



Barcombe Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Better
education
and care

Unique Reference Number 114488
Local Authority East Sussex
Inspection number 279393
Inspection date 17 October 2006
Reporting inspector Clive Lewis

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Barcombe Cross
School category	Voluntary controlled		Lewes
Age range of pupils	4-11		BN8 5DN
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01273 400287
Number on roll (school)	142	Fax number	01273 401187
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Carwyn Hughes
		Headteacher	Caitlin Yapp
Date of previous school inspection	13 November 2000		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Barcombe is a smaller-than-average village school. Attainment on entry is average and the school has fewer pupils than average with learning difficulties and disabilities. No pupil speaks English as an additional language. The deputy headteacher was recently appointed as headteacher and a new deputy has been appointed from outside the school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Barcombe is a good school which meets the needs of learners well. This is a more positive judgement than the rather cautious judgement of the new senior management team. One of the strengths of the school is the determined leadership and management of the headteacher and the senior management team and their very clear understanding of what the school needs to do to improve. Governors are very supportive of the school's work and are well aware of the challenges that it faces. The school is led and managed well and its capacity for further improvement is good.

This is a happy school with a welcoming family atmosphere where high priority is given to safeguarding pupils' well-being. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, one writing 'the school has improved greatly and is working hard to provide children with the best possible care'. The good relationships with staff and the wide range of interesting activities ensure that pupils really enjoy coming to school, adopt safe, healthy lifestyles and behave exceptionally well. These are key factors in the pupils' good personal development and, in turn, result in their good progress. Staff care for and support the pupils well.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and, as a result, pupils achieve well, although variations in the quality of teaching lead to some inconsistencies in progress. The school is monitoring and supporting teachers effectively to ensure greater consistency in teaching and in subject leadership, where there is some variation in the degree to which subject leaders monitor and assess standards in their subject. In the Reception class, children achieve well, a clear improvement since the last inspection. By the time pupils leave the school at age 11 standards are above average, although they do not do as well in writing as they do in reading, mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties receive effective support which helps them to achieve well.

The school works well in partnership with others to promote pupils' well-being. The good curriculum enriches pupils' lives through the many interesting and exciting activities provided for them in lessons and by the extensive range of well-attended after-school clubs. Good opportunities help pupils develop their enterprise skills to support future learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the consistency of teaching to ensure better progress across the school.
- Improve standards in writing throughout the school.
- Strengthen the management role of subject leaders.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All pupils, including those with learning difficulties, achieve well and standards are above average. Children enter the Reception class with broadly average skills and experiences, although the current cohort of children has more advanced mathematical

skills and personal and social skills than usually found. Children make good progress in the Reception class because the provision and teaching are good and the issues of the last inspection relating to the outdoor curriculum have been addressed well.

Progress in Year 1 is satisfactory, but pupils achieve well in Year 2 because of outstanding teaching. As a result, standards by the end of Year 2 are above average, as shown by the most recent 2006 national assessments. Progress varies similarly from year to year in Years 3 to 6 but by Year 6, standards are above average. The national test results in 2006 were above average. These good results in Year 6 are a recent improvement and are entirely due to the determined leadership and the strong, focused teaching of the new deputy headteacher. Throughout the school, there is a relative weakness in pupils' writing, which the school is aware of and is addressing effectively.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Attendance is above average and behaviour in and around school is excellent. Pupils respond well to the good opportunities provided for them to show respect and care for others. In the playground they play well together and the 'buddy' scheme and other initiatives make even the youngest feel safe and comfortable. Pupils have good attitudes. They look forward to coming to school because they really enjoy learning and feel valued and respected. Their moral, social and spiritual awareness is excellent. Especially close links with local churches and a good range of interesting activities enable pupils to build on their experiences. Pupils' cultural awareness is good, and they are keen to participate in art and music, but their appreciation of different cultures is not quite as strong.

There are many opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to the community, and members of the school council are enthusiastic and keen to make a difference. Pupils can explain clearly why it is important to eat healthily. They have a good awareness of the importance of staying safe and know who to go to should they feel threatened or bullied. Pupils' good basic skills and their high levels of confidence prepare them well for the next stage of their education and, eventually, for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, resources are used well and lessons are carefully planned. Effective questioning, the imaginative use of information and communication technology (ICT), and novel and interesting methods aimed at making learning fun occur in several lessons. These approaches have a positive effect on pupils' progress. However, some inconsistencies remain and on a few occasions teaching is less effective. As a result of these variations in teaching, of

which the school is very aware, pupils in some years are making much better progress than those in others. The development of pupils' writing has not been as effective as other areas of the curriculum. However, the school has made good progress in addressing this relative weakness and the teaching of writing skills is now good.

Teachers have good relationships with all pupils, which help to motivate them. Teaching assistants work very well with teachers, giving sensitive support to pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Teachers assess pupils' learning thoroughly. This information is used well in English and mathematics to ensure that work builds consistently on what pupils already know. Pupils know what is expected of them because teachers share with them what they need to do next to improve. Individual targets are also effective in motivating pupils' positive attitudes.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a broad and lively curriculum that ensures all pupils are provided with learning opportunities that are well matched to their needs and capabilities. The school successfully promotes healthy and safe lifestyles. The curriculum is also greatly enriched by visitors to school and visits to places of interest such as a residential centre on the Isle of Wight. These opportunities develop pupils' personal skills and bring their learning alive. The school provides a wide range of clubs and activities, which are very popular with pupils of all ages and contribute well to their personal development and positive attitudes. In the Reception class, there is a good mix between teacher-led and child-initiated activities. Since the last inspection the school has developed a well-organised outdoor area which supports learning effectively. There is a good focus on developing basic skills in literacy and numeracy, including writing, which is improving. Provision for ICT has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now taught well and used successfully to support learning in a wide range of subjects. The school has rightly identified the need to review the curriculum framework regularly to develop more creative cross-curricular approaches to teaching and learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. Attendance is monitored thoroughly and the school is careful to check up immediately on reasons for absences. Pupils are supervised well, including at the start of the day. Adults show a genuine concern for pupils' safety and learning, and child protection procedures are thorough. Pupils say that they feel safe and secure and they know what to do if they have any worries.

Because of recent significant improvements in the analysis and use of assessment information, all members of staff now have a good understanding of pupils' individual academic needs and progress. This information is used well to set targets in English and mathematics and is developing well in science. Pupils who may need extra help are beginning to be identified early. Individual education plans for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are detailed and include clear and realistic targets, although teachers' involvement in monitoring these effectively is at an early stage.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The new headteacher and senior management team, with the good support of a committed governing body, have been very effective in raising achievement in a relatively short period. They have set a clear direction leading to improvement and are promoting high quality care and education. The headteacher, with the very effective support of the deputy headteacher, has worked hard, and with some success, to support teachers to enable them to overcome relative weaknesses in their teaching. Leadership of subjects, however, whilst developing well, is not strong in all areas and remains an area for further development.

Under the new leadership, strengthened and accurate analysis and checking procedures have resulted in a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. This information is usefully shared with all staff so that all teachers now have a very clear understanding of the progress individual pupils are making and are expected to make in their classes. This good self-evaluation is reflected clearly in the school improvement plan, which identifies the main areas for improvement. The school has set in place good systems to achieve the required improvements. For example, a whole-school initiative to improve standards in writing is beginning to have an impact.

Governors discharge their responsibilities well. They have a very clear view of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Resources, including staff, are deployed well in order to achieve best value for money. The school is well placed to improve further.

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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?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
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	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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

18 October 2006

Dear Pupils

Barcombe Church of England Primary School, Lewes, East Sussex

I would like to thank you for your help during the recent inspection of your school. We very much enjoyed our visit.

Barcombe is a good school. Your headteacher and staff enable you to learn well and enjoy your lessons. They make sure you understand how to look after yourselves and keep safe, and you do this well. Your teachers plan your lessons well and make sure you know how you can improve your work. You told us that you like school and there are lots of things to do and enjoy. We agree with you. Your behaviour is excellent and you usually make good progress in your lessons. You work hard and try to succeed in all that you do.

We have asked your school to do some things to make it even better.

- Make sure that activities and planning are good in all classes to help everyone make good progress all the time.
- Help you all to improve your writing further.
- Help teachers who are responsible for different subjects to learn more about how well the subject is taught in the school.

We are confident that, with your help, the school will improve still further.

I wish you well in your future education.

Yours sincerely

Clive Lewis Lead Inspector