

Barnes Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108755
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337142
Inspection dates	24–25 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Kate Pringle

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	330
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Chris Small
Headteacher	Miss Hilary Cooper
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' books, assessment information, records of the school's reviews of its actions for improvement, school development plans and updates of progress towards meeting identified priorities. Inspectors also considered 149 questionnaires from parents and carers, 109 from pupils and 23 completed by staff.

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

- the current attainment and the progress made by different groups of pupils
- the strategies in place to raise attainment in mathematics
- how well assessment is used to plan for the needs of differing abilities of pupils
- the involvement of leaders and managers in identifying priorities and the actions taken to meet them.

Information about the school

Barnes Junior school is larger than average. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is lower than that found nationally. Although there are increasing numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups, most pupils are from a White British background and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average.

The school has achieved awards for Investors in People, International Schools, Activemark and Quality in Study Support.

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

2

Main findings

This school provides a warm, happy and caring environment for pupils. Pupils demonstrate a positive commitment to working together because of good relationships with teachers and friends. An overwhelming proportion of parents appreciate the friendly atmosphere of the school. This is reflected in the following comment, 'There are wonderful opportunities for every child to flourish in many ways – the school centres around what is best for the children at all times.'

Pupils enter Year 3 with standards largely above average. Except for a dip in 2009, attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is above average with mathematics being the weakest subject. Interventions for those with special needs and/or disabilities are successful and these pupils attain well. Progress is satisfactory because teaching is largely satisfactory. In lessons, learning activities are not always well matched to the individual abilities of pupils. This means that pupils are not always sufficiently challenged and do not always make enough progress. Marking is inconsistent and much fails to celebrate pupils' achievements or indicate the next steps in their learning

Pupils are considerate and respect each other's feelings. This is a caring school with warm relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils enjoy school. However, attendance is only satisfactory because of the proportion of holidays taken and a small number of persistent absentees which affects the outcome for some pupils. Pupils carry out conscientiously a range of responsibilities including representing their class through the school council. Access to lots of exciting additional opportunities supports a good curriculum which increases pupils' experiences. They engage well with their local community and international links further extend their understanding of other cultures in today's society.

Good self-evaluation by leaders and managers has successfully identified and addressed key areas for improvement which have largely improved outcomes for pupils within the school. This is a result of the rigorous tracking of achievement and understanding of how this can positively impact upon learning. Strategies to improve standards and raise attainment are promptly put in place. This has enabled the school to respond swiftly to the dip in 2009. The firm focus on improving teaching and learning reinforces the good capacity of the school for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure good and consistent progress in all subjects, especially in mathematics by:
 - making teaching more exciting with challenging activities which engage pupils

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and encourage investigation, enquiry and creativity

- using assessment information to plan tasks that match the differing levels of ability
- using marking to celebrate pupils' achievements against individual targets and identify next steps in learning.
- Improve further pupils' attendance by impressing on parents the effect on pupils' education of taking holidays in term time.
- 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**

In many lessons pupils listen carefully and work hard to complete the tasks set for them. They appreciate the help and support given to them by staff to improve their work. Good behaviour together with care and respect for others are central to the ethos of this school. Pupils are keen to learn and particularly enjoy enquiry-based lessons in which they are practically engaged and have opportunity to consider and discuss their findings. In such lessons pupils work with great enthusiasm and learn quickly. However, in other lessons pupils make satisfactory progress because teaching is not always sufficiently challenging and exciting to sustain pupils' interest.

Attainment is generally above average, although the results of national tests dipped in 2009, and the school identifies some pupils did not make enough progress. The school's current data indicate in Year 6, standards are set to return to former above average standards and may well exceed them. Achievement from Year 3 to Year 6 is satisfactory but progress is not consistent, especially in mathematics. The success of interventions for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and for pupils who speak English as an additional language results in these pupils making good progress.

Pupils feel safe and speak clearly about the dangers they may face. They understand well how to deal with them and who can help. They are aware of what bullying is but say that it rarely happens in their school now. Pupils have a good understanding of the benefits of keeping fit, staying active and choosing a balanced diet. Spiritual, moral and social development is well reflected through the respect and care pupils extend to others. They understand well the differences between right and wrong and the potential consequences of actions. Links with a range of local partners and the work the pupils have engaged in with partners in Uganda are starting to extend their understanding of the diversity of beliefs and cultures. The school actively supports a wide range of charities and as a result, pupils have strong social values.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
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?

The quality of teaching ranges from satisfactory to outstanding. This lack of consistency contributes to the uneven progress that pupils make across the school and in different subjects. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils who have good attitudes to learning. Where teaching is good or better, the pace is brisk and realistically high expectations are well matched to pupils' needs to promote good quality learning. Successful lessons engage pupils in enquiry-based learning which challenges their understanding and increases their verbal reasoning. However, not all teachers plan effectively to engage pupils in such a way; neither do they always use assessment information to plan effectively to meet individuals' needs. As a result, learning opportunities do not always reflect pupils' abilities well enough and some pupils are set work that is either too difficult or too easy. Marking is inconsistent and much fails to inform pupils of their achievements or indicate their next steps in learning.

Improving pupils' well-being is central to the curriculum. Many opportunities provide rich experiences and contribute greatly to pupils' understanding of the wider world. The use of writing and information and communication technology to support other subjects is increasing. However, the curriculum does not presently offer pupils understanding of how subjects link together. Pupils are enthusiastic as they speak about educational visits and visitors to support their learning. The excellent range of after-school clubs which are very well supported by pupils is a real strength of the school as they extend pupils knowledge and skills through a range of alternative activities. The many residential visits for pupils contribute considerably to raising levels of independence, self-esteem and cooperation.

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Good care is taken of the pupils and the support and guidance they are given enables most to learn well in lessons. Teaching assistants support vulnerable pupils and those who need additional help effectively and sensitive pastoral and constructive guidance enables pupils to overcome personal difficulties. Pupils who have emotional and behavioural issues are given good help so that they can make the most of their time in school. Strategies to improve attendance levels are presently being addressed but are not yet demonstrating good impact. Parents and carers are confident that their children's pastoral needs are very well met. The school works well to ensure the successful induction into school is supportive, as is transition through this school and into the next.

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	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has been successful in creating an effective senior leadership team with a sharp focus on driving forward improvement. The skills of senior leaders and other leaders are strengthened through appropriate professional development. Staff work well together and are enthusiastic and articulate about their roles and the quality of success they have been able to achieve. Target-setting is rigorous and teachers are held to account for individual progress to ensure pupils are on track to achieve them. Increasing accountability, together with improved assessment, has enabled former weaknesses in, for example writing, to be successfully addressed. This provides a secure platform for a concerted drive for further improvement as all work to embed improvement across the school.

Governors are supportive and clearly committed to ensuring a positive ethos and a focused approach to learning. They are aware that key procedures such as safeguarding require regular and robust quality assurance checks. Safeguarding meets requirements well. The school promotes equality satisfactorily within a harmonious and tension-free atmosphere.

The school works successfully with the local and global community and has completed an audit for community cohesion. This work is further extended through successful links with a wide range of partners and is positively impacting upon the development and well-being of pupils. Opportunities for pupils to learn about communities of more diverse cultures in modern day Britain are at an early stage.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	3
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

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. They hold the headteacher and her staff in very high regard and appreciate the care and consideration given to their children. They are confident that any concerns are listened to carefully and acted upon appropriately. The school received much praise for the enjoyment it provides for their children. One typical comment noted, 'There are wonderful opportunities for every child to flourish in many ways—the school centres around what is best for the children at all times.' Parents and carers might find it helpful to know that there were no serious issues in the very small numbers of concerns raised, but all were fully investigated.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barnes Junior 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 inspector received and read 149 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 330 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	52	67	45	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	81	54	67	45	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	55	37	90	60	2	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	62	42	78	52	8	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	64	43	81	54	1	1	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	52	35	89	60	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	32	95	64	3	2	0	0
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)	55	37	87	58	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	53	36	87	58	6	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	42	28	95	64	6	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	23	100	67	5	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	50	34	94	63	2	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	70	47	76	51	1	1	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.



26 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnes Junior School, Sunderland, SR4 7QF

Thank you for the lovely welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We did enjoy talking to many of you and especially liked the way in which you care for each other and for your school. We were pleased to see how well you all get on together and the ways in which you try to think of others and help them through raising money and giving of your time to visit and sing to others in your community.

We thought your behaviour was good and you obviously enjoy all of the wonderful experiences your school provides for you through your visits and after-school clubs, and especially your opportunities to attend residential learning opportunities at Seahouses and at outdoor activity centres where you learn different skills. The adults who care for you make sure that you are well looked after and we know that you feel really safe in school.

Your teachers plan lots of things for you to do but we have asked your school to help you understand your lessons more clearly and have even more fun. I have asked your headteacher and teachers to:

- make sure you all make as much progress as possible especially in mathematics
- check that all your lessons are exciting and challenging and include more practical and creative activities
- ensure that your work is set at just the right level for you and that marking tells you how to improve
- raise attendance so that you don't miss any learning because this prevents you making as much progress as possible.

I'm sure that you will be able to think of more ways to help your school become even better than it is now. Best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Mrs Kate Pringle

Lead inspector

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