

Barrowford School

Rushton Street, Barrowford, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 6EA

Inspection dates 7–8 July 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Inadequate	4
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Inadequate	4
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Early years provision		Inadequate	4

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that has serious weaknesses. It is not good because

- Teaching is inadequate. Staff expectations of what pupils can achieve are not high enough. Some staff do not give enough attention to teaching the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics.
- The teaching of reading is ineffective. In some classes, the weaker readers read aloud too infrequently to an adult. The school has not developed a good partnership with parents to help pupils develop their reading skills at home.
- Children in Reception are not prepared for the curriculum in Year 1. The proportion of children reaching a good level of development is too low. The quality of provision and standards in the early years are inadequate, including welfare arrangements.
- Governors do not follow up the issues they identify for improvement in enough depth. This means they are not always sufficiently confident in holding the school to account. As a result, governance requires improvement.
- The headteacher's leadership has emphasised developing pupils' emotional and social well-being more than the attainment of high standards. Leaders and managers have acted to address weaknesses in teaching but this has not yet resulted in improvements. Consequently, pupils in some classes do not achieve as well as they should.
- Behaviour requires improvement. In lessons, pupils do not always concentrate on what they are doing and are too easily distracted. Some pupils do not complete all of the work they have been set, particularly if the teacher has not been clear about their expectations or set timescales for completing the work.
- More-able pupils do not reach the higher levels in the national tests and assessments for seven- and 11-year-olds. Pupils' achievement over time is not good enough, particularly in year groups where teaching is weak.

The school has the following strengths

- Standards are improving and are getting closer to those attained nationally by seven- and 11-year-olds as a result of some well-targeted small group teaching, particularly of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school is inclusive. Pupils who have special educational needs are supported well by staff and make good progress. Pupils are taught to be tolerant of differences and caring towards those who need help.
- Pupils are polite and friendly to visitors. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities to represent the views of pupils to improve their school.
- Pupils say they are confident to tell staff about how they feel at school because staff listen to any concerns and act upon them.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection was carried out with no notice.
- Inspectors observed teaching in all classrooms, carried out joint observations of lessons with senior leaders, looked at the work in pupils' books and the displays around the school. They spoke to teachers, pupils, four members of the governing body, the independent school improvement partner and parents.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and talked to pupils about their work while they visited classes.
- Inspectors considered 112 responses from Parent View, along with individual contact with the inspectors by three parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised the school development plan, school information and assessment records and the minutes of the governing body meetings since the last inspection.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding arrangements and policies.
- Inspectors visited the nurture room and breakfast arrangements.

Inspection team

Gill Jones, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

John Gornall

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sheila Loughlin

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 44 of the Education Act 2005 (as amended), Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. Although the proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is increasing, it is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The percentage of pupils who are disadvantaged and eligible for support from pupil premium funding is below the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are cared for by the local authority.
- The school meets the current government floor standard. This is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs is below the national figure.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club and a nurture room.
- Provision is offered full time for children in Reception.
- The school employs a social worker, play therapist, educational psychologist and a behaviour support manager in addition to its teaching staff.
- There has been significant turbulence in staffing over the last year, reducing the senior leadership team from five to three members.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of leadership and management by taking concerted action to remove inadequate teaching.
- Strengthen governance by ensuring that governors make good use of the information they are provided with to systematically challenge senior leaders and address weaknesses.
- Improve the quality of provision and standards in the early years by ensuring that:
 - transition arrangements do not impede the learning and development of children currently in Reception
 - assessment is accurate
 - resources are suitable and welfare arrangements are appropriate
 - the curriculum matches the learning and development needs of the children.
- Leaders and managers must improve the quality of teaching by ensuring that:
 - teachers use time well and have high expectations of what pupils, particularly the most able, can achieve so that all groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points
 - staff adhere to school policies and procedures for teaching reading, writing, mathematics and for giving homework
 - new staff receive suitable induction and clear guidance on implementing policies and schemes of work
 - teachers set high expectations and clear timescales on how long pupils have to complete tasks and for pupils adopting good attitudes to learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leaders and managers have not secured good or better teaching across the school. They have not paid enough attention to ensuring that all staff teach the basic skills in reading, writing and mathematics well. Although standards are improving gradually, the headteacher has relied too heavily for this improvement on a few talented individual teachers performing well. She has not tackled all inadequate teaching quickly enough.
- Senior leaders are too lax in their approach to monitoring the day-to-day activities of classes. For example, they do not check timetables to know what pupils will be learning during the week. Staff are given too much freedom to set the parameters of the day; as a result, not all teachers use time well enough to ensure pupils are given every opportunity to do their best.
- New staff joining the school are given too little guidance on implementing policies and schemes of work for teaching the basic skills, such as reading and mathematics. Consequently, the variation in the quality of teaching in these subjects is wide.
- Leaders faced some significant staffing issues in the last academic year which were outside their control. They dealt with them purposefully to ensure that the education of pupils in Year 6 did not suffer as a consequence.
- Pupil premium funding is used mainly to support pupils' emotional needs, which are met well. However, not enough attention is given to more able disadvantaged pupils reaching the higher levels in their national tests and assessments.
- The mathematics and English subject leaders are new to their roles and are keen to implement their plans. They share a good understanding of what needs to be done, but it is too soon to see the impact of their subject leadership across the school.
- Following the departure of the senior leader responsible for the curriculum, the deputy headteacher has stepped in. Together with the headteacher, she is clear about the strengths and weaknesses of the curriculum and has analysed pupil progress data well to drive improvement in the Key Stages 1 and 2 national assessments. However, very little emphasis has been given to ensuring that the broader curriculum is strong across the school.
- The headteacher has placed an appropriate emphasis on developing an inclusive school, where pupils are encouraged to work together well, understand differences and help those who struggle to learn. Pupils are prepared socially and emotionally for a life in modern Britain. Arrangements to safeguard their health and safety are adequate.
- Attendance is monitored closely and the behaviour support team works effectively with pupils from families facing challenging circumstances. Consequently, attendance has improved since the last inspection and the behaviour of these pupils is managed well and improving.
- Leaders and managers ensure that pupils who have special educational needs and those pupils in need of personal and emotional support achieve well, enjoy school and maintain their well-being. A large proportion of the school funding is allocated to nurture and therapy for the most vulnerable pupils, which has led to improvements in the standards they achieve.
- Recent arrangements to bring forward the transition arrangements between year groups, so that pupils are already with the teacher who will teach them in the next academic year were successfully managed in Key Stage 2, but less so in Key Stage 1. This is because insufficient attention was paid to the learning needs of children in Reception.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Members of the governing body carry out their statutory duties satisfactorily through a range of committees. The work of these committees is not always followed up sufficiently closely in the main meetings of the governing body. Recently, the headteacher introduced a new online system of information sharing to enable governors to access all the key documentation about the school. However, this provides too much information for governors to read and digest and it is not all useful. Consequently, not all governors are sufficiently confident to drill down and ask the most important questions. Their challenge has driven improvement in the outcomes for older pupils and for pupils in the phonic reading check in particular. The minutes of meetings show that governors are mainly correct in their lines of questioning, but they do not pursue them far enough. This means some important weaker aspects, particularly in the lower part of the school, remain.
 - Governors check the quality of teaching adequately and implement appropriate reward systems. They have taken decisive action on staffing issues when required and are keen to ensure that pupils achieve well and receive a high quality education.

- Governors are supportive of the school and some visit regularly. However, they do not use these visits to systematically check the information they receive.
- The governing body take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. They ensure that safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. In the lower part of the school in particular, pupils are not well motivated in lessons. There is too much idle chatter and not enough focus on getting the tasks done.
- Behaviour in lessons is variable, ranging from good to poor. Although the school promotes pupils 'loving to learn', it was not evident in all classes. In the weaker lessons, pupils' attitudes towards work were sloppy and tasks were often incomplete. More generally across the school, pupils are not overly concerned about presentation. This is reflected in the lack of display in some classrooms and around the school.
- Some younger pupils do not have the self-discipline to focus on their work. The large numbers of pupils with additional needs in Year 1 classes in particular, disrupts those pupils who are more ready to learn.
- Year 6 pupils are very responsible and polite. During the inspection, they set a good example to the younger pupils.
- In the playground, pupils make good use of the limited space available to them. Playtimes are sometimes very crowded when more than two classes are outside at any one time. However, pupils generally behave well.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- Approximately one-fifth of the responses on Parent View stated that their child does not feel safe in school. All the pupils who spoke with inspectors said they felt safe in school; however, behaviour in some of the Reception and Key Stage 1 classes was not good.
- Pupils told inspectors that there was some bullying, but that it was always dealt with well by staff. Pupils receive guidance to stay safe online.
- Staff pay good attention to pupils' emotional and physical needs. They are caring and approachable. They know the pupils and their families well, which enables staff to provide support where necessary.
- The school employs additional staff who support pupils' well-being. They are used effectively to intervene, providing support through nurture sessions and play therapy. Consequently, pupils' attendance is improving.

The quality of teaching

is inadequate

- Too much teaching is inadequate. Too often, teachers do not set out their expectations clearly; consequently, pupils are not sure what they are expected to learn.
- Staff do not ensure pupils complete work to a high standard. In some classrooms, there is very little direction set for pupils on how to do their best or celebration of what they have achieved. Some pupils told inspectors that 'no one minds if we don't do our best work'.
- Exercise books show that teachers do not use assessment effectively to challenge the most able pupils sufficiently, or provide enough guidance for those who struggle to learn. On too many occasions, pupils of differing abilities are set exactly the same work. Teachers rely too heavily on the additional support that is provided for some pupils by extra staff, rather than ensuring that their lessons meet the different learning needs of pupils.
- Pupils have one exercise book which contains their work in all subjects. This makes the management of marking difficult and pupils do not get the regular feedback they need to ensure rapid progress. Teachers assess pupils' skills and abilities regularly, but this information is not used effectively to ensure pupils make rapid progress.
- Staff do not follow consistently the agreed school policy for reading. In some classes, teachers hear weaker readers daily, in others as little as once a fortnight. Not all staff prioritise weaker readers and consequently, those who are behind in their reading do not have the chance to catch up quickly. The system for home reading is firmly established in some parts of the school, less so in others. Consequently, not all pupils make enough progress in their reading and this limits pupils' ability to do as well as they

could in other subjects.

- The teaching of writing is weak across the school. Older pupils do not complete enough pieces of extended writing to develop sufficient fluency, nor do teachers check work thoroughly enough for accuracy; consequently, standards in writing are below average.
- Mathematics teaching is inconsistent. Although there are pockets of good teaching in mathematics, which has led to some more-able pupils gaining the higher Level 6 at the end of Key Stage 2, too much is weak. Staff do not have good subject knowledge and the mathematics scheme of work is not detailed enough. Some staff told inspectors they struggle to find sufficient materials suitable for the wide range of ability in their classes.
- Teachers do not ensure that teaching assistants are well briefed or included in planning lessons. This means that some teaching assistants provide appropriate support to manage pupils' social and emotional needs, but they do not feel well prepared to support pupils' learning.
- Staff do not set homework that consistently helps support pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. Nearly a third of responses on Parent View were negative about homework and pupils spoken to during the inspection did not take work home.
- In classes where teaching is stronger, the work in pupils' books and on the walls demonstrates higher expectations. There are pockets of good teaching in all key stages.
- Teachers' focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not consistently strong across the school. Where it is good, pupils are polite and work effectively together.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Following a year in Reception, less than a third of all children achieved the government's expected standards in 2014. Well below the national average proportion of children reach a good level of development. This means that two thirds of pupils started Year 1 in 2014 without the skills and knowledge they needed.
- More pupils achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonic screening check in 2015 than previously. The pupils who read to inspectors were able to use their phonic knowledge to help them sound out words. Not all pupils receive sufficient support to become fluent readers.
- Younger pupils do not make good enough progress from their starting points to reach the standards expected for seven year olds. Too many of the higher ability pupils in particular, do not do as well as they could. Disadvantaged pupils do slightly better than those not eligible for support through the extra funding. This is because the additional small group support provided for those pupils helps them to make better progress than their peers.
- Pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has improved over the last two years. Most pupils now attain average standards by the time they leave Year 6. However, more-able pupils do not do as well as others nationally, with fewer reaching the higher Level 5 in reading, grammar, spelling and punctuation and mathematics. The early indications of Key Stage 2 results for 2015 show that more pupils are set to reach the higher levels in all subjects than previously and demonstrate stronger progress.
- Pupils who have special educational needs make good progress. Their progress is carefully tracked to ensure they receive the support they need.
- Disadvantaged pupils achieve less well in reading, writing and mathematics than other pupils in the school at the end of Key Stage 2. They finish Key Stage 2 more than a year behind their peers. Although the gap in attainment between them and other pupils nationally is continuing to close, their progress is slower than that of other pupils in the school.

The early years provision

is inadequate

- The children in Reception are not well prepared for the curriculum in Key Stage 1. Leaders and managers have failed to ensure that assessment is accurate. This means that the transition between Reception and Year 1 does not support children to make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is inadequate. Teachers do not ensure that the curriculum and resources enable children to make progress. They do not excite children's natural inquisitiveness through the activities they provide and relationships are poor. Children are transferred to Year 1 classes before they are ready.
- Children's behaviour is poor. They do not respond to instructions from adults and are not well motivated to learn. Children who are ready for more challenging tasks are not stretched because staff spend too

much time managing poor behaviour.

- Hygiene at snack time is inadequate. For example, children are allowed to handle books and other resources while still eating oranges. They are not encouraged to wash their hands before and after handling food.
- On the second day of the inspection, the headteacher responded to feedback from the inspectors and moved the children in Reception back to the Reception classroom with the early years teachers. The quality of teaching was better and the children enjoyed the range of resources available.
- Children's learning journals and reading records indicate that past learning was better than that seen during the inspection. However, teachers' assessments are overly generous and do not accurately reflect the current skills, behaviour and abilities of the children.
- The transition arrangements are inadequate. Too much time is spent preparing for the new intake at the expense of providing a good quality of education for the children who are already in the school.

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	119166
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	465398

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Doug Metcalfe
Headteacher	Rachel Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2012
Telephone number	01282 615644
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	head@barrowford.lancs.sch.uk

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