

Barley Croft Primary School

Malham Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, LE4 0UT

Inspection dates

5–6 February 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The strong leadership of the headteacher and other senior leaders has made sure the teaching has improved. It is now mostly good and, at times, outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their different starting points. As a result, standards in English and mathematics are rising.
- Good teaching ensures pupils make good progress in the speech and language unit.
- Teaching assistants provide good support for any pupils who need additional help.
- The school accurately evaluates how well it is doing and what needs to be done to improve. Leaders keep a close check on how well every pupil is doing.
- Pupils feel safe. Their good behaviour and attitudes to learning contribute to their good progress in lessons.
- The governing body is very effective and provides the school with good levels of challenge.
- The school successfully engages increasing numbers of parents and carers in their children's education.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The teaching of the links between letters and sounds (phonics) is not consistently good.
- Not enough pupils have made more than the expected progress in mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 19 lessons. Several of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors also observed the breakfast club and one assembly, and made a number of short visits to classrooms.
- Pupils were observed at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, staff, pupils and the Chair, Vice-Chair and two other members of the Governing Body. They also met with some parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- A meeting was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at information on individual pupils' progress. Groups of pupils of different ages were heard reading.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents including policies, teachers' plans, samples of pupils' work, school improvement planning and records on behaviour and safety. They examined evidence about teachers' performance, and records of meetings held by the governing body.
- They took account of 41 responses to the staff questionnaire, 12 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and 86 responses to a survey of parents' views carried out by the governors.

Inspection team

Kenneth Thomas, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Lynda Townsend

Additional Inspector

Kate Robertson

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average primary school.
- The majority of pupils are from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds.
- About one-third of pupils speak English as an additional language. This is well above average and rising.
- A high proportion of pupils, close to two thirds, are known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding. This is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children with a parent in the armed services and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs who are supported through school action is average. The proportion supported at school action plus or through a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school provides specially resourced provision for up to 15 pupils with statements for speech, language and communication needs.
- The proportion of pupils who join partway through their primary school education is well above that in most other schools.
- The school provides a breakfast club.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Make sure that all staff have a clear understanding of how letters and sounds can be taught effectively and how pupils' progress in this area can be accelerated.
- Develop pupils' understanding of mathematics-specific words and terms and improve their ability to solve word problems that demand a series of steps in the way the answer is reached.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Nursery and Reception classes with skills that are generally low in comparison with those expected for their age. Most children are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Language and communication skills and personal and social development are particularly weak. Children make good progress from their starting points, although only a small minority achieve the Early Learning Goals (the standards set for this stage) by the time they enter Year 1.
- The large majority of pupils enter Year 1 with weaknesses in language and communication. They start from a low point, and make steady progress in learning about letters and the sounds they make, but it is not rapid enough to make up ground. The teaching of phonics is not consistently good, in either the Early Years Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1 so the proportion of pupils reaching the levels expected for their age in the Year 1 phonics screening check is below that in most schools.
- After this, a strong emphasis on the development of reading and writing skills helps pupils to begin to catch up. As a result standards in reading and writing, although below average, are rising, with the large majority of pupils reaching the expected levels by the end of Key Stage 1. Standards in mathematics are also improving, although at a slower rate than in reading and writing.
- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6, although below average, represent good achievement when standards on entry are taken into account. In the 2013 national tests and assessments, the proportions of pupils who made expected progress in reading and writing from the end of Key Stage 1 were close to the national figures. The proportions making better than expected progress were above the national figures in both subjects.
- While the proportion of pupils who made expected progress in mathematics was close to the national figure, the proportion making better than expected progress was below. As a result standards in mathematics were lower than those in reading and writing. Although pupils have reasonably secure basic number skills, weaknesses in comprehension and subject-specific vocabulary interfere with pupils' ability to solve more complex multi-step word problems.
- The progress of more-able pupils is comparable to that of other pupils. However, because of the low starting points of many pupils, the proportion of pupils that reach the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics is below average.
- Standards are affected by the large number of pupils who join the school at different times. The standards reached by pupils who are in the school throughout Key Stage 2 are much closer to national averages. Many of those who join are in the early stages of learning English. They learn the language rapidly and achieve well because of the intensive support that is provided to develop their English language skills. There is no difference in the achievement of pupils of different ethnic backgrounds.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress from their different starting points because effective use is made of assessment information to make sure that the work they are set is suited to their particular abilities and disabilities. Pupils in the speech and language unit make good progress because of the effective specialist support and good teaching they receive.

- Pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium funding achieve well to reach standards that are often above those of their classmates. At the end of Key Stage 2 in 2013, they were ahead of other pupils in the school, but were behind other pupils nationally by about 14 months in mathematics, 10 months in reading and eight months in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling. These gaps were narrower than they had been at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Good use is being made of the additional sports funding. It has boosted pupils' general health and wellbeing through their participation in a wider range of sports and other physical activities.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The good teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes lays the basis for pupils' enthusiasm for learning that is seen throughout the school. The vast majority of pupils, across all year groups, have positive attitudes to learning and want to try their best for their teachers.
- Underpinning the good teaching throughout the school is the improved use of assessment information in lesson planning. Teachers know the levels that pupils are working at and make sure that, in most lessons, pupils of differing ability levels do not find the work they are given either too hard or too easy. This was a feature of the good teaching in an English lesson with a class of Year 4 and Year 5 pupils, for example. In this lesson pupils increased their understanding of writing for different purposes as they wrote sets of instructions on 'How to look after your Dragon'.
- Good use of the support available from teaching assistants is a feature of most lessons. Their work is well managed and directed closely at ensuring different groups of pupils, including those of higher ability, achieve well enough. Together with teachers, they ensure that the work given to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and, where needed, those eligible for the pupil premium, builds up in small steps so they make good progress towards their learning targets.
- Pupils who join the school at different times make good progress because their standards and any particular weaknesses are carefully assessed and effective individual or small group support is provided by skilled teaching assistants to fill in any gaps.
- The teaching of literacy and numeracy skills is good overall. However, not all adults in the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes fully understand how phonics may be taught effectively and how pupils' progress in their understanding of letters and sounds can be accelerated.
- A feature of many lessons is the emphasis placed on the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils are encouraged to talk, through the tasks they are given and with a partner. This helps to develop both their communication skills and their use and understanding of subject-specific vocabulary.
- The quality of teaching in the speech and language unit is good and, at times, outstanding. Staff have an excellent understanding of pupils' individual speech and language capabilities. They provide good linguistic models and make sure that work and support are carefully planned to develop pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work is thorough and makes clear what pupils have done well and what they need to do to improve. Pupils' books show that they are responding to the teachers'

comments and are learning from the advice given.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is calm and orderly. Pupils' positive attitudes to learning contribute to their progress in lessons because the vast majority listen carefully, share ideas and want to try their best for their teachers.
- The behaviour of pupils is good both inside and outside the classrooms. From the time children enter the school they learn the need for school rules and most follow them willingly.
- Pupils and staff say that good behaviour is the norm. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well and interruptions to learning caused by poor behaviour are rare. School records confirm that incidents of poor behaviour are not common.
- Pupils behave well in the speech and language unit because staff have high expectations and a consistent approach to managing behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Parents and carers spoken to during the inspection echoed the view that this is a harmonious and welcoming school in which their children are kept safe.
- Through lessons and assemblies, pupils are given the skills they need to manage everyday risks for themselves; for example, safe use of the internet, and road and fire safety.
- Pupils have a good understanding for their age of different types of bullying, including physical bullying and persistent name-calling. Those spoken to by the inspectors said that there had been a few incidents of bullying involving a very small number of older boys. The school makes clear that bullying or harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. The incidents had been dealt with by the school and pupils were confident that adults would look after them well if they had any concerns.
- The school provides particularly good support to pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Effective support enables such pupils to play a full part in the life of the school and make progress in line with that of others.
- Pupils respond well to opportunities to take on jobs and responsibilities within the school, for example, as school councillors. Those spoken to during the inspection said that they were very satisfied with all the school offered and could not think of any way in which the school could be improved.
- Although below average, attendance is improving because of the success of several well-planned actions taken by the school. There has been a reduction in the number of persistent absentees. Regular attendance is celebrated and given a high profile in classrooms and school assemblies. The school's attendance officer quickly follows up absences.
- The breakfast club is well supervised and provides the pupils who attend with a very welcoming, friendly and nutritious start to the day.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher, with the strong support of the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders, guides the work of the school very effectively. Together they form a very effective team and have the full support of staff and governors.
- Good leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) ensures that supportive links are established with parents and carers from the time that children first enter school. This has a positive impact on children's academic progress and social development.
- The careful checking of pupils' progress and accurate evaluation of the school's work provides all leaders with a clear understanding of the school's performance. This ensures that improvement planning is sharply focused on identified weaknesses. This is seen, for example, in the successful tackling of the action points raised in the last inspection report.
- Improvement planning is supported by effective procedures for evaluating individual teachers' performance and setting targets that are based on the impact of teaching on pupils' progress. Teachers and teaching assistants confirm that they are well supported through training to improve their skills and achieve their targets.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide academic and personal support for eligible pupils through, for example, additional staff and resources. The progress of these pupils, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is checked to ensure that the variety of things the school does to support pupils have a positive impact on their progress.
- Good leadership and management of the speech and language unit make sure that staff work together as a cohesive team. Parents and carers value the good quality of the teaching and support provided for their children.
- The local authority provides the school with good support through the school improvement adviser. She supports the school very effectively and has been engaged, for example, in helping the school improve teaching and learning and the work of governors.
- The curriculum promotes achievement well. With an appropriate emphasis on the development of literacy and numeracy skills, the curriculum is enhanced by a variety of creative activities, after-school activities and visits out of school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is nurtured well through school assemblies, music and the arts. The impact is seen, for example, in pupils' acceptance of clearly defined boundaries of what is right or wrong.
- The school makes good use of the additional primary sports funding to enhance provision through, for example, the employment of specialist sports coaches to work alongside and develop the skills of teachers. There are appropriate systems to evaluate the impact of this provision.
- The school has very positive relationships with the vast majority of parents and carers. Through the concerted efforts of the school's family support worker, family engagement officer and learning support officer, the school is successfully engaging more hard-to-reach families in their children's learning. This is having a positive impact on pupils' attendance and achievement and demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity and the elimination of discrimination.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The school benefits from the support of an effective governing body. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They know how its results compare with those of other schools and hold leaders to account for its performance. Governors spend time in classrooms, talking to teachers and pupils so that they are clear for themselves about the progress being made and they produce useful reports. For example, the vice-chair of governors identified where discontinuity in a pupil's learning occurred and this led to action to improve the support provided for similar pupils.
- Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching and make sure that pay and promotion are justified by the impact of teaching on pupils' progress and achievement. They have supported the firm action taken by the headteacher to eradicate inadequate teaching. Governors make sure that all national requirements are met, including those relating to the safeguarding of pupils. All necessary checks are carried out to ensure pupils' safety.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	120050
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	430698

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	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dennis Yeates
Headteacher	Kevin Lacey
Date of previous school inspection	8 March 2012
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