

Barwick and Stoford Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123718
Local Authority	Somerset
Inspection number	314688
Inspection date	27 February 2008
Reporting inspector	Anthony Shield

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	62
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Sparks
Headteacher	Sarah Coleman
Date of previous school inspection	15 September 2003
School address	South View Barwick Yeovil BA22 9TH
Telephone number	01935 476736
Fax number	01935 476736

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Barwick and Stoford Community Primary School is smaller than most primary schools, and consists of just three classes. Reception children are taught alongside other children in Years 1 and 2. Most pupils are of White British origin and live in the villages of Barwick or Stoford. On entry, pupils' attainment is just below typical levels for their age, and an above average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It benefits from being smaller than most schools, so that staff and pupils know each other well and care for each other. The sense of community is strong and pupils are proud to be part of 'our school'. There are significant strengths in the personal development of pupils, their care, guidance and support and the curriculum.

Pupils' achievements are satisfactory given their starting points. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class. Because numbers in each year are very small, results in national tests have varied but overall standards at the end of both Year 2 and Year 6 are broadly average. However, writing is a relatively weaker area and this holds up more rapid progress in a number of subjects. Although some thoughtful work has been done to link subjects and to teach writing across the curriculum, there is more to be done before this is rooted in everyday practice. Progress in reading and mathematics is more secure and pupils are much more confident in using and applying these skills. The school has recognised that pupils' writing skills need to be improved, and has devoted much energy to tackling the issue. Progress has been made and gains are already evident, but there is more to be done before pupils' progress in writing matches that in mathematics.

The school's commitment to the care of each pupil, alongside good relationships, results in friendly and responsible pupils. Their good personal development is a strength and results from the good levels of care, guidance and support provided to them. Pupils mostly behave sensibly and politely to each other and take their responsibilities seriously, for example in the way older pupils 'buddy' younger ones. As one parent commented: 'this is a brilliant idea, and teaches children to look out for each other'. Pupils are keen to do well and show good attitudes to learning. They are enthusiastic about school, and have a good awareness of how to keep healthy.

Whilst teaching is satisfactory, it is improving and some is good. As yet, however, its impact on pupils' overall progress remains satisfactory. Classrooms are lively and stimulating environments in which teachers make learning enjoyable. Pupils respond with good levels of concentration. Although teachers plan work carefully, sometimes it does not provide enough challenge, because they do not always plan work which builds step by step on what pupils already know and can do. The good curriculum is well balanced. Whilst basic skills are a priority, there are good opportunities for enrichment through working in other subjects and clubs.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Governors and the headteacher provide clear direction, and the commitment to sharing leadership roles has ensured that all staff are involved and feel part of school improvement. Subject leaders are developing their roles well, through playing an active role in monitoring provision and sharing good practice. Work done to improve literacy standards is beginning to make a difference. Self-evaluation is satisfactory but whilst targets are realistic, they are not yet sufficiently challenging. Information about how well pupils are progressing is not yet used with sufficient rigour to raise expectations and challenge pupils to do their very best.

The school's way forward, building on what has already been achieved, is clearly mapped out. Given what has already been achieved, the school's capacity to improve further is satisfactory. Although a very small minority of parents are concerned about the progress their children are making and the school's communication with them, most are supportive of the school.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception class with skills below typical levels, particularly in language and literacy. They make good progress, and most transfer to Year 1 with attainment that is broadly in line with expected levels, although there is still a deficit in their communication skills. This good progress is down to well-planned and organised teaching. Children are increasingly confident in making choices, sharing and taking turns and, despite the lack of an outside play area in wet weather, they make good progress in their physical development. Because of the good transition arrangements with the pre-school settings, children settle quickly and happily into school routines. Members of staff work effectively to track children's progress and target any support where it is needed. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed and good curricular links are made to Year 1.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop pupils' writing skills across all subjects to raise standards of literacy.
- Use performance information more accurately to set challenging targets, raise expectations and get the very best out of all pupils.
- Check pupils' progress more incisively to plan work in lessons which offers consistent challenge and builds progressively on their skills, knowledge and understanding.

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 get off to a good start in the Foundation Stage class, and they are well prepared for entry into Year 1. Standards in Years 1 and 2 are broadly average in reading and mathematics, but writing is a relatively weaker area and is often below average. Although fewer pupils than might be expected reach higher levels in writing, achievement is satisfactory. Standards are also below average in English and science by the end of Year 6. Attainment in mathematics at this stage is closer to the average. Writing skills remain a relative weakness and an impediment to more rapid progress in a number of subjects. However, the school is working successfully to tackle this, and strategies to improve pupils' ability to write at length are beginning to take effect, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Pupils with learning difficulties make securely satisfactory progress through the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy the family atmosphere in the school, and take pride in belonging. This sense of community encourages pupils' good personal development. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and as a result, they feel safe and well cared for. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and the school's international work has done much to foster pupils' awareness of cultural differences. Pupils are attentive and work hard in lessons. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, and they have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils report that there is some name-calling in the playground, but that swift action is taken by teachers when it is reported. Every younger pupil has an older buddy for help

and friendship. Pupils' good awareness of healthy lifestyles is actively encouraged, reflected in the school's award of both Healthy School status and ActiveMark. Older pupils enjoy opportunities to contribute to school life through being house captains or working on the school council. Younger pupils willingly offer to help tidy up classrooms. They contribute to the wider community through charity fund-raising and singing locally. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is broadly average. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Whilst teaching is satisfactory overall, it is improving and some is good. Teachers manage their pupils very well, relationships are good, and there is a purposeful atmosphere in lessons. Lesson planning is usually well considered to accommodate the needs of the mixed ages and the often wide ability profile in each class. Recent initiatives are making a difference. For example, the use of personal learning targets in literacy is encouraging individual pupils to think more clearly about how well they are doing and what they need to do next. They especially enjoy achieving a target and moving onto the next. This feedback on how well pupils are doing and the use of assessment information to plan work has improved learning in literacy lessons, but is not used consistently well in all subjects in order that all pupils are challenged to do their best. Tasks are carefully designed to stimulate interest, but this is not consistently the case. Teachers offer clear instructions and explanations, and present ideas thoughtfully. The rapt attention of pupils to the telling of a story about Joseph in Year 3/4 was typical of the good attitudes shown by pupils. Teachers use a variety of methods to sustain pupils' interest, and good questioning prompts pupils to think more for themselves. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to support pupils' learning. Teaching assistants offer well-targeted support for pupils with learning difficulties. Marking is regular and usually gives clear guidance on what pupils need to do to improve.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The good curriculum is broad and balanced and increasingly relevant to pupils' needs. Together with improvements to teaching, the curriculum is beginning to impact positively on pupils' progress. There is a strong emphasis on basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT and increasingly work is being planned to develop these skills across all subjects. Some imaginative writing, for example, followed the pupils' visit to the Tutankhamun exhibition. This cross-curricular approach is doing much to encourage a more interesting and meaningful curriculum, but there is more to be done before this is fully rooted in curriculum planning. Visits and visitors are used well to enrich pupils' experience, and pupils appreciate the range of after-school clubs. The well-planned personal, social and health programme makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school's commitment to the care of every pupil is clear. Members of staff know pupils well and are good role models to help them feel secure and enjoy learning. Pupils respond positively

to being treated with fairness and respect. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are quickly identified and their progress carefully tracked. Safeguarding procedures are all in place. Procedures for checking on pupils' progress are now good, but are relatively new and have not yet had time to impact fully on pupils' progress. Intervention to support pupils with particular needs is carefully targeted so they make securely satisfactory progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

A commitment to shared leadership has given the school a clear sense of purpose and all staff are confident to contribute. Teachers are ambitious for further improvement and the school is well placed to do so. However, progress since the last inspection has been only satisfactory, partly because of the detrimental impact of staff changes in a small school. The headteacher and staff have effectively identified where there is scope for improvement and taken steps to tackle it. The impact of recent initiatives, particularly in improving learning in literacy and giving pupils individual learning targets, demonstrates that the school has a clear grasp of what needs to be done to secure further improvement. Monitoring by the headteacher, governors and subject coordinators is regular and supportive, enabling the school to have a sound knowledge of itself. Performance data is being collected and analysed but whilst realistic targets are being set to raise standards, as yet these are not challenging enough. Committed and hardworking governors are making a sound contribution through their regular visits.

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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?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 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	2
How well 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 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?	2

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?	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 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

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barwick and Stoford Community Primary School, Yeovil BA22 9TH

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. We enjoyed talking to you, and particularly liked the friendly welcome you gave us. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory standard of education.

What we liked most about your school:

- the small size of the school helps you to know and care for one another well
- you are well behaved in class and keen to please your teachers
- you make good progress in the Reception class
- you try hard in lessons and enjoy all the activities and clubs the school arranges for you
- your teachers make your lessons interesting
- the school takes good care of you, ensuring you feel safe and well-looked after
- the headteacher and teachers are working hard to make your school even better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help you to do even better, particularly in using your writing skills in all subjects
- make sure that all the teachers use information about how well you are doing to set you work to make you think harder
- set you targets which help you to raise your game and do even better.

Thank you once again for your help during the inspection.

With best wishes for the future!

Yours sincerely

Mr Tony Shield Lead Inspector

28 February 2008

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BA22 9TH**

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