



Barnton Community Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 131681
Local Authority Cheshire
Inspection number 293811
Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007
Reporting inspector Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Townfield Lane
School category	Community		Barnton, Northwich
Age range of pupils	4–11		Cheshire CW8 4QL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01606 74784
Number on roll (school)	214	Fax number	01606 782784
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr Ian Stanley
		Headteacher	Mrs Dianne Howarth
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2001		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 24–25 January 2007	Inspection number 293811
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is an average sized primary school located within an area of mixed local authority and privately owned housing. The school includes a small unit which provides for pupils who have moderate learning difficulties (MLD). The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly above average, and a higher than average proportion are eligible for free school meals. The school has achieved the Artsmark Gold and Activemark Gold national awards, as well as the local authority's Healthy Schools award. The headteacher was appointed just prior to the last inspection, shortly after the amalgamation of infant and junior schools.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school in which pupils are exceptionally well cared for and supported. They build very well on the good start they make in the Foundation Stage and achieve extremely well as they move through the school, particularly those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. By the time they leave the school, pupils are thoughtful and mature young people with superb attitudes to learning. Attendance is good because pupils greatly enjoy the creativity of lessons and opportunities to express themselves through their work. Relationships are excellent; consequently, pupils are extremely mindful of one another and their behaviour is exemplary. The fact that the school has judged itself to be good rather than outstanding reflects the mindset of the headteacher and deputy headteacher - that improvement is an ongoing process with no room for complacency. Together they have driven through some major initiatives which clearly demonstrate the school's outstanding capacity to improve. All issues from the previous inspection have been dealt with. There is now impressive teaching and learning throughout the school and achievement which ranks among that of the top five per cent of schools nationally. Outstanding leadership and management ensure all aspects of the school's work are rigorously reviewed on a regular basis in order to maintain the current high standards and quality of provision. Standards are significantly above the national average; pupils' results were the school's best ever in 2006. That said, the school does not rest on its laurels, as demonstrated by the vigorous work undertaken to improve boys' writing, although this has not yet permeated all subjects. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and increasingly attend the many learning sessions arranged for them. Everyone is justifiably proud of the exceptionally high quality of the environment and standards of cleanliness which contribute greatly to pupils' feeling of well-being and enjoyment of school. Pupils respond exceptionally well to the rich and varied curriculum. They relish the challenges of lessons. Their achievements are testimony to the outstanding value for money provided by the school.

What the school should do to improve further

- Create more opportunities, for boys especially, to practise writing in a wider context across the curriculum.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 1

Children's overall attainment is broadly average for their age when they start in Reception class. They make very good progress so that most children reach, and a significant number exceed, expectations particularly in their personal development, by the time they leave the Foundation Stage. The school builds very well on their early skills and pupils make excellent progress as they move through the school. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities, which include those attending the special unit, achieve particularly well, frequently reaching the levels expected for their age

and at times beyond that. Standards have been consistently above, and at times well above, national expectations in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 1 and 2 over time. The reasons for this high level of performance can be found in the consistently challenging teaching and the thoroughness of systems for checking progress, which enabled the school not only to anticipate the slight 'dip' to above average in 2005, but to challenge its own performance, particularly with regard to boys' writing in 2006.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development thrives in school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The way pupils reflect on cultural issues shows that they are very well prepared for life in a multicultural society. They fully appreciate the quality of their school environment and take very good care of displays and equipment. Recently, pupils were placed runners up in the David Bellamy Award for Environmental Cleanliness. They understand the importance of diet and exercise in keeping a healthy lifestyle and know how to avoid dangerous situations. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities, such as school council membership and carrying out daily routine duties around the school. The after-school homework club is exceptionally well attended. The important life-skills that pupils learn, combined with their very good grounding in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), mean that pupils are very well prepared to secure their future well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 1

The quality of teaching and learning is outstanding. Teachers are guided by the example of leading primary practitioners on the senior leadership team who, with the headteacher, continually provide support and monitor the quality of their work. Pupils gain maximum benefit from teachers' special skills such as in art and music as these are shared throughout the school. The use of ICT is a strong feature of lessons and often inspires pupils to work at home under their own steam. For example, a pupil brought in their own animated computer-based presentation saved on a 'memory stick'. Teachers use assessment very well to check progress and set challenging targets for pupils at every level of ability. Relationships are excellent because of the highly effective way that staff manage pupils and promote their personal development. Teaching assistants play an important part in pupils' progress. They are especially skilled in helping those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities and are always sensitive to pupils' particular needs.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and enables them to achieve exceptionally well. It includes the teaching of French throughout the school and a residential visit to France is planned. Provision for literacy, numeracy, and ICT is outstanding, resulting in pupils' very high achievement, though there is scope to broaden the context for pupils' writing in order to strengthen their skills even further. There is an exceptional programme of activities, including residential visits, to enrich pupils' learning and their personal experiences. Lunchtime and after-school clubs for sport and the arts are very well attended and enable pupils to develop their varying skills and interests extremely well. This is demonstrated, for example, in the quality of art displayed and the outstanding singing of the choir. The school works very effectively with outside partners, and participation in local events and links with local churches have significantly enhanced its standing in the community.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are exceptionally well cared for. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children are in safe hands. The most vulnerable pupils receive outstanding support for both their emotional and academic development and often achieve beyond expectations. Everyone feels safe in school because of the trusting relationships that exist. Pupils are given every encouragement to succeed in an environment which is supportive and free from aggression. Procedures for safeguarding pupils, including risk assessments and safety checks of equipment, are robust. Academic guidance is highly effective. Teachers know what their pupils are capable of achieving and set challenging targets for them. Pupils understand what their targets are and what they must do to achieve them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 1

The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide outstanding leadership and have set a clear direction for the school. They maintain high expectations for standards and the quality of provision. Staff members, governors and parents share that vision and contribute fully to the school's continuing success and, because of its inclusiveness, the school is now at the heart of the community. Improvement since the previous inspection has been outstanding. The headteacher successfully steered the school through the legacy of cultural change brought about by the previous amalgamation of infant and junior schools and has firmly embedded outstanding teaching, achievement and quality of care. Self-evaluation is rigorous, though too modest in many of its judgments, given what has already been achieved. The school is justifiably recognised by the local authority as one of its most improved schools. Nevertheless, leadership is not complacent in the drive for further improvement. Governors

understand the school's strengths very well and are equally clear about where improvements are to be made. They evaluate the school's progress systematically and ensure that spending fully supports planned improvements.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	1
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	1
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

As you will remember we visited your school recently. We would like to thank you for the splendid welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you and your teachers and found many terrific things about your school. We agree with you and your parents that Barnton is an outstanding school.

The most important things we found out are that you all achieve exceptionally well to reach such high standards in English, mathematics and science. This is because your teachers have high hopes for you and use their skills extremely well to make sure you all do your best. Your behaviour and manners are fantastic and you told us just how much you really enjoy school. These are further reasons why you achieve so well. We also noticed how well all of the adults in school take really good care of you and how well you respect them for that. You told us that you feel safe and happy and we can see why. Your headteacher has done a tremendous job in making your school an outstanding place in which to learn. To make sure it remains that way, we have asked if you could be given a few more opportunities to practise writing in more subjects, so that you really make use of all the impressive skills you learn.

Good luck everyone and best wishes for the future.