

# Barkston and Syston CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120689
<b>Local Authority</b>	Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	327342
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Bob Roberts

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	109
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 Pat Sheardown
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sally-Anne Caunter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	30 January 2006
<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>	Church Street Barkston Grantham Lincolnshire NG32 2NB

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 March 2009
<b>Inspection number</b>	327342

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Barkston and Syston is a small Voluntary Aided Church of England (CE) primary school. Almost all pupils are of a white British background. There are very few pupils with English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is very low. There is a small proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. An Early Years Foundation Stage unit provides education for children aged four to five years. Pupils are taught in four mixed age classes. The school has an Activemark for physical education, a Quality Mark for basic skills and an Intermediate International Award.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Barkston and Syston Primary is a good school. In its self-evaluation, the school judged itself outstanding. Inspection cannot go so far. There have certainly been a number of improvements, not least in the achievement of pupils since the last inspection when the school was judged satisfactory. The many parents who responded to the questionnaire that accompanied the inspection recognise the qualities of the school. Many wrote additional comments such as: 'We feel that our children are really valued and are in an environment where they are able to achieve their full potential.'

Pupils achieve well overall. Achievement and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory and pupils enter Year 1 at average levels of development in the areas of learning. The provision they receive throughout the rest of the school is good. They receive good teaching. They enjoy the good curriculum, which offers them many interesting experiences, and most benefit from participation in the wide range of activities available outside the classroom. Pupils are cared for and guided exceptionally well, both in and out of the classroom. Assessment is very thorough and pupils are given good academic guidance. As a result of this provision, they make good progress and reach standards at the end of Year 6 that are well above average overall. Standards in mathematics are above average although higher attaining pupils are not making the progress they are capable of, as already identified by the school. Provision for gifted and talented pupils is limited.

One of the distinctive features of the school is the value placed on each individual. Parents certainly recognise and value this characteristic. As a result of this close knowledge of each child, the personal development of pupils is outstanding. Their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is excellent. They behave very well and care for each other. Attendance is excellent. They feel completely safe and develop an excellent sense of how to be healthy. They contribute outstandingly well to the life of the school and value being part of the school and its local community.

Leadership and management at the school are good. The headteacher has successfully identified priorities and led actions, such as the focus on writing, that have brought about improvement. She has taken some difficult decisions and remained clearly focussed on the academic and personal development of pupils. She is well aware of the next steps that are necessary to improve the school further. These have been accurately identified in the school's long-term plans. The role played by teachers in monitoring and evaluating standards and progress have broadened since the last inspection, but are not yet fully developed or robust enough. Although its self-evaluation was too generous, the school knows its strengths and weaknesses well and the capacity to improve is good.

## Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage provision is satisfactory. When pupils enter the Nursery and Reception classes they have knowledge and skills at levels that are expected for their ages. They make satisfactory progress and by the time they leave Reception most of them meet the expected goals. Good arrangements for the children and their parents to meet staff and become familiar with the school help children to settle. A satisfactory range of experiences meets their needs. There are opportunities to mix with others,

learn about sounds and letters, and acquire writing and mathematical skills. Teaching is satisfactory. Planning is thorough, but some activities are allowed to go on for too long. A newly appointed specialist teacher, who has good support from an experienced mentor and from the headteacher, leads the Early Years Foundation Stage unit satisfactorily. The teacher and the experienced teaching assistants establish warm and caring relationships with children who feel safe and secure. There is a suitable balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by staff. The classroom is sufficiently spacious, flexible and benefits from the modern computer technology. The outdoor area, which is due for refurbishment, is used effectively to extend learning. There are good links to Class 2 for Years 1 and 2 in the main school. Staff are easily accessible to parents at the beginning and end of the day and communications with parents are good. The analysis of children's development is thorough although there is a lack of clarity about the rate of overall pupils' progress in the unit.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the rate of progress in mathematics, particularly for higher attaining pupils.
- Develop provision for gifted and talented pupils across the curriculum.
- Develop the involvement and skills of subject leaders and early Years Foundation Stage leadership with regard to planning and the monitoring of progress.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

From starting points that are broadly in line with national expectations, pupils make good progress overall and achieve well above average standards by the time they leave school. The rate of progress has been accelerated in the last two years as the quality of teaching has improved and the assessment of progress has become more robust. By the end of Year 2, pupils are reaching standards that are above average and well above average overall by the end of Year 6. There is a rising trend in attainment that is above the national rate. In English, levels of writing, although still slightly below those of reading, have improved substantially as a result of a concerted focus on writing skills in recent years. In mathematics, while overall standards are above average, higher achievers are not making as much progress as they should do. The school has identified this area for development and is taking appropriate action. Girls and boys are doing equally well. Pupils who find learning difficult also make at least good progress, and in the case of those with severe disabilities, their progress is outstanding.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides a close, caring environment that encourages pupils to flourish and develop. Their social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is outstanding. Daily religious assemblies carry spiritual and moral messages to which pupils do respond, as shown in their excellent behaviour, their care and concern for each other, and their very successful efforts to raise money for a range of good causes. They participate enthusiastically in the special events that the school uses to broaden their awareness of cultural diversity. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school, and their attendance is excellent. They feel completely safe and secure. They are very aware of what it means to live healthily and most of them participate in the many sporting activities provided. Pupils work and play together very well, showing particular regard for newcomers and those of their community with disabilities. They show excellent attitudes to learning and older pupils are keen to take opportunities for responsibility. Links with the local

church and village provide a wide range of opportunities for pupils to contribute and develop confidence and skills. Their outstanding social awareness and personal confidence, their good achievement in literacy and numeracy, and the good skills they acquire in information and communication technology, all mean that they are excellently prepared for the next stage of their lives.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The school judged the quality of its teaching and learning as good and inspection supports this judgement. Teachers develop very good relations with pupils who appreciate their efforts to make learning enjoyable. Teachers plan well for the different needs of groups within these mixed year classes, although occasionally the challenge for the more able in mathematics could be higher. In the lessons seen during the inspection, pupils respond very well and they particularly enjoyed practical activities such as the use of real flowers to investigate plant biology and the use of role-play to reinforce learning about plant pollination. Teaching assistants provide effective support. Satisfactory use is made of modern computer technology. Pupils are aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. The marking of pupils' books is very good, providing effective guidance. A good system for tracking pupils' progress identifies those who are falling behind and need extra support, which is subsequently provided.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

A good curriculum meets the needs of pupils well. The curriculum for class 2 (Years 1 and 2) links effectively with the Early Years Foundation Stage provision. For the older children in classes 3 and 4, the curriculum covers the required core and foundation subjects operating over a two-year period. Links have been developed between subjects and carefully planned projects provide opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills well. Religious education is a strong feature of the curriculum, reinforcing pupils' spiritual development, with excellent resources and displays around the school relating to the church year. The school has introduced special elements to its curriculum in the last few years to broaden pupils' experience and prepare them more effectively for life in a culturally diverse society. These include residential field study trips, cultural events on African art and the Chinese New Year, and shared study days with pupils from other schools. There is a very good range of after school activities. These mainly centre on sport and music, which are both important elements in the life of the school. Although there is some extra provision for the most gifted and talented pupils, this aspect of the curriculum is in the early stages of development.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

There is an excellent commitment to the care of pupils and their welfare. Many parents wrote comments like: 'The school provides my child with a secure and supportive environment in which to learn'. What is distinctive and is appreciated by many parents is the way in which children are known and treated as individuals. Another wrote 'Barkston and Syston feels more like a family than a school. It has a warm, friendly atmosphere, which my children have been thriving in.' Arrangements for the safeguarding of pupils are robust. Health and safety

responsibilities are effectively met. Pupils are set clear curriculum targets that are monitored and updated on a regular basis. The inclusion of all pupils, especially those that are more vulnerable, is a strength of the school. The approach of the staff to supporting and including those with the most severe disabilities is mirrored by the pupils themselves, who demonstrate warmth and compassion in their actions. The school works very effectively with parents, through its monthly newsletter, its web site, and by staff being accessible at the beginning and end of the day. Academic guidance is good because pupils have a good knowledge of their individual targets and know what to do to improve their work and reach the next level.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher has been effective in bringing about significant improvements since the last inspection. Levels of attainment have risen, particularly in writing, an issue which was highlighted in the last report. Lesson planning has improved. Strategic planning for the future of the school is longer term and more effective. In such a small school, all teachers have to carry some subject responsibilities and they do so willingly. The effectiveness with which teachers carry out these roles has improved. They keep in touch with developments and carry out some monitoring tasks. However, their role with regard to evaluating standards and progress is not yet embedded because they do not yet plan collaboratively enough for the medium term or take enough responsibility, using the data systems, for standards and progress in different subjects or phases. The school is highly inclusive and values every child as a distinctive individual. The headteacher continues to have strong support from parents who refer in particular to her accessibility, responsiveness to concerns and her knowledge of the children. Effective data systems for monitoring pupils' progress have been established. Links with local bodies are very strong and work with other schools has enhanced provision for pupils in a number of areas. The school makes a very good contribution to community cohesion by virtue of its key place within the life of the village. Furthermore, good steps have been taken since the last inspection to broaden pupils' horizons and make them more aware of the diverse world in which they will live their lives. Governors are well informed and support and monitor the school very effectively. Plans for race equality and the promotion of community cohesion are in place and ways of measuring the impact of these actions are being developed. 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?	1
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?	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?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

### 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

<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>	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

## 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?	1

## 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	1
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**

23 March 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barkston and Syston Church of England Primary School, Barkston, Lincolnshire  
NG32 2NB

As you know, your school was inspected recently and this is to tell you about the results of the inspection. First of all I would like to thank you for the way so many of you greeted and spoke to me during my visit. You were extremely welcoming and courteous and a credit to the school.

Barkston and Syston is a good school. It has improved a great deal since its last inspection three years ago. The staff have worked hard to improve the school and you are all contributing as well. You make good progress from when you join the school and the standards you are reaching in Year 6 are higher than we normally find, especially in writing, which has certainly improved. Your school has a family atmosphere, as many of your parents recognise. In this warm and caring environment, your personal and social development is excellent. It is clear that you enjoy coming to school very much. Your attendance is excellent. You behave extremely well and show real care and concern for each other. The teaching you receive is good and most of you enjoy the many activities, especially in music and sport that take place at the school. You told me how much you enjoy lessons, how your computer skills are developing, and how much you enjoy the special cultural events that happen.

There are ways in which the school could improve even further. Those of you who are particularly good at mathematics should be progressing a bit faster and the school needs to build on the extra help it gives to pupils who are exceptionally talented. Teachers share responsibility for subjects and leading different stages of learning, such as Early Years Foundation Stage and there are ways that they can develop these roles further.

I wish you all well and hope you will continue to contribute to the school and its future.

Bob Roberts

Lead inspector