

Barmston Village Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108835
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	324843
Inspection dates	28–29 January 2009
Reporting inspector	Joan Elton

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	263
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Christine St.Clair
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Harman
Date of previous school inspection	14 September 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Barmston Centre Washington Tyne and Wear NE38 8JA
Telephone number	0191 219 3700
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school, where the overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Of those pupils from minority ethnic groups, only a very small percentage does not have English as a first language. The catchment area the school serves has many indicators of social and economic hardship. A higher than average proportion of pupils is entitled to free school meals. A similarly high proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The proportion of children who join and leave the school other than the normal times is higher than average. The school has Nursery and Reception classes in its Early Years Foundation Stage and provides a breakfast club, an after-school club and wrap-around Nursery care.

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. It provides good teaching and learning, a vibrant curriculum and good care. Leadership and management are effective and very successfully promote equality of opportunity to all pupils. Pupils make good progress socially and academically. Parents think highly of their school and appreciate the school is 'very well run.' They give much praise to the headteacher and staff who, they feel, help with children's emotional and academic needs. The overwhelming majority of children love school and parents give individual examples of the great care taken with transition into Nursery and of children's good progress and behaviour.

Children enter Nursery with skills well below those expected for their age. By the time they leave Year 6, standards are broadly average. This good achievement is the result of accurate assessment, appropriate learning programmes that meet individuals' needs and clear guidance to pupils on how to achieve their targets. In previous years, reading and writing have not been as successful as mathematics and science, particularly for boys. Staff have responded effectively to this, putting in a variety of strategies to raise standards and monitoring their effect systematically. These initiatives are accelerating progress. Good provision for pupils with English as an additional language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities ensures they make the same good progress as their peers.

Personal development is good. Most pupils are very happy and cooperative in school. They have positive attitudes to learning and feel safe. Their good behaviour and attendance reflects this. Pupils are keen to take up responsibilities to help their teachers and other pupils. They know the main features of a healthy lifestyle and have engaged in many community projects. Their knowledge and understanding of British cultural diversity beyond their own community is more limited. The school has some global links and encourages its own minority ethnic pupils to share their traditions. Nevertheless, pupils do not have regular opportunities to interact with others from different ethnic, religious and social backgrounds.

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well and are highly focused on raising achievement. They consolidate and extend learning effectively, set interesting challenges to sustain concentration and provide appropriate individual support. Clear guidance in marking enables pupils to reach their targets. Relationships with pupils are warm and supportive. The good curriculum meets the needs and interests of all pupils and has enough variety, choice and excitement to keep pupils motivated to learn. The school takes great care of its pupils, giving them good pastoral and academic guidance. Nurturing sessions support pupils emotionally. Staff provide good role models of respect and consideration. The improved pupil/teacher ratios enable more individual support for pupils and more active self-assessment. These help raise pupils' self-esteem.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has established excellent systems for monitoring provision and progress. She has empowered staff to use these effectively to secure pupils' improvement. Governance is satisfactory. Governors make active contributions to many aspects of school life, share the commitment to raising achievement, but have limited involvement with the school's self-evaluation.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. Children receive consistently good teaching and support from a team of dedicated teachers and teaching assistants. The environment staff create is attractive and stimulating, both indoor and out, and gives interesting activities across the curriculum. Personal development has a successful emphasis, especially for children who experience difficulties. Induction into Nursery is carefully planned and children settle quickly, happily following safe and efficient routines. When children enter Nursery, their skills are well below those typical for this age group. Early identification of particular needs and accurate continuous assessment enable staff to provide a good balance of teacher-led and child initiated learning experiences. Opportunities to consolidate basic skills are sometimes missed because they are not planned as essential features of independent activities. Most children leave Reception having made good progress. The majority reach the nationally agreed Early Learning Goals, although English and general knowledge are still at low levels. Leadership and management are good. The Early Years Foundation stage coordinator ensures that teachers' planning targets areas for development well and that arrangements to promote the welfare of the children are good. Staff use every opportunity to teach children about keeping safe. Parents are well informed and encouraged to help their children's learning. Staff evaluate their own practice and plan to extend the outdoor classroom. The setting runs very smoothly and is well focused on raising achievement. As in the extended school provision and wrap-around care, children thrive in its warm welcoming ethos and parents have great confidence in their children's education and welfare.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise awareness of cultural diversity in Britain and the wider world.
- Increase governors' involvement in school life so that they effectively contribute to the school's self-evaluation.
- Ensure basic skills are firmly embedded within all children's independent activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Standards are broadly average by Year 6. This represents good achievement because children enter Nursery with skills well below those typical for this age group. Pupils' standards remain below average by the end of Year 2 but as they progress through Key stage 2 their progress accelerates. Progress for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good, as it is for pupils with English as an additional language. This is due to the school's outstanding inclusion policies and excellent pupil/teacher ratios. These strategies, as well as a more efficient tracking system to identify individual needs and match appropriate resources, have also benefited other pupils. Progress for the majority, including the gifted and talented, has accelerated since September 2008. The initiatives to improve reading and writing throughout the school, particularly for boys, are successful.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good as is their spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The school goes to great lengths to meet the personal, social and emotional needs of pupils and give them learning skills for life. There are many opportunities for pupils to take responsibility. They love working as monitors, buddies and school councillors. A good example of this is the playtime tuck shop serving hot toast to hungry footballers. Pupils have a keen sense of fair play and know right from wrong. By Year 6, most pupils are sensitive and caring about the experiences of others and reflect on how they must be feeling. They are not as confident talking about the different races and beliefs which make up British society and the wider world. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their above average attendance reflects this as does their good behaviour in lessons and around school. Pupils say there is no bullying in school and they feel safe and secure. Pupils' understanding of how to stay fit and well is good; they eat healthily and take plenty of exercise. Pupils participate enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricular activities and visits, which includes active involvement in the local community such as tending gardens in a local national trust property.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning is good. Lessons move at a brisk pace. Pupils needing additional help receive good quality support because support staff are enthusiastic and well prepared. Teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations of their pupils. They understand exactly what the pupils can do and what they need to learn next. Accurate assessment is used very effectively to meet all pupils' needs. Pupils appreciate the detailed feedback they receive when teachers mark their work because it helps them understand their learning targets and how they can improve their work further. This understanding is driving up achievement. Relationships between pupils and teachers are excellent because each respects the other's contribution to the lesson. A good example of this occurred when pupils carried out complex calculations to plan and cost out a go-carting party. In less successful lessons, the rate of progress is slower because activities lack pace and pupils are not sufficiently focused or challenged.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It provides well for all pupils, whatever their needs and interests, by making learning fun. The reorganisation of the curriculum to develop key skills, such as information and communication technology (ICT), and provide more learning topics instead of subject lessons, is beginning to work well. It makes learning more relevant, particularly for the boys, and is beginning to enhance literacy and numeracy skills by practising them in more meaningful contexts. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported because there are extra teaching assistants in the classroom. Additional activities and clubs further enrich the curriculum. Specialist visitors to school, together with external visits by pupils, develop self-confidence and raise awareness of the broader environment. The school pays attention to the development of personal, social and citizenship skills. Recently pupils linked Washington (Sunderland) with Washington DC. As a result, pupils learned about American values and lifestyles.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school provides good care, guidance and support. There is a very caring ethos within school and pupils are well supported both academically and socially. They feel happy, safe and cared for because they know staff will listen to them if they are worried. Teachers and parents work closely with other professionals to ensure the welfare of all of their pupils. Each child is treated as an individual and receives appropriate support to allow them to flourish. The nurture group is particularly effective in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. This additional support helps to improve confidence and raise self-esteem. Teaching assistants are well deployed and provide invaluable support in class. The school meets all the requirements for safeguarding children and risk assessments are in place. Effective target setting and monitoring procedures inform pupils and parents of current progress and future targets.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher's clear vision is to raise pupils' achievement and aspirations. She sets clear direction on how this can be achieved. Assisted by the deputy, she has devised very effective systems to monitor all aspects of school life. This involves clear definitions of roles and the development of staff at all levels. Staff have a better overview of the school's strengths and areas for development. They are more able to target their areas of responsibility to bring about improvement. This has led to effective lines of staff communication and greater confidence in leading initiatives. Governance is satisfactory. The governing body is small in number and very enthusiastic but many are new to their roles. This currently limits the contribution governors make to the school's self-evaluation. Nevertheless, governors are actively involved in all aspects of school life. This encourages new governors to acquire a better understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development. The leadership team promotes a good standard of care and education and makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. It manages the school's finances successfully, has raised overall achievement and secured inclusion for all learners. Improvement since the last inspection is good and the school has good capacity to make further progress. The school provides good value for money.

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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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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	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	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of 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

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 eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
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	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**

30 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barmston Village Primary School, Sunderland, NE38 8JA

Thank you for welcoming me to your school during your inspection. I enjoyed meeting you. You were very kind and I enjoyed my two days in your school. I also found your parents' questionnaires very interesting and helpful. Please thank your parents on my behalf.

Your school is a good one and it is improving. It provides good teaching and learning throughout the school and interesting topics for you to study. The staff take very good care of you. I know now why your parents like your school and why you feel happy and safe there. Most of you make good progress so that when you leave Year 6, you will have reached national average standards. This is because your teachers and teaching assistants know you well. They support you very well in lessons and other activities and encourage you to aim high. Their marking gives you very clear instructions on how to improve your work. You know how to look after your health and have had lots of experiences in community work. You become cooperative young people, able to express your opinions confidently. Your school is well led. Your headteacher, staff and governors want you to succeed and to achieve the best you can. I have found three things that will improve your school and have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to develop these.

- The school needs to make sure you know and understand that Britain is a country of many cultures, religions and traditions. You may work or live in a different part of Britain when you leave school. It may be very different from Barmston and so the more you learn now, the better you will be prepared. You may even live abroad for a time and need to know more about the lives of people across the world.
- Governors work hard for the school and have to make sure you are getting the best education possible. They will work closely with the headteacher and other staff to make sure they understand the school well and contribute to ideas about how to make it even better.
- In Nursery and Reception basic skills are well taught, but these also need to be practised when children work independently without the teacher.

I think your school will be very successful with these three things. Your headteacher, staff and governors are determined to make your school even better and they have the skills and experience to be successful. Best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Mrs J Elton

Lead inspector