in some lessons learning slows as teachers rely on just a few volunteers to answer questions. Occasionally teachers get bogged down in lengthy explanations to the whole class, resulting in lack of purpose and challenge for the more able and slowing their progress. Teachers are increasingly using the much improved assessment information to help match work accurately to the needs of pupils. At times this is highly successful, resulting in all pupils making good progress. An example of this was seen in Year 3 when targeting different groups of pupils to improve their handwriting during an excellent intervention session, using the team of teaching assistants well. However, in some other intervention sessions, although the less able pupils are identified accurately and receive mostly effective support, the average and above average pupils are not fully stretched.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school is working to produce a creative curriculum whilst maintaining a strong commitment to English and mathematics. It has begun to develop guidance to ensure key skills are taught progressively. There are already some good links made between subjects, especially in the afternoons. The curriculum is carefully adapted to meet the needs of the least able but there has been less focus on adapting it for more able pupils. There are examples of good use of computers across the curriculum but the computers are underused for large parts of the day. Imaginative materials promote personal, social and emotional development and good use is made of the swimming pool and extensive school grounds for sport and environmental studies.

The curriculum is enriched well by the range of visits, visitors and special events such as the annual residential visit.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The care and support for pupils are good throughout the day in all sections of the school, including the out-of-school club and the WAC. There is always a good level of staffing and this helps ensure all pupils are known well and carefully nurtured. Procedures designed to safeguard pupils are implemented rigorously. There are good strategies to support the most vulnerable pupils and those with complex learning difficulties. This is valued greatly by parents who recognise the effective way the school links with external professionals to support their children's needs. Academic guidance, although improving, remains satisfactory. Pupils are usually clear about what it is they are meant to be learning in each lesson. However, some short-term learning targets are not clear enough to be helpful and teachers do not consistently give pupils enough feedback about their work or refer to the targets sufficiently when marking.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The acting headteacher, together with the chair of governors, has worked with skill and determination to improve relationships within and between staff, governors and parents. There is now a tangible sense of team spirit, with leaders working hard to reverse the previous decline in standards, and parents becoming more involved in their children's education. The school has responded well to support from the local authority, and individual leaders in the new leadership team are welcoming the opportunity to lead and contribute to whole-school developments. Some of these new initiatives have not been in place long enough to have shown an impact in increased pupils' progress. An example of this is the very structured programme of intervention for pupils who have fallen behind, which, although excellent in parts, is not being applied with equal quality. The much improved systems for assessing and tracking the progress of pupils are good and an important strength within the satisfactory range of procedures to check the performance of the school. However, the processes for monitoring the quality of teaching sometimes lead to over generous judgements and do not currently provide enough feedback to teachers about precisely what needs to improve. Governance is satisfactory. Governors have established better systems for conducting their work, and are undergoing further training to help them hold the school more fully to account.

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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?	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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

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

20 October 2008

Dear Children,

Inspection of Barley Close Primary School, Mangotsfield BS16 9DL

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we recently visited your school. We enjoyed talking with you and seeing some of your work. Yours is a satisfactory school. There are several things that are already good and others that are improving. There are also a few things that need to improve. Here are some of the highlights we found.

- You learn to behave well in lessons and around the school, and are polite to visitors.
- You are lucky to have such good facilities out of doors and an indoor swimming pool. You rightly told us how important it is to stay fit and eat healthily.
- You work hard in lessons and many of you are learning more now than you did a year or so ago.
- Everyone who works in the school takes good care of all of you, before, during and after school, from the very youngest in the wrap around care room to those of you in Year 6.
- Your headteacher has worked hard to bring all the adults working in the school into a team that is determined to improve things even more for you.
- Your parents are pleased about the changes made in the school over the last year and are glad you go to Barley Close School.

Even though the school is improving we have asked the headteacher, staff and governors to work together on four things to make it even better.

- Help you make more progress in mathematics, especially those of you in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6.
- Ensure teachers make sure work is always challenging, especially for those of you who sometimes find it a bit easy, and that you are all clear about what you need to do to improve.
- Find ways for adults to help children learn more in the Nursery and Reception classes when they are playing outside.
- Make sure leaders find out exactly what it is that needs to improve when they carry out checks on how well the school is doing.

Many of you help around the school with various jobs and we are sure you will want to do all you can to help the school continue to improve. Yours sincerely,

Martin Kerly Lead inspector