

Barnfields Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	124167
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340506
Inspection dates	10–11 March 2010
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Rick Boote
Headteacher	Mrs Gillian Richards
Date of previous school inspection	7 November 2006
School address	Lansdowne Way Wildwood Stafford
Telephone number	01785 356356
Fax number	01785 356360
Email address	headteacher@barnfields.staffs.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The majority of the inspectors' time was spent in lessons, observing learning. Inspectors observed 25 lessons, taught by 13 teachers. Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher and the senior leadership team, teachers, and a representative of the governing body. The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation and a sample of the pupils' work. Questionnaire responses from pupils, staff and 214 parents were analysed.

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

- whether all groups of pupils are performing to their potential
- the benefits that the pupils gain from their involvement in their own and the wider communities
- the impact of monitoring and evaluation in improving the quality of provision and raising attainment.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average primary school with a nursery. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much lower than the national average. The vast majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds.

A before- and after-school club operates on the school site. This facility is not managed by the school and is subject to a separate inspection.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

'By the way, we've got to do this systematically.' This was one Year 2 pupil's contribution to the rest of the group as they worked together with considerable concentration to find a solution to a problem they had been set in a mathematics lesson. It illustrates very well the degree of independence and cooperation that the school develops in its pupils so that they can, as the school motto puts it, 'believe and achieve'. Throughout the school, the pupils enjoy the tasks and activities their teachers set for them and respond very positively to their high expectations. The pupils are very attentive and apply themselves very well. As a result, they are achieving exceptionally well. The pupils are willing and skilful learners who reach high levels of attainment.

The teaching is very effective and results in girls and boys making rapid progress. In an English lesson in Year 1, the pupils were highly motivated to write. A teaching assistant burst into the room in apparent distress after seeing a lion! Excitedly, the pupils set off with their 'pretend hats' on, on a 'lion hunt' around the grounds. This reflects the high degree of activity found in many lessons, which are thoughtfully planned to take account of the needs of all groups. The pupils' work is marked very thoroughly, and their overall performance very rigorously analysed so that any pupil who is not making the expected progress is given help to make up lost ground.

Interesting and motivating activities abound. This was particularly well illustrated when Year 6 pupils planned and made an impressive buffet for a presentation evening to their parents. The preparation of the food and the presentation, about a recent residential trip, reflected the pupils' high levels of understanding about diet and hygiene and also their very well-developed organisational skills that will equip them extremely well in the future.

An ethos that reflects the school motto is evident throughout the school. The support and guidance given to the pupils lead to them growing in confidence and developing respect for the views of others, which allows them to work very productively and cooperatively. The pupils' moral and social development is strong, but they have few opportunities to develop a broader awareness of groups and cultures not represented in the immediate locality.

The governing body is steering the school very firmly, in their words, 'on a journey to excellence'. It holds the school to account and shares its determination with a senior leadership team that is committed to providing the pupils with a high-quality education. Monitoring and evaluation are rigorous, and provide the basis for very sharply focused improvement plans. The school has taken considerable steps forward since it was last inspected. The quality of teaching, the provision for the more able, the effectiveness of

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monitoring, and the quality of the outdoor provision for the youngest children have all improved markedly. The governors and senior leaders have demonstrated an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- – Promote greater engagement with a wider range of communities beyond the locality of the school, in order to extend the pupils' awareness and understanding of cultural diversity.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

The pupils make rapid progress and reach high standards in English, mathematics and science. This is evident in lessons, in the pupils' work and in the results of national tests, which have been significantly better than average over the last few years. Attainment in mathematics has risen to be exceptionally high and some pupils in Year 6 are being taught elements of the Year 7 curriculum through the school's strong links with the local secondary school. There is a very strong emphasis, in almost every lesson, on pupils improving their work. As a result, the pupils have mature attitudes and are very open to suggestions from their teachers and their peers. They are confident enough to try new approaches, to redraft their writing, or check their answers to mathematical problems using an alternative method.

The pupils are developing many skills that enhance their learning and progress. They turn readily to information and communication technology (ICT) and display high levels of competence in using a range of hardware and software. In Year 6, pupils demonstrated high attainment in design and technology, and throughout the school there are examples of interesting and thoughtful work in a range of subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are doing well and making good progress because of the well-focused provision made for them.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning, and their behaviour in lessons is exemplary. They work independently with confidence, and show high levels of organisation, cooperation and resilience when faced with a group task or problem. The pupils say they feel very safe in school and have adopted an extremely positive approach to healthy eating and staying fit. They are curious about the world around them and are enthusiastic about all the school offers them. They respect each other and relish the responsibilities they are given. They are interested in other cultures, but do not have a broad understanding of the similarities and differences between their own and other cultures.

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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Almost all of the lessons seen during the inspection were good, and many were outstanding. This is the result of the collective determination of the senior leaders and teachers to motivate and interest the pupils so that they learn extremely well and achieve highly. The teachers create and use a broad range of resources, often in imaginative ways. In Year 6, the pupils are using the Michael Morpurgo novel *Kensuke's Kingdom* as the focus for a unit of work in English. To enable the pupils to explore the disappearance of the central character, the teachers created a press conference where groups of pupils very successfully used a range of new technologies to create television, radio and newspaper reports of the incident. The opportunities that the lesson afforded the pupils took full account of their previous learning with, for example, the more able acting as editors. Four pupils acting as the family of the central character gave insightful and mature performances that gave credibility to the activity. The pupils' participation in this activity reflected their independence, and their ability to organise themselves and to work cooperatively.

The teachers very carefully mark and assess the pupils' work. This provides a great deal of information, which they use well to plan for their next lessons. The senior leaders rigorously monitor the quality of marking and talk to the pupils about how it helps them. For the most part, marking is very good; however, when the pupils do not correct and improve their work in response to their teacher's comments the marking has less impact.

The curriculum provides many excellent opportunities for pupils to use and extend their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a wide range of contexts. The school has reacted

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positively and promptly to recent national developments in the organisation of the curriculum, and is providing pupils with many creative opportunities, in lessons and after school. Visits and visitors enhance the curriculum and provide many opportunities to develop a wide range of skills. Music and musical events make a considerable contribution to the curriculum.

The school supports and guides pupils with great consideration. For pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the teachers plan tasks that are carefully tailored to their needs. Often, teaching assistants provide skilful support for individuals or small groups. Parents of pupils with specific needs who have recently arrived at the school commented on the outstanding care shown to their children and on the marked academic improvement which has come about as a result of the very effective support the teachers have provided for them.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The governors bring a range of skills and expertise to the school that have resulted in the governing body developing robust recruitment procedures, sharply focused approaches to improvement planning, and strong links with teachers. Together, these give an incisive view into the school's performance. As self-confessed 'hard taskmasters', the governors have placed high expectations on the senior leadership to bring about improvements. Governors hold senior leaders to account for the school's performance. The senior leadership team has risen to the challenges set by the governors. Although pupils are now performing very well because the school's provision is excellent, there are very clear plans for still further improvement. The school development plan sets out a number of areas where provision is to be refined and improved further. The senior leadership is very ambitious for the school, and along with middle leaders they share a determination to provide a high quality of care and education for the pupils. Arrangements to ensure that the pupils are safe, and records of checks on all adults, are exemplary.

Monitoring and evaluation are comprehensive. Regular observations of lessons, scrutiny of the pupils' work, and discussion with them about what helps them to learn, provide a detailed insight into what is working well and where improvement can be made. The leaders are not afraid to change and refine approaches in order to promote better learning and progress for the pupils. Pupils' progress is analysed to make sure that all

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groups of pupils are doing well, reflecting the school's very strong commitment to equality of opportunity.

There are clear plans, based on a detailed audit, and a strong commitment to promote community cohesion. While community cohesion is strongly promoted within the school and local communities, engagement is less well developed with ethnic groups and cultures beyond those represented locally.

The exchange of information between home and school is very strong. Workshops, the results of annual questionnaires, and individual meetings to discuss progress, all contribute to the comprehensive information provided for parents. The school website, designed and maintained by the pupils, conveys a wide range of information.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The children join the Nursery with the skills and abilities expected for their ages. They make excellent progress and reach a good level of skills by the end of the Reception Year. This is the result of the excellent leadership and organisation of the Early Years Foundation Stage by the coordinator, who has involved a working group of parents in auditing the quality of education and in planning actions to improve it further.

Learning and development are very effectively managed and supported by all of the adults. Throughout the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults make timely interventions to extend the children's confidence, build their vocabulary and appreciably enhance their personal development. The children are happy to engage in conversation, asking visitors, 'What's your name?' The adults do not miss an opportunity to extend learning,

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and constantly assess and record the progress the children make. They keep detailed notes and examples of the children's progress in all areas of learning.

The provision made for the children in Early Years Foundation Stage promotes their well-being, learning and development very well. The accommodation is safe and well resourced. The environment supports learning with displays of words and numbers. The range of tasks and activities, both those led by adults and those chosen by the children, is expertly managed and ensures that the outdoor area is in constant and very effective use.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with their child's education. While a very few expressed concerns relating to incidents involving individuals, not receiving sufficient information, and not enough homework, most parents who made additional comments were full of praise for the school. The following are typical of them:

- 'We have nothing but praise for the staff...'
- 'The staff are of a very high professional calibre...'
- 'My child is motivated and excited.'
- 'Communication between home and school is excellent.'
- 'This is a terrific school...'
- 'An inspiring school!'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barnfields 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 214 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	143	67	66	31	5	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	152	71	59	28	1	0	1	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	119	56	91	43	3	1	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	120	56	83	39	10	5	1	0
The teaching is good at this school	135	63	76	36	3	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	117	55	87	41	10	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	94	44	116	54	2	1	1	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)	89	42	106	50	2	1	1	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	102	48	98	46	8	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	96	45	103	48	4	2	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	106	50	97	45	5	2	2	1
The school is led and managed effectively	138	64	69	32	1	0	2	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	144	67	68	32	2	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.



12 March 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barnfields Primary School, Stafford, ST17 4RD

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to inspectors about your school.

You go to an outstanding school which is very welcoming and supports you very well to 'believe and achieve'. You make excellent progress because your teachers are doing such a good job. You behave in a very grown-up manner, and approach your work with confidence. You work very well on the very interesting tasks your teachers set you. The children we spoke to told us how much they enjoy school, and that they feel very safe in lessons and on the playground. Some of you also said that the school provides lots of opportunities, particularly to play sport, that help you to keep fit. You also know how important it is to have a healthy diet. The buffet made by Year 6 for their presentation to their parents looked delicious, and I am sure it tasted just as good!

The school has improved a lot since the last inspection. This is because the headteacher and senior teachers, along with the governors, have very high expectations. As a result, the school provides you with an excellent curriculum that interests and encourages you to do your best. You have a lot of fun while you are learning.

The headteacher and senior teachers are leading the school extremely well. With the help of the governors, they are constantly looking at how well the school is doing so that improvements can be made. They have a plan for you to learn more about other communities and cultures, so I have encouraged them to go ahead and put this into place so that you become as knowledgeable about these things as you are in everything else you do at school.

I hope that you continue to really enjoy all that you do at school, and that you all continue to do well in future and achieve as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely

Christopher Parker

Lead inspector

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