

Barnwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108809
Local Authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	337156
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Graeme Clarke

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	253
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Amanda Shale
Headteacher	Mrs J Foster
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 lessons and saw eight teachers, including specialist support staff, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the arrangements for safeguarding pupils' welfare, school policies and documentation, samples of pupils' work, assessment data, monitoring records and strategic planning. They also analysed the 130 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as the 25 questionnaires from staff and 126 from pupils.

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

- attainment and progress in writing, particularly in respect of the more able pupils
- how well work in lessons is matched to pupils' abilities so that the higher attaining pupils are successfully challenged and engaged
- how well the school's planning for improvement has led to improved progress and teaching quality
- the attainment and progress of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage in recent years.

Information about the school

This school is slightly above average size. It serves an urban village locality to the west of Sunderland. Almost all pupils are White British. An average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. An average proportion have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A lower-than-average proportion have a statement of special educational needs. The school manages the Footsteps Centre which provides registered childcare. This takes the form of a day-care facility for children up to three years old and before- and after-school childcare for older pupils. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Status, Activemark, the Becta ICT Mark and Investors in People.

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

The school provides a satisfactory education overall with clear signs of improvement. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage now make good progress. Many aspects of pupils' personal development are good. Parents and carers are fully at ease with the school's arrangements to safeguard the welfare of their children. A calm environment prevails in which children and pupils conduct themselves safely and with confidence. Pupils behave well and politely, showing consideration for others. The many opportunities offered throughout the curriculum broaden pupils' experience and contribute to their overall good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils maintain a healthy lifestyle and are enthusiastically involved in physical and sporting activities. They contribute in many ways to their school and local communities. Productive partnerships with parents and carers, and local agencies make a key contribution to pupils' learning and development.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning and willingly take part in lessons, where they work well together or independently. Year on year, most pupils make steady progress through the school and leave with broadly average attainment in English, mathematics and science. Pupils' attainment in writing, including that of the higher attaining pupils, has improved since the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. However, too few pupils make sufficiently good progress to reach high standards. This is because teaching does not extend the more-able pupils' learning with suitably challenging work. When marking pupils' work, teachers do not consistently give pupils clear enough pointers about how to improve.

The headteacher, the senior leadership team and governors foster a caring ethos among all staff and assiduously promote the school's values. Their drive to improve teaching is beginning to pay dividends but practice remains inconsistent. Their diligent review of the school's work results in a broadly accurate picture of its strengths and weaknesses. Governors recognise that the school's contribution to community cohesion lacks a vital wider dimension. They have yet to foster pupils' comprehension of the diversity of British life and to a lesser extent of life overseas. Taking all this into account, the school's capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' progress and raise standards by ensuring that:
 - activities in all lessons challenge and motivate all groups of pupils, particularly the higher attaining pupils

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- marking consistently includes comments on pupils' achievements and gives them clear pointers about how to improve to the next level.
- Press ahead to promote all aspects of community cohesion by:
 - extending opportunities to widen pupils' direct understanding of the diversity of life in Britain and their perspectives of life abroad.
- 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 enjoy taking part in lessons and many work with commendable endeavour. They work cooperatively in pairs or small groups and show admirable personal responsibility when working independently. Many willingly contribute to whole-class discussions. They take care to present all of their written work neatly. However, learning slows, especially that of the higher attaining pupils, when activities are not sufficiently challenging and so pupils do not need to try hard.

Attainment in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 has been close to average over the last three years. Over this same period, pupils made satisfactory progress as they moved through the school. The school's assessment information suggests that the current Year 6 pupils are on course to reach the National Curriculum levels expected for their age, having also made satisfactory progress. As a rule, too few pupils reach the higher levels, especially in mathematics. Girls tend to do a little better than boys in English, and boys to outperform girls in science. As a result of carefully chosen activities and effective support, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress and reach standards above those of their counterparts nationally.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. The school is calm and orderly, with good, polite and sensible behaviour prevailing and pupils have a very good sense of right and wrong. Through their work in science and personal development sessions, pupils know the need for a balanced diet and the importance of being active, typified by their enthusiasm for physical activities during and after school. Pupils make a commendable contribution to raise the quality of school life through an effective pupil council, as school helpers and playground buddies. They are always ready to help others in their nearby community and willingly take part in charitable work. However, pupils' cultural development is limited by infrequent contact with groups of people not represented in the immediate locality. Above average attendance and well-developed social skills together with adequate basic skills equip pupils satisfactorily for future life.

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	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	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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers are always clear about what they want pupils to learn and check their progress during the lesson. In lessons where teaching is very effective carefully organised activities, which hold pupils' interest and promote enthusiastic participation in group and class activities, lead to good learning. Classroom routines are followed promptly. Teachers and assistants give effective support to helping pupils with particular needs in their classrooms. Consequently, many of these pupils make good progress. However, in some year groups questioning too often does not challenge the higher-attaining pupils and, because activities are not sufficiently taxing, they find tasks rather easy. In turn, they do not reap the benefit of a sense of real accomplishment and are not making as much progress as they could. Teachers ensure that pupils know how well they are doing and indicate targets for higher levels. Marking celebrates strengths in pupils' work but pupils are not always given helpful pointers towards their next steps in raising attainment. Where pointers are given, they are not followed through to make pupils' learning fully effective.

Many and varied enrichment activities both during and after the school day broaden pupils' experience. These strengths in the curriculum, many of which stem from beneficial partnerships, substantially contribute to pupils' spiritual and moral development and enhance their social skills. Tailored support and well-chosen specialist activities foster the good progress made by pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Well-planned opportunities, for example through the Coalfields Forum, an initiative to stimulate economic growth in the area, widen pupils' awareness of local community perspectives and make an important contribution to this aspect of

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community cohesion and cultural development. Conversely though, pupils have little opportunity to develop at first hand an understanding of life in present day Britain from interacting with others from different social, religious or ethnic backgrounds.

The school assures the well-being of all pupils. Parents and carers particularly appreciate the welcoming and caring environment of the school and approachability of staff in dealing with any queries or concerns. Considerate relationships in both the main school and the adjacent Footsteps day-care centre bolster parents' and carers' confidence in the school's care for the welfare of their children. Good arrangements for before- and after-school care ensure that the pupils who attend these sessions are well looked after. They have a good start to the morning and thoroughly enjoy a range of well-chosen activities at the end of the day. Well-trained teaching assistants make a key contribution to support learning by pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Good arrangements effectively foster children's transition from home and successfully prepare pupils for moving on to secondary education. Effective liaison with home promotes above-average attendance and much lower persistent absenteeism than in similar schools.

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 and senior leaders are committed to improving teaching and learning but their initiatives, for example in the use of assessment to improve learning, are yet to show their full effect. Although well-informed, and entirely supportive of the school's work, governors rely heavily upon analytical reports from the headteacher and local authority to provide up-to-date perspectives. They recognise that their next steps are to extend their direct involvement in evaluation and strategic planning. Nevertheless, the school's detailed planning for improvement incorporates well-chosen activities, although proposals to address them are overly complicated. This lack of clarity hinders judging their success and future evaluation. The school eliminates discrimination by making certain pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable participate fully but recognises that more work is needed to close all the gaps in the performance of different groups. For example, too few of the higher-attaining pupils make the best possible progress. Governors ensure that effective procedures safeguard the welfare of children throughout the school and in the Footsteps day-care centre. By incorporating key aspects of acting safely into the curriculum they ensure that pupils have a good

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understanding of safe and considerate behaviour. Following a thorough analysis, governors and leaders know what is needed to assure a strong contribution to community cohesion, but they have yet to go beyond developing pupils' understanding of their local community. Although facilities and resources are deployed carefully, pupils' satisfactory progress and broadly average standards lead to satisfactory value for money.

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	3
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit throughout this period of their education. When they join the Nursery, children's skills vary but are often below the expectations for their age in all areas of learning. Most leave Reception having made good progress, particularly in developing communication and literacy skills, to reach standards close to average in all areas of learning. Children are well behaved, enjoy learning, and are able to play and learn both collaboratively and independently. They form good relationships with other children and adults and in turn know who to ask for help if they have any concerns.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Skilled staff provide a supportive indoor and outdoor environment in which children feel safe and develop confidence. Children learn in a carefully managed way that blends adults' support with activities that children choose for themselves. This balance of well-arranged activities stimulates their imagination and enjoyment. Improved assessment procedures have enabled a better match of activities and expectations to children's particular needs. Staff have a good knowledge of children's progress and interests and, by involving parents and carers in

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their children's learning, help children develop further.

Governors have ensured that all requirements for children's welfare and childcare registration are met through good-quality joint leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage and the Footsteps day-care centre. Within Footsteps, care and education are closely and well integrated with suitable resources and activities provided for the three- and four-year-olds as well as for younger children. Children become engrossed in a good range of appropriate activities where they play and learn together or benefit from the effective support of an adult. From an early age, all children are happy, contented and confident. Close cooperation and productive partnerships enable parents and carers to make use of facilities available at the children's centre leading, in turn, to continuity of learning with the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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	2

Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires were very supportive. They were particularly pleased with: the way the school ensures that their children are well supported, safe, develop a healthy lifestyle and enjoy their overall experience of school; and the way it keeps parents and carers well informed. The inspectors uphold these views but judge that teaching is satisfactory overall and not good, as parents and carers believe. Of those parents and carers who wrote comments, most were very positive. A few other parents and carers mentioned issues related to their particular experiences, which inspectors were unable to confirm.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barnwell 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 130 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 253 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	60	49	38	3	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	91	70	38	29	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	85	65	43	33	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	76	58	50	38	4	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	61	50	38	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	67	52	57	44	5	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	69	53	57	44	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)	65	50	55	42	4	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	76	58	51	39	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	67	52	53	41	7	5	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	67	52	51	39	8	6	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	81	62	45	35	3	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	87	67	41	32	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



12 May 2010

Dear Pupils,

Inspection of Barnwell Primary School, Houghton le Spring, DH4 7RT

My colleagues and I really enjoyed our visit to inspect your school. We have judged that it is a satisfactory school. Adults in the school look after you well. For all of you in the Footsteps day-care centre, in the Nursery and Reception class and in Years 1 to 6 good arrangements keep you safe and help you develop confidence.

Thank you for helping us when we came to see you in lessons and assemblies. We know the headteacher and all the staff are very proud of you. You were very polite and helpful and we did enjoy talking with those of you whom we met. We were delighted to see how much you like to take part in lessons and we noted your good behaviour. You contribute well to school life, for example as school councillors and buddies to help others. You have many opportunities which help you learn about yourself and how to work with others. We have asked the school to give you more chances to learn about the many different groups of people who live in Britain today and to find out more about those who live elsewhere in the world.

Children in the Nursery and Reception classes make good progress. In Key Stages 1 and 2 you make satisfactory progress. In recent years standards in the English, mathematics and science tests you take at the end of Year 6 have been average. Those of you needing extra help do well. We have asked your school to ensure that you all do as well as you can in all subjects by making sure that each of you is given work that helps you do as well as you can. We have also asked your teachers to be very precise when they mark your books and to point out what you need to do to improve.

You will soon be moving into new classes and some of you will be leaving to go to other schools. We hope that you all do really well.

Yours sincerely

Mr Graeme Clarke

Lead inspector

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