

Barrow Island Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112236
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	325561
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Irene Cochrane

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)	187
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	Mr Mark Roberts
Headteacher	Mrs Janet Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	21 March 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Trinity Street Barrow-in-Furness Cumbria LA14 2SJ
Telephone number	01229 894648

Age group	4–11
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01229 894649

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school in an area of considerable social and economic disadvantage. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is higher than the national average. The number of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average and the number of pupils who have a statement of special educational need is above average. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises one Reception class. Most pupils attend the neighbouring nursery school prior to entry. The school holds several national awards including the Primary Geography Quality Mark and Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher was appointed in September 2008. There is an out-of-school club on site which is run by a private provider and was inspected separately by Ofsted.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to pupils' achievement and standards in Key Stage 2 and in improving the monitoring of pupils' progress towards higher standards.

Overall effectiveness, although judged by the school to be satisfactory, is inadequate. Progress since the last inspection has been unsatisfactory resulting in sustained low standards by the time pupils leave Year 6. Over the last year, the headteacher has rightly implemented systems for improving standards but they are not yet all fully embedded across the school. Governors have improved their awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school but until recently have not been fully involved in monitoring the effectiveness of strategies designed to raise standards.

Children's skills are generally in line with those typical for their age when they start school. Pupils make satisfactory progress during the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 to attain standards that are broadly in line with the national average by the end of Year 2. In 2008, the results of assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 were average. Standards when pupils leave at the end of Key Stage 2 are low and the results of national tests for 11-year-olds show that this has been the case for the last four years. Few pupils attain the higher levels. Current standards remain low in all subjects. Given the pupils' starting points, this indicates inadequate achievement.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. As a result of actions taken by the school, teaching is beginning to improve; during the inspection, teaching in lessons was satisfactory and in some cases good. In the best lessons, teachers give clear explanations and make good use of resources to demonstrate learning. Pupils enjoy activities that engage their interest and build on prior learning. In less effective lessons, work is not always accurately matched to the needs of all groups of pupils and there is a lack of pace and challenge to extend pupils' learning. There are inconsistencies in marking to help pupils to improve and assessment of pupils' work does not always help to inform the next steps in learning. The curriculum is satisfactory. It provides a range of activities both in and out of school which the pupils enjoy but it does not focus sharply enough on raising pupils' basic skills particularly in English and mathematics. The school has plans to further develop a more creative approach to the curriculum.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils take on responsibilities and are proactive in helping others; for example, older pupils spontaneously look after younger pupils in the playground when necessary. Pupils enjoy coming to school; this is reflected in their improved attendance, which is above average, and generally good behaviour. Pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development is satisfactory overall, but there are particular strengths in their social and moral development. Pupils respond well to each other throughout the school day and understand how their own actions will affect others. Although the school's everyday care of the pupils is good and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet requirements, the school's policies are not well documented and not all training in safeguarding for staff is up to date.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has given a renewed key focus on improving standards and pupils' achievement with the support of

governors and the senior leadership team. Governors have become more aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and are supportive of the school. Systems introduced, such as the daily phonics sessions and guided reading are beginning to have an impact on reading outcomes. Given the impact of these improvements and the effect of actions taken to improve the quality of teaching, the school shows it has satisfactory capacity to achieve further improvements.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision for learning and development in the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and improving. Children start school in the Reception class with skills which are generally in line with those typical for their age, although some have difficulties in aspects of communication, language and literacy and in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They make satisfactory progress overall and reach the goals set for their learning by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress in their personal development, which is promoted through activities to develop independent skills, and take responsibility for small tasks. Children relate well to each other and benefit from opportunities to work co-operatively. Relationships with staff are good.

The teaching is satisfactory and provides children with opportunities to choose from an increasing range of activities; there is a daily emphasis on learning letters and sounds linked to writing which is supporting the development of early writing skills. There is a suitable range and balance of adult-led and child-led activities. Sometimes though, children sit on the carpet for too long, and this leads to some getting restless and also restricts their learning. Adult observations of children at work and play help to inform the next stage in learning. For example, as a result of such observations, staff became aware of the need to encourage boys' interest in writing; the school acted to provide suitably stimulating activities, such as the construction area to build homes. Opportunities for outdoor provision are satisfactory but restricted due to access mainly on the patio area.

Links with the Nursery on site are established and ensure children are prepared for the transition from one phase to another. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory and welfare requirements are met.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide further training for staff for safeguarding pupils and ensure that relevant policies are fully up-to-date.
- Raise standards and improve achievement in English, mathematics and science in Key Stage 2 by improving the consistency in the levels of challenge and pace in teaching.
- Develop a more consistent approach to marking to help pupils understand what they have to do to improve.
- Strengthen the role of the senior staff and governors in their monitoring and evaluation of raising standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils' achievement is inadequate by the end of Year 6 and standards are low. This is because pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 is inadequate.

When pupils start in Year 1, their attainment is average. They make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Assessment results at the end of Year 2 have been broadly average over the past four years but few pupils reach standards above those expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.

The school's results in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 have been consistently low for the past four years. In 2008, the results showed a further decline overall, but particularly in English, where fewer pupils attained the higher Level 5 than was the case in mathematics and science. The school's data and pupils' work show that standards remain low in each of these subjects. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress to that of their peers throughout the school.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' personal development including spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Their moral and social development is good. They are thoughtful, responsible and supportive of one another. When problems do arise, as occasionally happens, other pupils are quick to lend a sympathetic ear. Behaviour is mostly good. A small minority occasionally pose problems but prompt action by staff minimises disruption. Pupils are eager to learn and sustain concentration well, only showing a lack of interest when the subject matter is not very stimulating. Their improved attendance, now above average, shows how much they enjoy school. Punctuality has been an issue but this too is improving.

Pupils are increasingly embracing a healthy lifestyle. Their work in the new kitchen garden shows their commitment, and they appreciate the sense of well-being that exercise provides. Positive links with local agencies educate them about how to deal with dangers of the outside world, such as road safety. The strong sense of community in the locality pervades the school, and pupils play their part in the school's development. Visits to the Lake District and London help pupils to appreciate experiences beyond their immediate environment. Pupils' readiness for their next school is inadequate, because they do not reach high enough standards at the end of Key Stage 2.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

The quality of teaching is satisfactory. During the inspection the teaching in lessons was satisfactory overall and in some lessons it was good, reflecting the early success of actions taken by the school's leadership to bring about improvement. Lessons have common strengths, particularly a positive working atmosphere. Pupils respect their teachers so they listen well and respond to new learning readily. Teachers are good at explaining new learning and, at times, use resources shrewdly to strengthen pupils' understanding. For example, pictures of hands of different sizes helped pupils in a Year 4 class to appreciate proportion and enhanced a multiplication task. Advice and support in lessons by all staff help pupils to understand how they can improve.

Work is not well-matched to the different needs of pupils with consistent accuracy. As a result, some pupils become restless and do not focus on the learning. Assessment of pupils' work is not used to ensure that lessons are challenging enough for all groups of pupils, particularly

the more able, who spend time consolidating work rather than being able to work at their own pace. Some learning is not fast enough because not all teachers impose a sense of urgency. Marking is variable. Pupils say that they appreciate teachers' comments but marking is not rigorous enough in highlighting weaknesses and double-checking that pupils have responded to advice. Over the past year, teaching has begun to improve. There has been a successful school focus on improving teachers' subject knowledge and assessment.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory and not as good as the school believes. There are good aspects such as the extra activities beyond the classroom, visitors and visits, including one to a nearby Buddhist temple. Pupils say how much they appreciate this diversity. A focus on particular topics, such as flight, gives pupils the scope to study subjects in depth. Teachers are beginning to make the most of all subjects to improve basic skills, especially in writing, but there is still some way to go before this has an intrinsic and effective part of the school's provision. The curriculum has not yet been instrumental in helping pupils to raise standards, especially in Key Stage 2, in English and mathematics, but the school has good plans to introduce a more creative curriculum. The provision for pupils' personal and social education is satisfactory; pupils are developing an increasing sense of citizenship through, for example, environmental awareness.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school's everyday care for its pupils is good. Pupils feel safe in school because staff are fair and know their individual needs and circumstances. Pupils with emotional or behavioural issues are well supported in lessons and in separate sessions. The learning mentor is especially successful in managing these issues and in improving other aspects, including the level of attendance. The school complies with current requirements for safeguarding pupils. However, some written policies are out of date and training for staff in more recent requirements is incomplete. The school has begun to address a small number of minor issues regarding health and safety highlighted in a very recent local authority report.

Good systems for monitoring pupils' academic progress give staff a clear picture of which pupils are achieving well and which need extra help. However, the systems are too new to have had much discernible impact. Pupils have targets relevant to their age-related needs, but do not have well-defined individual targets in English or mathematics to show them how they can improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has provided supportive leadership for staff and governors and has a key focus on improving standards and pupils' achievement. School self-evaluation is satisfactory, reflecting the strengths and identifying most of the areas for development. The senior leadership team is working with a shared agenda to lead improvements in teaching and learning. Appropriate actions have been taken and have achieved some initial success in improving the quality of teaching. Actions are recent and their impact on pupils' achievement has yet to be seen. The school has also improved systems for

monitoring the progress of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and now has a clearer picture of the progress made by these pupils.

In addition, the school's leaders have established and implemented an effective system for tracking pupils' progress; this enables the school to identify underachievement and has further assisted the accuracy of the target-setting process. Through the introduction of daily phonic sessions and guided reading there is evidence that there are improvements in reading in some classes. Governors are supportive of the school. Over the last year, they have become more aware of the school's strengths and weaknesses and are kept well-informed by the headteacher through additional meetings. There is a firm commitment to further improvement. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. The Community Development Centre on site provides valuable training opportunities for adults within the community and local links are fostered through the church and governors. The school is aware of the need to further develop national and global links.

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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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
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?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	4

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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	4

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	4
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	4
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?	Yes

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

11 June 2009

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Barrow Island Community Primary School, Cumbria,

LA14 2SJ

Thank you for welcoming Mr Scott and me to your school in the recent inspection. We really enjoyed talking to you and finding out what you thought about your school. There were things we liked during the inspection but at the moment your school has been told that it must improve. This means that an inspector will visit to check on the progress being made.

We are pleased that you enjoy school and that your teachers care about you, especially if there is something that you are worried about. Your attendance at school is getting better all the time, so well done. You know about healthy eating and enjoy the out-of-school activities.

We have asked the school to make sure that, where necessary, staff have some extra training and that as much as possible is done to make sure you get good results in English, mathematics and science. To help you improve, we think that marking could be used more effectively.

We have also asked that your governors, headteacher and all teachers keep a really close eye on how well you are doing in your work throughout the year to make sure you can do your very best.

Thank you again for making our visit enjoyable and good luck in the future.

Yours faithfully,

Irene Cochrane and Andrew Scott

(Your inspection team)