

# Barling Magna Community Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114830
<b>Local Authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	326071
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Julie Winyard HMI

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	171
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Hilary Hall
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Marion Still
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 November 2005
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Little Wakering Road Southend-on-sea Essex SS3 0LN

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 February 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	326071

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**Age group** 4–11

**Inspection dates** 3–4 February 2009

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Barling Magna is a smaller than average primary school with fewer pupils eligible for free school meals than are found in similar schools nationally. There are smaller than average numbers of pupils identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities or with a statement of special educational needs. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups and none with English as an additional language. There are a higher proportion of boys in Year 2 and Year 5 and girls in Year 3. Attainment on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage is broadly in line with national expectations. Attendance is above average. There has been some turbulence in staffing in Key Stage 2 over the last two years. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award and Active Mark. There is an after-school club that is not managed by the school and which was inspected at the same time.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Barling Magna is a good school. In the words of one parent, 'Mrs Still and her team are a great asset. Our school has grown from strength to strength.' This is confirmed by inspection evidence, which shows that the school has made good progress since the last inspection. Teamwork is a strength of the school. The good leadership of the headteacher has enabled all staff to work together with the good governing body to ensure good outcomes for all pupils. The majority of parents who responded to the parent questionnaire were very positive about the school. However, a significant minority expressed concerns about mixed-age classes leading to lack of challenge for the most able pupils; communication between school and parents, poor relationships between staff and pupils and bullying by a very small group of pupils. Inspectors could find no evidence to substantiate these concerns. For example, in every class there are good examples of activities being adapted to meet the needs of all pupils, including the most able. Pupils themselves say there is no bullying. Personal development and well-being are good because of the good relationships between all staff and pupils, and the good care and support pupils are given both in lessons and at break times. Behaviour is good around the school and on the playground. For example, lunchtimes are quiet and relaxed. Pupils with school dinners and packed lunches sit alongside each other and chat happily.

Pupils achieve well and reach generally above average standards across the school because of the good teaching they receive. Over the last two years there has been some turbulence in staffing at Key Stage 2 and this has had an adverse effect on pupils' progress. The school has recognised and addressed this issue. Current progress in Key Stage 2 is good and pupils are on track to reach the challenging targets the school has set for them. However, it is essential that the school maintain this good progress after the very recent period of considerable change. Standards and progress in Key Stage 1 are also good. There is good provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, who make good progress. This is because of the good leadership and management of the Inclusion Coordinator, who ensures that all pupils get access to the specialist support they need. She has developed a good team of well-trained teaching assistants to support this work. In the words of one pupil, 'I have got better because I'm learning new things every day and I remember them. I like the extra help.'

The school has a good curriculum, which has recently been revised to ensure that it meets the needs of all pupils, including the large numbers of boys in some year groups. Pupils enjoy being at school and like their lessons. Academic guidance for pupils' learning in lessons is good. However, written marking in pupils' books does not always explain exactly what pupils need to do to improve their work, nor are pupils always given time in lesson to make changes to their work based on the teachers' good suggestions. Teachers explain to pupils what they will be learning about in all lessons, however, they do not always make it clear enough what they expect the outcomes to be and how pupils can achieve their best work.

Leadership and management are good and because of this the school knows itself well and has produced an accurate self-evaluation. The school has good capacity to make further improvements.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. There is a good balance of child-initiated and focused adult-led teaching activities. Children often work in very small groups with effective adult interventions. This ensures that children make good progress, so that by the end of the Reception Year standards have improved and are above average for most pupils. Extensive use is made of the outdoor area, including taking advantage of a recent snowfall to make pretend iced drinks in different flavours. This encourages good personal development and well-being because children work and play well together. However, the lack of a covered area outdoors sometimes limits opportunities to extend learning.

A parents' information evening, visits to meet the children at home and in their pre-schools, all help children settle quickly into the Reception class. All staff make an effective contribution to learning, and children's welfare and safety is of high quality. The school makes good use of the support it receives from the many parent helpers. Teaching and learning are good. The good use of questioning, together with an emphasis on discussion, careful observation and the promotion of good listening skills help children to learn and develop well. Children enjoy the wide range of activities provided. For example, role-play areas, like the Chinese Restaurant where children make and serve food to their 'customers', provide good opportunities for imaginative play and creative learning. There is outstanding provision for physical development provided by the School Sports Co-ordinator as part of the local partnership of schools. Leadership and management are good. The well-informed Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides clear direction and support for the current good practice. She has a clear vision for the future, including development of the outdoor area.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the current improvement in progress in Key Stage 2 is sustained.
- Ensure that all written feedback explains clearly what pupils need to do to improve their work and that pupils are given time in lessons to make these improvements.
- Ensure all pupils understand how to achieve their best learning and work in all lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 2

Pupils enter Key Stage 1 with standards that are slightly above national expectations. They make good progress, and, by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. In 2008, girls did better than boys in reading, writing and mathematics, and summer-born pupils did less well than their peers. However, there is currently no significant difference between the attainments of these groups. In Key Stage 2, progress has dipped over the last two years and attainment has been slightly below national expectations due to the changes in teaching staff. However, the school has addressed this issue and progress so far this year is good in Key Stage 2. Pupils of all abilities are on track to achieve the challenging targets set for them.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils feel safe and are cared for well. They say that any bullying is swiftly dealt with and they make good use of the 'Worry Box' to report any concerns. Children treat each other with respect and they are generally polite and well behaved. Children enjoy coming to school because, as

one pupil said, 'there are lots of fun things to do and our lessons are interesting'. Attendance is good and the school has taken positive steps, in partnership with the local authority, to reduce absences. Spiritual, moral and social development is good. For example, pupils have raised considerable amounts of money to help support the building of a new school in Kenya. This has had an extremely positive impact on cultural development, although the school is also keen to provide more opportunities for children to learn about the different cultures of people living in this country. Pupils are taught about the importance of healthy eating and they know how to live a healthy lifestyle. The development of pupils' basic skills in literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology are good and they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Class and school council activities give pupils opportunities to have a say in matters of importance to them, although there is scope to increase the influence and impact of these groups.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. In the best lessons teachers have high expectations of all pupils and work is interesting, challenging and varied. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they plan effectively to improve the skills and understanding of all their pupils. Teaching assistants make highly effective contributions to learning and provide good support to individuals and small groups of learners, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Interactive whiteboards, film and video clips, together with opportunities for children to talk and share ideas are all used effectively to make lessons interesting and engaging. Teaching provides helpful opportunities to develop speaking and listening, and writing in subjects across the curriculum. For example, a topic on World War Two provided the stimulus for pupils to plan and engage in a high quality debate about evacuees. Pupils' learning is usually assessed carefully through skilful questioning and by encouraging pupils to evaluate the success of their own achievements. Occasionally, however, pupils are required to listen for too long and the required outcomes of tasks are not explained clearly enough. When this happens the pace of learning slows and pupils become restless and do not always achieve their best work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils well. It has been carefully planned around a series of themes and skills that help pupils make links between different subjects. Music is a real strength of the school. An orchestra and choir are well established and pupils learn to play stringed instruments and flutes. The school choir performed at a recent music festival at The Cliffs Pavilion. Pupils also enjoy participating in a very good range of after-school clubs and activities, including orchestra, football, hockey, netball, dance, gardening and archery. The school has formed effective links through its School Sports Partnership and has been awarded 'Activemark' in recognition of its good sporting provision. French has been introduced for all pupils, with songs, games and partner activities helping to develop conversational skills. The school is keen to build upon the existing language expertise of some teachers in order to consolidate the quality of this provision. The curriculum is being enriched with the introduction of the new 'Domino' scheme to provide higher levels of challenge for the most able mathematicians. This is part of the provision for higher attaining pupils, and is in the early stages of development.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 2

Good levels of care, guidance and support, together with a strong emphasis on welfare and safety successfully contribute to pupils' enjoyment and good personal development and well-being. Relationships between staff and pupils are good and this helps pupils to feel valued and well cared for. The school takes positive steps to identify vulnerable pupils and works in productive partnerships with other agencies to provide support and advice. Well-trained teaching assistants provide effective group and individual care to pupils in need, including the highly effective 'circle of friends' approach. Robust systems to safeguard pupils' health and safety, including risk assessments and safeguarding procedures, are fully in place. Praise is used to good effect and this helps children feel successful about their achievements. Teachers generally mark pupils' work carefully although there are inconsistencies in the quality of written guidance and it is not always clear to pupils how to improve their work.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

The good leadership of the headteacher has built a strong and inclusive team where everyone focuses relentlessly on raising standards and achievement and improving progress. The school has a robust and effectively used tracking system, which ensures that any underachievement is very rapidly identified and appropriate additional support is given to individuals or groups of pupils. Middle leaders know how well pupils are doing in the subjects they manage. They look at work, observe teaching and learning and talk to pupils. This monitoring results in clear and concise action plans that are evaluated regularly with the headteacher. Governance is good because governors give the school effective challenge as well as support. Community cohesion is good. The deputy headteacher and the chair of governors have audited the current position and accurately identified that the school needs to ensure pupils have a wider understanding of the cultural and socio-economic diversity of the United Kingdom. Links with the local and global communities are good.

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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 <sup>1</sup> 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/or disabilities make progress	2

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<sup>1</sup>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.

## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

5 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barling Magna Community Primary School, Southend-on-Sea, Essex, SS3 0LN

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave us when we came to your school. My colleague and I were very impressed with your good behaviour and with how much you enjoy your lessons and like being at school. We think you have good teachers who work very hard to make lessons interesting and fun. Your headteacher has developed good teamwork and everyone is working together to ensure you do your best and achieve really well all the time.

I would like to say a special thank you to all those pupils who came to talk to us about the school. I know my colleague was impressed with how confident you all are and how eager you are to talk about the good things you are doing. I really enjoyed talking to a group who sometimes find learning and behaviour difficult. It is great to hear all the school is doing to help you and that you feel you are making good progress because of this.

Barling Magna is a good school and we were very pleased with what we found. There is always room for further improvement and we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following to make your learning even better.

- Make sure you continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2, especially after a time when you have had a number of different teachers.
- Make sure that when teachers mark your work they explain exactly what it is you need to do to improve and that they give you time in lessons to make improvements.
- Make sure that you understand how to do your best learning and work in every lesson.

With very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

Julie Winyard

Her Majesty's Inspector