

Barcombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114488
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	338379
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Helen Hutchings

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Dyer
Headteacher	Caitlin Yapp
Date of previous school inspection	17 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited seven lessons, and held meetings with representative governors, staff and pupils, and spoke to parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's improvement plans, assessment information and curriculum planning. In addition, 42 parent, 13 staff and 70 pupil questionnaires were received and analysed.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress, particularly of pupils in Key Stage 2
- the effectiveness of the actions taken to improve pupils' writing across the school
- how well all staff are involved in contributing to school improvement.

Information about the school

The school is smaller than most primary schools. It serves the village of Barcombe and surrounding areas. The majority of pupils are from White British families, with very few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who hold a statement of special educational needs, is above average, with dyslexia being the main identified need. Most pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. It holds Healthy School and Activemark awards. Currently, there is a major programme underway to extend and refurbish the building, meaning that the school is working without some significant facilities and playground space.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Barcombe is a good school where pupils get a good start to their education and achieve well. Pupils say that they enjoy school because teachers are friendly, explain things well and make learning interesting. Many parents or carers accurately sum up the school's strengths in comments including, 'The school has a friendly atmosphere, encouraging good social relationships.' Others recognise the particular challenge of the building programme: 'We think the staff have done amazingly well considering they are working in a building site with no staff room, no sports hall for most of this term and exceptionally wet weather for this last part.'

Good teaching and a stimulating curriculum are the reasons why pupils learn and achieve well throughout the school. Their attainment in English, mathematics and science is above average by the time they leave for secondary school. Pupils of all abilities progress at similar rates, although pupils with special educational needs do particularly well and most reach the levels of their classmates because of the focused support they are given. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in improving pupils' writing skills, but staff recognise that the next challenge is to bring pupils' non-fiction writing skills to the level of their story writing. Generally, attainment in English is a little stronger than mathematics and science. The current focus on trying to develop pupils' basic number skills in Years 3 and 4 is well planned and designed to tackle an identified weakness in pupils' fluency in knowing their tables, and to give pupils more confidence in mathematics in Years 5 and 6. Pupils find the curriculum interesting because it makes very effective links across subjects. Staff are keen to make the curriculum even more effective by ensuring that subject-specific skills, for example in history and geography, are developed systematically through the school. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used especially well to encourage curiosity and independence, with the school's website enabling older pupils to access their work in school from home.

The school's effective care, guidance and support for pupils contribute to their good personal and social skills. Pupils are well known by adults and feel exceptionally safe in school. They comment that there is always an adult on hand to help sort out any problems. Their awareness of safety has been heightened through the building programme. They know how to take care of themselves and the importance of looking after one another. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding because pupils are encouraged to think deeply about issues, supported through strong links with the church, in line with the school's faith status. Pupils' attendance is high.

The school achieves good outcomes and provision because it is led well. The headteacher, senior staff and governors have focused relentlessly on improvement and

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effectively secured consistent progress for pupils through a challenging time of staff mobility. The good systems for tracking pupils' achievements mean that pupils who may need additional help are picked up quickly. The consistency brought to teaching since the last inspection, a sharp awareness of where further improvements can be made and staff expertise give the school a good capacity for successful future developments.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' overall attainment by:
 - improving pupils' non-fiction writing skills
 - developing pupils' fluency in recalling their tables in Years 3 and 4.
- Implement the plan to ensure that pupils' subject-specific skills are developed progressively and systematically in all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils enjoy learning because teachers effectively plan work which is relevant for them and fosters their interest and curiosity beyond what they already know. As a result, pupils work hard in lessons and all groups of pupils achieve well across all areas of the curriculum, reaching above-average attainment. Their good behaviour and ability to work well in small groups, for example to explore and discuss their ideas, help to create a positive environment for learning. They say that working together 'speeds up work'. Pupils respond well to known routines so that no time is lost; for example, younger pupils immediately started the handwriting task laid out for them after assembly without the need for any prompting. Pupils understand their own learning because they are increasingly involved in setting targets and monitoring their own progress against the next steps set out for them. Most pupils are aware of how their work can be improved, and there are striking examples where pupils respond well to the teacher's marking by improving their work without being required to do so. This is just one example of how pupils take a pride in their work and are happy to work hard. They say that 'teachers explain things well and try to keep work simple but with a challenge'. Many enjoy working towards the additional challenges set regularly in lessons.

Pupils' considerate behaviour spills out beyond the classroom. They behave well in the restricted playground, with some even saying that they have benefited from this because they are playing with others who would previously have used different areas. Pupils' enthusiasm for all aspects of school life is seen in their outstanding attendance. Developing life skills is a focus of the school's work, seen in good literacy and numeracy skills. Pupils also have well-developed ICT skills, shown for example when pupils requested more information from their teacher about relevant internet access to find out more about the topic they were studying. Pupils understand how to lead healthy lifestyles, reflected in the Healthy School and Activemark awards. The school council is rightly proud of its work, particularly in gathering the views of their classmates about furnishings for the new facilities. Pupils thoroughly enjoy taking on a wide range of responsibilities, distributed well across all age groups and helping pupils to get on well

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together. Pupils learn about and understand the value of different views and beliefs, raising questions for themselves such as, 'Why are there different religions?' Pupils are given good opportunities to respond to social and moral issues, for example, through interactive corridor displays letting pupils offer their ideas and views beyond classroom discussions. They relish supporting village and wider community activities such as involvement in church events, putting on performances or giving their views to the committee responsible for the new village hall. All this gives pupils a sense of belonging.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
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	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Effective teaching across the school ensures that pupils learn well. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and manage them effectively. They manage the different ages and abilities in their classes well, for example through questioning to make sure that all understand and in the way that they give pupils tasks appropriate to their earlier learning. Typically, lessons are challenging and have a good pace, but occasionally activities go on too long, slowing the pace of learning. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is good, so that pupils have good levels of focused support, giving

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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them the help they need. Teachers' marking is thorough, with many helpful comments so that pupils have a good understanding of how their work could be improved. However, pupils are not routinely required to respond to teachers' suggestions, though older pupils are developing their responses through ongoing written dialogue with their teachers or indicating how well they believe they have done. School data show that, in recent years, pupils' progress has been inconsistent, partly because of the disruption caused by staffing changes. Teachers have identified any gaps in pupils' knowledge or skills and are successfully ensuring that these are filled so that pupils' progress is being accelerated to ensure ongoing good achievement over time.

Teachers bring their good subject knowledge effectively to many aspects of the curriculum within 'learning journeys', which makes learning coherent and exciting for pupils. This approach is carefully planned to ensure good subject coverage, give pupils a range of interesting topics to study and effectively meet the needs of pupils in mixed-age classes. Good links are forged between subjects, as seen in a lesson where the visit of a gospel singer the previous week was used well as the basis for pupils to write a news report. Teachers recognise that the 'learning journeys' have not always ensured the progressive development of all subject skills through the school. An audit has been undertaken and a curriculum developed to ensure that skills in all subjects are developed more systematically in the future. Teachers give pupils frequent opportunities to strengthen their understanding through talking their ideas through, and often recording their discussions so that they can evaluate their efforts and improve their communication skills. The school makes good use of a range of outside agencies to offer specialist support to children and their parents when additional expertise not available in the school is needed. Surveys conducted in the school as well as the inspection questionnaire confirm that pupils know that adults care for them well. The focused support for pupils with special educational needs enables them to develop confidence in their learning and achieve well.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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 staff lead the school well, shown most strikingly in the way the school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis through the current period of considerable disruption. Their self-evaluation of the school is honest and accurate because of the good systems for monitoring the school's work. Staff morale is high

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because they are consulted about developments, shown in their enthusiasm about current curriculum developments and how they intend to raise attainment further. For example, the work of curriculum teams successfully promotes teamwork. Governors too have reorganised their committee structures to streamline their strategic oversight of the school. Individual governors provide support and advice which is valued by senior leaders. The governing body has taken difficult decisions, including the number of classes and class sizes, to ensure ongoing viability.

Arrangements to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are good. The effective promotion of equal opportunities means that all groups of pupils achieve well. The school runs as a cohesive society and community cohesion is promoted well, for example by broadening pupils' horizons through a link with a school in different social circumstances. Events such as Black History Month are used very effectively to develop pupils' understanding of their place within a local, national and global community.

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	2
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	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Reception are catered for well, as indicated in parents' very positive response to the questionnaire. For example, one parent commented on the good links between school and home and how the start to school had been a 'fantastic experience' for the family. Another parent praised the school for managing under difficult circumstances, where facilities are cramped because the outdoor area has been removed temporarily during building work. Good leadership of the provision, under the guidance of the headteacher, is minimising the impact on children's experiences. However, the room

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lacks some stimulus for creative development because of the range of equipment which would normally be used outdoors. Nevertheless, good planning, for example taking children outside to follow number trails, means that they have access to the necessary range of experiences for their age. Children's skills when they start vary considerably from year to year as numbers in each cohort are small, but generally they are around average for their age. This year, many children are young and are only attending for part of the day. They have adjusted well to school routines because of the good arrangements to ensure their welfare. They are content and settled into the school's routines, and are developing well across all the areas of learning because of a good curriculum which meets their needs well. Their developing confidence and speaking skills were demonstrated admirably when they calmly provided a school assembly about their study of The Very Hungry Caterpillar. Their performance was much appreciated by older pupils and parents and friends attending the event.

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

A very large majority of parents and carers are happy with all the school offers, making comments on the inspection questionnaire such as, 'We love Barcombe School; our children are happy and cared for and enthusiastic about what they are learning.' Parents and carers are appreciative of the school's small, friendly and caring environment, its role as an integral part of the village and the emphasis placed on developing pupils' personal qualities. For example, one parent's comment reflected the views expressed by others: 'the teachers at Barcombe invest so much time and energy making our children into good citizens who will create a better society in the future'. A very small minority expressed some concerns and these mainly related to individual issues. A few were concerned about the turnover of teachers and teaching assistants, which had negatively impacted on their child's learning. Teachers are fully aware of where pupils have gaps in their skills or knowledge and are ensuring that pupils catch up quickly. A few parents or carers indicated that the school does not take account of their concerns, but inspectors found that the school regularly surveys parental views and makes every effort to take parents' concerns into account when these are raised.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barcombe Church of England 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 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 139 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	45	22	52	0	0	1	2
The school keeps my child safe	20	48	19	45	0	0	2	5
The school informs me about my child's progress	8	19	31	74	2	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	33	23	55	1	2	2	5
The teaching is good at this school	15	36	23	55	2	5	1	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	13	31	25	60	2	5	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	12	29	24	57	4	10	1	2
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)	13	31	19	45	1	2	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	36	21	50	3	7	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	12	29	23	55	3	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	24	23	55	3	7	2	5
The school is led and managed effectively	18	43	14	33	3	7	3	7
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	17	41	20	48	3	7	1	2

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.



4 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barcombe CE Primary School, Barcombe BN8 5DN

Thank you for the very warm welcome you gave us when we visited you recently. We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you and seeing you at work. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

Barcombe School is a good school.

- We were impressed by how well everyone gets on together and this makes the school a happy place.
- Your good behaviour helps everyone to concentrate and work hard in lessons so that you do well.
- Your 'learning journeys' make lessons interesting and you said that your teachers help you if you find work difficult.
- We could see that you enjoy school a lot and your attendance is exceptional.
- The staff take good care of you. This helps you to feel really safe.
- You are very considerate about making sure that everyone can enjoy the playground even if it is a bit crowded at present.

The headteacher and staff run the school well and have plans to make it even better in the future. They plan to make sure that:

- you have more opportunities to improve your non-fiction writing skills
- you learn your tables in Years 3 and 4 and are able to remember them quickly
- your 'learning journeys' help you to gain the skills you need in all your subjects, such as history and geography.

Remember that you can help by telling your teachers if your work is too hard or too easy.

Please thank your parents or carers for completing the questionnaire. It was very helpful to hear their views.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Helen Hutchings

Lead inspector

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