

Barham Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	118653
Local Authority	Kent
Inspection number	313030
Inspection date	22 January 2008
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	193
School	
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Scott Rutherford
Headteacher	Graham Bissett
Date of previous school inspection	4 May 2004
School address	Valley Road Barham Canterbury CT4 6NX
Telephone number	01227 831312
Fax number	01227 831096

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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: the impact of the school's provision in contributing to improving standards and pupils' achievement further; pupils' personal development and well-being; the effectiveness of leadership and management in contributing to school improvement. Evidence was gathered from national published assessment data and the school's own records of pupils' attainment, visits to lessons, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers' planning, discussions with pupils, staff and representative governors, the views of parents and a scrutiny of the school's documentation. 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 its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

The school is similar in size to other primary schools. Pupils' starting points on entry to the school are varied but, taken together, are above average. A significantly higher than average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. A number of pupils travel considerable distances to attend the school. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils taking free school meals is very low, partly because the school does not offer a hot meals service. The school currently holds the Sportsmark Gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Barham Primary is a good school, where the Christian ethos supports pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being exceptionally well. Pupils are overwhelmingly positive about their school, making comments such as 'it's the best school in the world' and 'teachers like it as well, they find it interesting to see how clever we are'. Most parents are positive about the educational provision and excellent care, guidance and support for their children, but a few do not think that the school listens well enough to their views. They recognise that pupils develop into mature, confident and polite young people. Many pupils and their parents commended the 'buddy system' for its contribution to the school's family ethos, helping pupils to look after one another and interact well with people of all ages. One parent reflected a view typical of many: 'Even 11-year-olds are not "too cool" to ignore five-year-olds.' The level of pupils' enjoyment is reflected in well above average attendance rates. Pupils have full confidence in adults to sort out problems should they occur so that they feel safe and well cared for.

An exceptionally rich range of extra-curricular activities very effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A high proportion of pupils attend clubs covering broad interests from 'grub' to 'bugs', including sport, music and drama, and encouraging pupils to widen their horizons as well as pursue existing interests. These activities make a strong contribution to pupils' outstanding understanding of how to live healthy lifestyles and contribute to their community. Good examples are where some older pupils organise clubs for their peers and younger pupils, such as the cross-country club, helping to develop social and leadership skills, equipping them well for their future economic well-being. Pupils' experiences are enriched by visitors to the school, such as an artist in residence and returning evacuees to the school as part of a World War II project. Pupils also make a valuable contribution to the wider community by singing in the church choir or contributing to the parish magazine. The many exciting opportunities, including residential visits abroad as well as closer to home, give pupils an excellent understanding of their own and others' cultures.

Pupils find the curriculum interesting and this, together with good teaching, helps them to work hard and achieve well. When asked about lessons, a small group of pupils unanimously said 'They're fun.' The recent Victorian topic is an example of how the good curriculum provides relevant contexts for pupils to practise skills learned in literacy, for example to record their understanding of history by producing diaries as kitchen maids or chimney sweeps. Plans are in place to extend this type of learning further. Teaching is consistently well structured so that pupils are clear about what they are learning and what is expected of them. Pupils' work is marked well to give them guidance about the quality of their work. Pupils know their targets and what they have to do next to improve further, helping them to achieve well across a broad curriculum, which includes French. Although parents have termly information about the curriculum, a few parents would like to have more regular updates which detail exactly what their children are learning, and include longer notice of some special events.

The school regularly achieves standards significantly above average in the national assessments and tests in Years 2 and 6. Last year, following changes in the approach to the teaching of literacy, the progress made by pupils between Years 2 and 6 increased over the previous year, as did the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in Year 2. Planning is in place to introduce the latest national guidance for the teaching of English to improve standards further. However, standards in mathematics fell and the school did not reach its performance target. Staff are bringing the same energy to improving the teaching of numeracy as they did to

improving literacy. School data shows that this is having a positive impact and standards are improving again this year. The school recognises that until recently, it did not have high enough expectations of a few, mainly average-attaining, pupils. Teachers now use the information about pupils' progress to plan work more closely to meet their individual needs and improve progress rates.

The leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher, together with the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, has further encouraged the teamwork amongst the staff evident in the last inspection, strengthening the sense of purpose across the school to do the very best for pupils. There are well-established and rigorous systems to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of initiatives and the school's work as a whole. The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities well and governors have a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and challenges. Teachers and support staff have a commitment to their own professional development and participate in activities provided through the local cluster of schools to bring best practice into the school. They know exactly what has to be done to meet the challenging targets the school has set for its future performance, giving the school good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Parents value the good start children have to their education, with comments such as 'The school has far exceeded our expectations.' Children have a broad range of experiences and skills when they join the school, with many children having good language development, but being less confident in making choices for themselves. However, some children with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities have not developed the skills typical for their age. Adults use their good knowledge of children's individual needs very well to plan activities which successfully help all children to make good progress. Consequently, most children reach, and many exceed, the goals for their learning, giving them a good basis for future learning. Children learn very well through a variety of structured play. They are particularly engaged by role-play, often inviting adults to join them, for example using role-play to practise writing as a follow-up to an earlier activity learning about speech bubbles in a story book. Children are required to think problems through for themselves, as when a small group built their own 'brick, wood and straw' houses for 'The Three Pigs'. Such activities effectively help children to develop their independence and a real love of school. The school is continuing its development of the outside area to further enrich the range of activities and give children opportunities to learn through observing and helping in their own Foundation Stage garden.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise achievement, particularly in mathematics, by raising expectations of what all pupils can achieve.

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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 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	1
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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

23 January 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barham CE Primary School, Canterbury CT4 6NX

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I visited recently. It was good to hear about the many interesting things you do in school. I would like to thank the school council for giving up part of their lunchtime to talk to me.

I agree with you that Barham is a good school and that some things are outstanding:

- you find learning fun and I could see that you work hard when the headteacher and I made a short visit to your classrooms
- you make good progress because you are taught well
- you get on extremely well together so that the school is like one big happy family
- many of you enjoy the exceptionally wide range of clubs and the sports activities that help you to keep fit and healthy
- many of you enjoy taking part in school performances, and they sound wonderful
- adults take excellent care of you and help you to sort out problems well when they occur
- the headteacher and the staff think very carefully about how well the school is doing and take action quickly if they think something needs improving
- members of the school council do a good job to help to make the school an even better place. This is only one of the ways children add to the school community. Others too are helpful, such as looking after younger children or running clubs.

I agree with your teachers about the most important thing to do next:

- to expect some pupils to produce work of an even higher quality, particularly in mathematics.

You can help by working hard and asking for help if there is anything you do not understand in numeracy lessons.

Please thank your parents for returning their questionnaires. I enjoyed reading their comments. I wish everyone at Barham School every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs H Hutchings Lead Inspector

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Lead Inspector