

Barrow Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112626
Local Authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	325648
Inspection dates	4–5 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Jane Melbourne HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	78
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Margaret Tighe
Headteacher	Ms Jean Primmer
Date of previous school inspection	15–16 March 2006
School address	Station Road Barrow Hill Staveley Chesterfield Derbyshire S43 2PG
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors. The inspector visited nine lessons, undertook an extensive walk around the school to assess the learning environment, and held meetings with governors, staff, parents and groups of pupils. She observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to safeguarding pupils and protecting their health and safety, a sample of planning and curriculum evidence files, the assessments of pupils' progress, records of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils' work, the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation, and 12 parental questionnaires.

During the inspection, many aspects of the school's work were reviewed. It looked in detail at the following:

- the effectiveness of the school's work in raising standards, particularly in mathematics
- the relationship and working partnership with parents and carers, particularly with a view to using this as a route to raising standards
- cross-curricular links, particularly for numeracy, and whether they are effective in delivering a more unified curriculum which addresses the needs of the 'whole child'
- the quality of academic guidance across the school, including the marking of children's work and the use of targets
- the governors' role in monitoring the quality of the school's work and how they hold the school to account.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average village primary school serving a White British community. There are currently no pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is three times higher than the national average. There are more pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities than the national average, but the number of those with statements of special educational needs is around the national average. The school population is less stable than is usual and the school is currently experiencing a falling roll. Pupils enter the school with attainment that is well below average for their age. Children are taught in mixed-age classes, with typically two year groups to a class. The Early Years Foundation Stage is provided for by a Foundation Unit. Nursery children attend morning sessions. The Reception children are currently taught with the Year 1/2 class in the afternoon. Staffing has stabilised since the last inspection and there is only one temporary teacher. Arrangements for classes are reviewed each academic year.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

3

Capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

In this very caring and supportive school, where aspects of pastoral guidance and care are excellent, pupils say that they feel safe and their behaviour overall is good. Their achievement is satisfactory as they make satisfactory progress and attain standards, including in English and mathematics, that are below the national average by the end of Year 6. During the inspection good teaching was observed resulting in pupils' high enjoyment in lessons and increased motivation. The pupils were well focused, remained on task and concentrated well. In good lessons the work set was well adapted to the wide range of ages and abilities within each class. These features of good practice have not been used consistently, or for long enough, to ensure that pupils make good progress. Pupils are keen to learn but do not achieve highly enough. The school is doing all that it can to ensure that enough good quality provision results in better outcomes for children. Much has been invested in providing the best quality possible for the pupils here and, as a result, the learning environment is well equipped and visually stimulating. The good curriculum often gives pupils opportunities to learn from first hand experiences. Staff are absolutely committed to helping pupils overcome the barriers to learning that they face. They have an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and have implemented a range of actions to tackle areas of underachievement which have been identified. Pupils are beginning to self assess their work but these opportunities are currently underdeveloped. The school continues to develop this process and the quality and consistency of the teacher's marking. Challenging targets are set for pupils which are worked out carefully for each cohort.

The school has made satisfactory progress towards the key areas for development identified at the last inspection. An example of this progress can be seen in the improvement in writing standards where there has been some success, but not sufficient to raise standards to the national norm, although the gap is narrowing as shown by the school's own data. A greater success story is the improvement in pupils' behaviour. Whilst it has been unable to eradicate all less desirable behaviour, the more consistent approach across the school, incentives to encourage pupils and high expectations for good behaviour have had a marked effect. Consequently, pupils are more settled in school generally and display positive attitudes to learning. This overall progress is indicative of the school's satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. Governors have improved the way they monitor the school and hold leaders and managers to account. However, there is still more to do here to engage

the whole of the governing body to work more efficiently in this and to greater effect. Taking into consideration the school's success in improving provision and the systems in place to evaluate current practice and set challenging targets, the school's capacity to improve is satisfactory.

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.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise standards in English and mathematics by:
 - using rigorous planning and consistently good quality teaching to improve progression in pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding at both key stages
 - targeting groups of identified pupils, providing more intensive support and evaluating the impact.
- Improve the relationship and working partnership with parents and carers, particularly as a route to raising standards, by:
 - creating more opportunities for parents and carers to visit and become involved in school life
 - involving the family support worker in auditing the needs of the parents and carers in order to increase their confidence in helping their children with homework
 - offering support for parents' own learning.
- Develop pupils' self-assessment of their work and the academic guidance given to them through:
 - pupils marking their own work and setting their own targets, identifying clearly how they can improve
 - reviewing the homework policy and monitoring whether school practice follows this consistently
 - ensuring homework is consistent and well matched to the range of pupils' needs.
- Improve the governors' capacity to monitor the quality and standards of the school and ensure they effectively hold the school to account and provide sufficient levels of challenge by:
 - holding regular and focused meetings with the chair and vice-chair of governors
 - re-assessing the roles and responsibilities of all members of the governing body to ensure that, as individuals or as groups, they are as effective as they can be in improving the school
 - developing a monitoring programme for the areas of improvement and analysing the impact of any actions taken by the school on raising standards.

How good is the overall outcome for individuals and groups of pupils?

3

All groups of pupils make satisfactory progress in their learning. In a significant number of lessons observed, pupils made some good progress, but this was not sustained in all subjects or with all pupils. Pupils work steadily and almost always show high levels of engagement and interest. A good example is the work in Years 3 and 4 surrounding World War II, where pupils' developed a better understanding of rationing and what essentials an evacuee would need to pack in their suitcase. Standards as measured by Year 6 national tests remain below average, but for the majority of pupils this represents satisfactory or better achievement. The effective support given to pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities means that some catch up with fellow pupils and make good progress. Other key features of pupil outcomes are:

- the majority of pupils feel safe at school
- the behaviour of pupils is good overall, with pupils showing a genuine desire to make progress in this area if they find it difficult
- the participation in extra-curricular sports clubs and pupil's increased understanding of eating well and taking responsibility for looking after their bodies demonstrates that pupils are trying hard to adopt healthy lifestyles
- team working in lessons and the work of the school council, for example in helping the elderly when visiting the school and helping to shape some of the school's initiatives for fundraising, show pupils increased contribution to the school and wider community
- attendance and punctuality are continually improving due to the effectiveness of action taken by the school and support given to pupils, for example the initiative of sometimes providing Year 6 pupils with alarm clocks.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	3
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	3
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	3
Pupils' attendance	3
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	3
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	3

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

The quality of the school's work

Whilst teaching is generally judged to be satisfactory overall because of its impact on the rates of pupil progress and achievement, the majority of lessons seen during the inspection and as judged by the school, are good in most respects. Lesson planning is thorough, based on accurate checks of what pupils have learnt and so is well matched to pupils' needs. In lessons pupils show interest, make good use of their 'talk partners' to share ideas and are able to work sensibly independently. Staff are becoming increasingly aware of moving pupils to activities quickly and them not sitting listening for too long. There is good quality dialogue between adults and pupils about their progress towards their targets and the school continually strives for consistent quality in the marking of pupils' work, so that pupils understand what they need to do to get better. Teaching strategies that most effectively motivate pupils and improve their learning are:

- staff's confidence in their subject and a wide range of resources for pupils to look at and use
- strong classroom management which ensures all pupils settle down to learning promptly
- effective starters to lessons which swiftly engage pupils and very effective plenary sessions which summarise pupils' learning enabling teachers to be clear about what pupils need to learn next
- strong engagement of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities
- opportunities for pupils to further develop their speaking and listening skills in an unhurried way
- high expectations of all staff and the belief in pupils that they will succeed.

The curriculum, including good extra-curricular provision, is based on a wide range of enriching experiences which builds effectively on what pupils already know. There is a successful programme of visitors to the school and visits out of school and pupils gain much from these enrichment activities which broaden their knowledge and stimulate their work. The curriculum is well adapted to meet the needs of groups and individuals and provision is well mapped out for the support programmes for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school gives good emphasis to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and staff are particularly skilled in creating links in these subjects to other areas of the curriculum, which encourages pupils to apply their knowledge and skills more widely.

Excellent attention is given to all aspects of pastoral guidance and care. The speedy identification of pupils' needs and strong links with associated professionals, such as the Special Needs Advisory Service and a family support worker, ensures that individual pupils facing challenging circumstances receive the best help possible to succeed. The school continues to work at its partnership with parents and carers, but recognises that actions taken to date have not significantly impacted on raising children's attainment.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	3
Effective assessment	2
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The way leaders at all levels monitor the work of the school has improved since the last inspection and demonstrates a satisfactory drive and ambition to improve the school. Individual subject areas are generally led and managed effectively with staff taking their roles and responsibilities seriously. They drive initiatives and share up-to-date information concerning their areas through staff briefings and delivering in-house training. Staff are prompt to cascade information from external training ensuring that all staff are well informed. Staff share the responsibility of leading the development of some subjects, such as science, but this arrangement means that these areas do not receive the same good quality commitment and focus as other areas. The chair of governors and vice-chair provide effective support. The governing body, as a whole, have improved their monitoring role since the last inspection but there remains more to do in analysing the impact of the actions taken by the school in driving up standards. The school has much anecdotal and statistical evidence on improving the outcomes for individual pupils for whom it has targeted and implemented well-planned interventions. The most successful work done by senior leaders to improve outcomes for pupils is due to:

- a commitment to wanting the best for the pupils at the school and raising their expectations
- stabilising the staff team and retaining good quality staff who demonstrate a desire to work at the school
- improving the learning environment of the school to ensure that it is sufficiently stimulating for pupils and inspires them to succeed
- good partnerships with most parents and carers and with support from a family support worker.

The school's involvement in a community cohesion project has ensured a satisfactory level of impact in this area. All safeguarding procedures are followed and effective. Improved ways of tracking pupil outcomes and intervention work are features of satisfactory work to tackle any underachievement of groups.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Communicating ambition and driving improvement	3
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	3
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	3

Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	3
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	2
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	3
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Staff provide a wide range of good quality indoor and outdoor activities that enable children to make good progress in their learning from their starting points, which are commonly lower than what is nationally expected. Children settle well in this welcoming environment, as is demonstrated by the contentment of the most recent intake of pupils. New children to the Foundation Unit participate in all that is on offer. Children continually choose the activities they engage in, being monitored carefully by the very caring team. They operate sensibly and safely within the whole environment, working independently or with adults. They behave well and understand the very clear boundaries set by staff. Children clearly enjoy their learning and are proud of their achievements which are continually celebrated. There is much nurturing of children's creativity and independent thinking. They are learning to make friends and work together harmoniously, sharing the equipment.

The outcomes for children are satisfactory because their attainment at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage remains below what is nationally expected. However, some children are exceeding national expectations in some areas of the curriculum because they are well challenged and they are supported effectively according to their individual needs. Often the Early Years sessions of mixed activities are of outstanding quality and enable the children to achieve well. Staff monitor children's progress carefully and adapt the planning of the activities and the delivery of the curriculum accordingly. Children work purposefully and most show high levels of sustained concentration for their age. The wealth of outdoor learning opportunities suits the needs of those children that find this more challenging. The learning environment is vibrant and stimulating. High quality, well-labelled displays create interest and provide information appropriate to the age and stage of the Nursery and Reception children. All staff are focused on helping children to make good progress in their learning and development. There is strong teamwork amongst the staff, including effective overlap between part-time staff. Self-evaluation of the Early Years Foundation Stage is accurate and planning for improvement is effective.

How good are the outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
What is the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	2
How effectively is the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage led and managed?	2

Overall effectiveness: how well does the school meet the needs of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage?	3
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Views of parents and carers

A small number of parents returned the questionnaires. Just over half of these were overwhelmingly positive. Some parents raised concerns that pupils' behaviour is not of an acceptable standard, particularly at playtimes, and that the school is not consistent enough in its approach to this. Inspectors found no evidence to suggest behaviour was a current issue and judged the school's approach to deal with undesirable behaviour appropriate.

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007-8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007-8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007-8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007-8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Achievement:	an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.