

Barrs Court Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109136
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	354527
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Michael Merchant

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	293
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	R K Hartley
Headteacher	Barbara Fox
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They held meetings with a governor, staff and groups of pupils. They also talked to some parents and carers who were present at the start and finish of the school day. They observed the school's work, and looked at its improvement plan, minutes of governors' meetings, data on pupils' progress, records of the monitoring of the quality of teaching, and a range of school policies. They also analysed questionnaires received from 121 parents and carers and 98 pupils.

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

- pupils' attainment and progress, particularly more-able pupils
- how well the teaching takes account of the needs more-able pupils and how well teachers help all pupils to improve their work
- the effectiveness of the curriculum at motivating and inspiring all pupils and providing challenge for the high-attainers
- the effectiveness of middle leaders and governors in checking attainment, progress and teaching, and maintaining the high outcomes for all pupils.

Information about the school

This school is larger in size than most other primary schools. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than is typically found. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities, mainly moderate learning difficulties, is above average but the number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is lower than is typically found. The school achieved the Healthy Schools award in 2006, Activemark and Gold Artsmark in 2008 and Green Flag in 2010. There is a Reception unit of 45 children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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

This is an exceptional school which has maintained and built upon the very high standards seen at the last inspection. One parent summed up the views of many when saying, □Barrs Court is a vibrant and happy place. I feel privileged that my child is a pupil there.□

Pupils join the school in Reception with attainment that is broadly that expected for their age. By the end of Year 6, attainment has risen considerably and has been very high in national tests for the last three years. This represents outstanding progress and achievement from their starting points and nearly all pupils meet or exceed their challenging targets. Pupils□ personal development is outstanding because they are encouraged to see their potential and are given the self-confidence to work hard and aim high. They have a high regard for both their classmates and for the adults who work with them. Pupils display an enviable generosity of spirit, support a range of national and global charities, and are always concerned, through their Eco-School work, to take care of the environment. A very positive atmosphere permeates the school, relationships are exceptionally strong, and this, together with excellent care, guidance and support, results in happy learners. All adults work together extremely well to ensure that all pupils, whatever their difficulties or disabilities, are able to take full advantage of all that the school has to offer. Pupils□ joy of school is palpable and is evident in the ever-improving attendance rate, which is high.

The driving force behind the school□s success is undoubtedly the gifted and dedicated headteacher. She has led the school for a number of years with unflinching enthusiasm and determination. However, she does not work in isolation and, as one member of staff explained, □She encourages everyone in this school to be creative in their own way.□ In addition to this clear, purposeful and ambitious leadership, several factors contribute to the pupils□ very high standards and achievement.

- The behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school is impeccable, although they are lively, questioning and were keen to engage inspectors in conversation about their school. Their application and attitudes towards their learning must be commended. They have been taught how to develop their independent learning skills, yet work cooperatively, having highly developed skills of listening, taking turns and giving and receiving positive criticism.
- Teaching is outstanding and makes a significant contribution to pupils□ impressive rates of progress. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, give clear explanations and plan their lessons very well. Teachers use assessment criteria skilfully to encourage learning, to analyse and improve performance, and to set challenging targets for individual pupils.

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- The exciting curriculum ensures that learning is very meaningful and great fun. It matches pupils' needs extremely well and does much to foster the development of pupils' independent learning skills.

There is a strong sense of teamwork and pride in what has already been achieved, coupled with a total absence of complacency. School self-evaluation is highly accurate. Most importantly, the school knows exactly what to do further to sustain its journey of excellence and this, together with the successful action leaders have taken to ensure improvement since the last inspection, means the capacity to improve further is outstanding. The governing body supports the school well and plays a key role in promoting safeguarding and links with parents and carers. However, it has yet to fully and systematically evaluate the work of the school or to play an active part in setting school priorities

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the individual skills and expertise of governors to ensure they play a robust and strong role in shaping the strategic direction of the school.

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

The work seen by inspectors in lessons confirms the overall picture of consistently excellent progress. Pupils greatly enjoy school, grow in confidence and develop very positive attitudes to learning. Pupils achieve highly because most teachers expect much of their pupils and explain complicated ideas well. In an outstanding numeracy revision lesson in Year 6, pupils were learning at a blistering pace because of the teacher's exceptionally high expectations of what she wanted them to learn and the challenging and fun tasks she set for them. The school is very conscious of the needs of all pupils and so there is very little difference in the progress made by the various groups of pupils. For example, high-flyers are given work that fully challenges them. The school works very effectively to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and to fully challenge and support those who enter the school with particularly low levels of attainment.

Pupils have a very well-developed understanding of right and wrong and a deep appreciation and enjoyment of the wonders of life around them. They enthusiastically and knowledgeably explain the value of adopting healthy lifestyles and the need for exercise, reflecting the Healthy Schools award that the school has gained. Pupils have an excellent understanding for their age of how to be safe in the community. They eagerly take advantage of the many opportunities to participate in the community and are very well informed about other people's needs. They relish responsibility and this is shown through the mature attitude of the school council and the pupils' eager participation in imaginative and thought-provoking assemblies. Pupils develop impressive social and interpersonal skills and relish working collaboratively. This, together with high standards in the key skills in English and mathematics, means that they are very well prepared for the next stages of their lives.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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	1
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	1
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	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

The curriculum is truly outstanding and the way subjects are seamlessly linked together is a significant strength and contributes strongly to pupils' learning. In particular, the arts and music are very well promoted. The curriculum supports pupils' personal development through very effective personal, social and health education. Detailed and thoughtful planning for different abilities is consistently sharp. There is an excellent focus on using visits to widen pupils' life experiences; for instance, older pupils greatly benefit from their exchange visit with a school in France near Geneva. Parents and carers agree that children are looked after very well. Induction programmes are outstanding for those who arrive throughout the year and those starting in Reception. Child protection procedures are rigorous and the care for vulnerable pupils is outstanding. Excellent links with specialists help pupils with their learning, social skills and emotional development. Support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is especially strong and helps them to make excellent progress.

The quality of teaching and engagement with pupils and their learning is impressive. Teachers plan to meet the needs of all learners and adapt their lessons quickly in

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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response to their assessment of pupils' understanding and progress. Typically, lessons are fast-paced and fun. Teaching is lively, tasks and concepts are clearly explained, and activities are carefully designed to challenge the pupils to learn at a swift pace. Adults ask perceptive questions and these help pupils to think and use more varied vocabulary in their answers. Effective use of 'talking partners', drama, role play and letter and sounds (phonics) activities helps pupils make rapid progress in their speaking and writing. The school has set up very thorough systems to check on pupils' progress and these are used very well to ensure that none is in danger of falling behind and to enable teachers to consistently set the next steps for each pupil's learning. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the quality of their work and what they need to do next in order to move forward.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	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 headteacher has a clear and unwavering vision for her school which is supported and implemented by all staff. She communicates her high expectations persuasively to staff so that all have a shared sense of direction and feel part of a successful team. Consequently, teamwork is strong, staff morale is high and pupils' progress is accelerating. There is an obvious sense of purpose and, despite this being a school which thrives on innovation, it is strongly self-evaluative, and monitoring is effective in holding people to account. The senior leadership team and the subject leaders fulfil their responsibilities very well. There is no hint of complacency and there is a determination from staff at all levels to sustain and build upon the many gains of recent years. The school promotes complete equality for all pupils through its sophisticated monitoring and exemplary support.

There is a total commitment to the promotion of community cohesion. The principle of human rights is used as a baseline against which all curriculum planning and school developments are audited and policies are written. There is excellent involvement with the local community and a clear recognition that, although the school is situated in a predominantly White British community, every opportunity is taken to expand the pupils' understanding of the wider world through residential visits, visiting speakers, creative activities and the outstanding curriculum offered.

The governing body fulfils all legal requirements and gives good attention to the welfare of pupils and staff with all safeguarding arrangements found to be effective at the time

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of the inspection. The governors are very supportive of the school but are insufficiently involved in prioritising improvement. Their contribution to the school’s improvement plan is light, and their approach to evaluating the effectiveness of some policies and procedures is insufficiently rigorous.

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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good provision for the Reception class enables children to achieve well and develop a good level of independence. Children love coming to school and parents and carers are very appreciative of the good start that their children receive in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Staff have created a safe, attractive environment in which the needs of all children are well met. Teaching is good and so children make good progress from their differing starting points. This is because a team of well-qualified adults support the children skilfully by asking focused questions to develop their understanding. There is a good balance of activities led by adults and those from which children can choose. Children are developing excellent social skills because they are making choices and fostering independence through working with others.

All adults make observations of children and carefully assess their learning. However, this information is not always used rigorously enough to ensure that next steps in learning are sharply focused. By the end of their Reception Year, most children are working securely towards the standards expected for their age in most areas. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader provides good leadership. She has a very secure understanding of the Early Years' curriculum and constantly reviews the team’s practice to ensure that all children receive good quality care and support.

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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 school and its headteacher clearly enjoy the confidence and support of those parents and carers who returned the questionnaire. A number of individual comments reflected the high quality care, support and guidance given to pupils, particularly to those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and the high academic standards reached by pupils. The inspectors agree with these views. The numbers of parental criticisms were very few and these were followed up as inspection trails during the visit. For instance, a small minority of parents and carers raised concerns regarding instances of inappropriate behaviour. Inspectors found behaviour in class and around the school to be impeccable. The views of the parents and carers interviewed informally in the playground confirm the positive response in the questionnaires.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barrs Court 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 293 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	60	42	35	1	1	2	2
The school keeps my child safe	73	60	42	35	5	4	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	31	67	55	12	10	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	46	53	44	5	4	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	71	59	48	40	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	47	39	63	52	9	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	56	46	61	50	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)	43	36	62	51	5	4	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	50	41	56	46	10	8	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	37	31	61	50	15	12	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	27	58	48	15	12	4	3
The school is led and managed effectively	66	55	49	40	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	71	59	43	36	5	4	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.



14 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barrs Court Primary School, Bristol BS30 7JB

Thank you so much for the very warm welcome you gave the inspection team when we came to visit your school recently. We enjoyed every minute of our time with you. A special thank you to those pupils who came and talked to us about their work and told us about all the wonderful things you are involved in. Here are some of the really good things we found out about it:

- Your headteacher and all the staff work very hard to provide you with the best education possible. They take great care of you and want to see you all achieve the best that you possibly can.
- In Reception, you get off to a good start and you make outstanding progress as you pass through the school. By the time you leave at the end of Year 6, you reach standards in all your subjects that are very high compared to those in most other schools. This is because your teachers teach you very well and you also work very hard.
- We particularly enjoyed looking at your stunning artwork and listening to you sing and watching you learn how to Samba dance. These are just a few of the many things you learn in school and we were very impressed by the way subjects in your curriculum are linked together.
- The very best thing about your school (apart from the pupils and your excellent behaviour and attitudes to your learning) is that learning is fun and your teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for you.

Even though you go to an outstanding school, your amazing headteacher helped by governors and staff still want the school to get better. They will be working together to make sure that governors are in a good position to check regularly that everything is as it should be and to help the school plan for the future.

We know you will continue to do your very best at Barrs Court and we wish you all every success in the future. Thank you once again for making our visit such an interesting and happy experience.

Yours sincerely

Michael Merchant

Lead inspector

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