

Barford Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103162
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	336022
Inspection dates	20–21 January 2010
Reporting inspector	Patricia Potheary

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	469
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss Verdah Chishti
Headteacher	Mr Richard Lee
Date of previous school inspection	6 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. A majority of the time was spent looking at learning, including pupils work. Twenty lessons and all classes were observed; three groups of pupils were interviewed. The chair of governors was interviewed and meetings were held with staff. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at local authority reports, information about pupils' progress, staff and pupil surveys and safeguarding procedures. The inspection team analysed 128 responses to parent and carer questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

progress in writing for pupils aged 7-11 and in the Early Years Foundation Stage

- the quality of teaching, particularly the use of target setting to secure progress
- how well leaders at all levels support the work of school improvement

Information about the school

Barford is a larger than average primary school with a wide ethnic mix of pupils who represent 35 different nationalities. The largest group are of Pakistani origin with significant numbers from African or Caribbean backgrounds. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and those whose first language is not English, are much higher than average. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of one 65-place Nursery and two Reception classes. The school has several awards including the Healthy Schools Award, Activemark and Sportsmark. The headteacher has been in post since September 2007 and one deputy headteacher since September 2008. One deputy headteacher is seconded elsewhere for four days each week.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Barford is a most harmonious and purposeful learning community where pupils' achievement is satisfactory. With such a wide range of different nationalities and backgrounds the school takes great care to ensure that all groups, regardless of gender, ethnicity or ability have the same opportunities. The robust systems for monitoring how well each group is doing means that, where underachievement is identified, effective support is put into place. This reflects the good care, guidance and support and strong partnerships so appreciated by parents and pupils alike.

When pupils enter the school their attainment is well below that expected for the age. By the time they leave Year 6 pupils' attainment is just below average, having made good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and satisfactory progress in the rest of the school. The school has improved in many areas and pupils' already satisfactory achievement continues to increase. Pupils' writing, however, presents more of a mixed picture. Although progress in writing is now at least satisfactory, pupils are having to catch up because their progress in earlier years was too slow. The school recognises that writing about more active experiences in other subjects and opportunities to write at length are not planned in enough detail. They have successfully begun to engage the younger pupils in understanding how language is written through discussion and story-telling, but not in all age groups.

Pupils' skills in information and communication technology (ICT) are broadly average, although the subject is not well developed. The school has identified that assessment, planning and the number of computers are insufficient. Teaching is skilled in this subject, however, and pupils are motivated by their ICT lessons.

Lessons are engaging and pupils try hard to do their best. The proportion of good lessons has increased. The quality of teaching, though, varies too much and there remains a substantial proportion of satisfactory rather than good teaching. Teachers assess pupils' attainment well. The resulting individual targets are not always specific enough, or cover a broad enough range, to provide suitable challenge in every lesson. Nevertheless, pupils think that teachers and their lessons are one of the 'great' things about school.

Senior leaders have been effective in raising attainment and have put into place a good system for regularly checking pupils' progress against their targets. This has given them an accurate view of the school's strengths and what needs to be improved. Middle managers and subject leaders, several new to the role, do not yet play a strong enough role in supporting staff to improve their teaching skills and share best practice. This has meant that overall improvement and the resulting capacity to improve are satisfactory

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rather than good.

Pupils show great enjoyment of school activities and most clubs are over-subscribed. They like the way, 'We work together so well.' They play an active part in the running of the school and many take on responsibilities, including helping other pupils with their behaviour and healthy eating at lunchtime.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and progress in writing for all groups by:
 - securing more activity-based writing tasks in a wider range of subjects
 - supporting all pupils in understanding the way language is written
 - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to write at length.
- Increase the quality and consistency of teaching for all ages by:
 - providing pupils with a broader range of specific targets, so that lessons are sufficiently challenging for everyone
 - strengthening the role of subject leaders and middle managers in supporting staff to improve their teaching skills and share best practice.
- Improve provision and achievement in ICT by:
 - better use of assessment to increase attainment
 - more systematic planning to ensure a balanced curriculum
 - increasing the number of computers in the school.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils clearly enjoy their learning. They approach lessons with a willingness to listen carefully and do their best. Their behaviour is satisfactory although, in some lessons, learning occasionally slows if one or two pupils require too much attention. Generally however, pupils behave well and are very polite. Attainment in mathematics and science is broadly average but in English, writing particularly, attainment is too low.

Nevertheless achievement is satisfactory overall. Attainment by the end of Year 6 has been rising for several years, reflecting improvements in mathematics and science. For example, in one lesson, pupils worked well with partners to solve division problems with decimals, enthusiastically and accurately in a timed task. Pupils in all groups, regardless of gender, ability or ethnic background make similar progress, including those with special educational needs and or disabilities. Pupils with learning or language difficulties can be seen throughout the day thoroughly enjoying learning more about reading or spelling for example. In this current year pupils' progress has continued to improve, especially in writing, with much more good progress being made as pupils begin to catch up. In one lesson the atmosphere was electric as pupils excitedly discussed their stories

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and wrote as much as they could because they were inspired. Satisfactory progress in ICT masks some considerable variations from year to year.

Pupils report feeling safe and behave safely, with rare incidences of any unkind behaviour. They have an active approach to keeping healthy and the high take up of healthy school lunches and fruit-filled lunch boxes, reflects their good understanding of healthy eating. The good contribution they make to the community includes caring for the local environment, mentoring younger pupils and being influential in the school travel plan. There is a strong spiritual dimension to the wonder pupils' find in some of the things they learn and they take every opportunity to join in with performing arts, especially from different cultures.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Strengths in teaching include an effective contribution by support staff and generally skilled classroom management. For example, in some classes high numbers of those with behaviour or other difficulties are settled and progressing soundly. Some of them are helped to make very good progress. Good care and support, including strong links

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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with other agencies, ensures that this group of pupils is usually able to keep up with their peers.

The interesting and rich curriculum is well designed to suit pupils' interests and cultures and so supports pupils' enjoyment of their learning. ICT is used well in several subjects to allow pupils to present their work or research information. Planning of ICT though, is not systematic enough to ensure that all pupils develop the full range of necessary skills to a high enough level. Other technology is used effectively in lessons to make ideas much clearer to pupils. Relationships are strongly positive and pupils and staff clearly value the process of learning. Pupils commented upon the, 'Fun lessons and practical work.' Although teachers accurately assess pupils' skills, the individual targets set are only useful in some lessons. They do not relate to all their mathematics and English lessons sufficiently well and so do not always provide sufficient challenge particularly for the more able. Planning to encourage writing and other basic skills in a wider range of subjects also lacks detail. Nevertheless continuing improvements to provision is gradually and securely overcoming these deficiencies.

The school provides good quality child care before and after school, where pupils eat a nutritious breakfast, are kept safe and enjoy interesting activities such as model making and art.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, well supported by senior staff, has worked skilfully to secure many improvements to provision which are beginning to increase pupils' progress. In mathematics, problem solving particularly has improved and, in addition, more lessons result in good progress. One major improvement has been the way information about pupils' progress is collected and monitored so that staff are clear about where strengths lie and what needs to be improved. This has resulted, for example, in improving attainment each year for pupils aged 7-11. The role of middle managers and subject leaders in supporting school improvement is developing, but is not yet fully effective, particularly where the pace of improvements to teaching is concerned. Governors bring considerable skills and commitment to their work, although they do not allocate enough time to supporting the work of school improvement.

School systems ensure that equality of opportunity is good. This is why all groups making similar progress over time, there is no discrimination and every pupil has the

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same opportunities to join in with school activities and make a contribution. Safeguarding procedures are also good, with well established, detailed systems, regularly reviewed to keep pupils safe. Community cohesion is promoted well. The school's many different nationalities amongst the pupils successfully encourage a respectful and tolerant community, particularly locally and in school.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children join the school, their skills are particularly low in language and literacy. They make good progress in Nursery and Reception, and enter Year 1 with broadly average skills in many areas. Their progress in literacy and some numeracy skills is below average, however. An emphasis on developing children's personal skills establishes secure foundation for learning so that they happily work independently and together with increasing confidence. Strong, positive relationships between home and school enable children to settle quickly and allow parents to become fully involved in their children's learning. Good teaching includes high-quality, teacher-led group work and activities where children explore for themselves. For example, one group was enthusiastically running a 'doctors' surgery complete with telephone, receptionist and stethoscope. Staff regularly engage children in talking about their work, skilfully developing their language further. Informative 'Evidence' books give valuable insights into how well children are making progress. This information though, is not always used effectively to match activities to every child's needs.

Satisfactory leadership ensures that children's progress is accurately assessed so that steady development takes place. However, improvements to the learning environment

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and developments towards best practice are satisfactory rather than good. The flow of learning for example between indoors and out is improving but, is the school recognises that this is not well established. Children thoroughly enjoy everything that is on offer. For example, nursery children show great enthusiasm during their lively 'Funky Monkey' start-of-the-day activity and, in Reception, they have great fun racing their tricycles and writing stories.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive in their views of Barford Primary School. They particularly appreciate how much their children enjoy school, being informed about the progress their child is making, how well the school encourages healthy living and how safe their children are. As one parent typically commented, 'I think Barford is a very well run primary school.' A few concerns were expressed on a variety of issues, most notably about progress and behaviour and, where these are supported by inspection findings, they are reflected in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barford Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 128 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 469 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	69	54	55	43	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	47	63	49	3	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	67	52	59	46	1	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	48	38	68	53	10	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	41	68	53	7	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	41	66	52	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	67	52	59	46	0	0	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	41	32	67	52	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	41	32	73	57	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	39	67	52	9	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	39	30	72	56	8	6	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	50	39	66	52	6	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	59	46	60	47	6	5	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement. ■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils. ■ The quality of teaching. ■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships. ■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



22 January 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barford Primary School, Birmingham, B16 0EF

Thank you for being so welcoming when we visited your school. We very much enjoyed meeting you, joining you for lunch and seeing some of your lessons. Your school is a satisfactory and improving school with many interesting things going on, just as you described. Your headteacher and senior staff work hard to keep developing the school and, for this reason, your work is getting better each year. However, some of you do not make enough progress in writing and we have asked the school to look at ways of helping you to write more often and in more subjects.

Interesting and often fun-filled lessons help you to make satisfactory progress and attainment is rising. As a result, you are doing much better in mathematics for example. We like the way you really enjoy your lessons and always try to do well. We would, though, like to see that all lessons are of the same good quality as the best. To help this happen we would like your targets to be more detailed and provide you with more challenge. We would also like opportunities for learning about technology and computers to be improved. We are sure that you will discuss this with your teachers and help them by working hard and sharing your ideas.

A good range of activities provides many opportunities for you to contribute well to school life and the community. The responsibilities that you take on are heartening, for example the eco committee and school council. The way you look after each other at lunchtime is good. You were keen to tell us that the school keeps you safe and looks after you well. It is therefore very pleasing to see that you are helping yourselves by taking plenty of exercise and eating a healthy diet. You show good respect and understanding towards others, including those who have different beliefs and ways of living, which helps make your school a happy and welcoming community. We think that this, alongside your mature attitudes to working with others, helps you to be suitably prepared for your next school and future lives.

Yours sincerely

Patricia Potheary

Lead inspector

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