



Barley Hill Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123034
Local Authority Oxfordshire
Inspection number 292562
Inspection dates 6–7 February 2007
Reporting inspector Steven Hill

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

The inspection of the day care was carried out under Children Act 1989: Part XA (as introduced by the Care Standards Act 2000) and, where (funded) nursery education is provided, under Schedule 26 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ludsden Grove
School category	Community		Thame
Age range of pupils	4–11		OX9 3DH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01844 213100
Number on roll (school)	570	Fax number	01844 260402
Number on roll (day care)	32	Chair	Mr Paul Nicholas
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Headteacher	Mr John Hulett
Date of previous school inspection	19 March 2001		
Date of previous day care inspection	7 September 2004		

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
4–11	6–7 February 2007	292562

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by four Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a large primary school that also provides day care for a small number of children both before and after school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage, with a small number of pupils from a variety of other ethnic origins. Very few pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average. The point of entry to the Foundation Stage has changed in the last few years, with most children now starting in September. Children's attainment on entry is broadly average. The school has achieved Healthy Schools' status. It is involved in partnerships with several European schools and one in Uganda. There is a collaborative partnership with a nearby village primary, and the deputy for Barley Hill works there 2.5 days a week as associate head.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Barley Hill succeeds well in implementing its aim of 'educating the whole child'. It is a good school where pupils enjoy learning and achieve well because of good teaching. By the time they leave at the end of Year 6 standards are above average. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the high quality care, support and guidance they receive. Their well-developed social and academic skills prepare them effectively for their future lives in school and beyond.

Improved provision means that children settle well into the Foundation Stage and make steady progress. Teaching is satisfactory with some strengths. Adults have good relationships with children and parents report how happy their children are in the Reception classes. Teachers plan well for all the areas of learning. However, adults sometimes do not make the most of opportunities that arise incidentally to develop children's skills further. Improved systems to link Reception with Key Stage 1 ensure that pupils settle quickly in Year 1, their progress accelerates and they achieve well through the rest of the school.

Standards at Year 2 are rising and were average in 2006. This represents good progress in Key Stage 1, as the standards attained by this group of children at the end of Reception were below average. By the end of Year 6 pupils have made good progress and, as a result, standards are above average. A relative weakness in older pupils' progress in writing last year, compared to their very high standards in reading, has been tackled well by the school and pupils are now making better progress.

Strong pastoral care from all the adults ensures that pupils behave well and have positive attitudes to all aspects of school. They take a pride in their accomplishments, enjoy learning and get on well with each other and with staff.

The good teaching and learning are characterised by positive relationships, secure discipline and thorough planning. Pupils reported that many lessons are fun, particularly when teachers give them hands-on experience of practical work. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what they are to learn in each lesson. They review this at the end so the pupils are clear how well they are doing. However, in many lessons all pupils are given the same task. On occasions, this means that pupils who struggle with work do not make enough progress, or high-fliers are not challenged sufficiently.

Pupils' progress is tracked carefully and teachers have clear targets for what pupils should achieve over the course of each year in English and mathematics. Pupils who start to fall behind are identified and provided with effective and well-organised support to help them keep pace. However, often pupils themselves are not given specific targets in these subjects so they can see what they need to do to improve, and reach the next level in their learning.

A good curriculum enhances pupils' learning and personal development. A wide range of subjects is taught in depth and are enhanced by extras such as themed weeks, a good range of clubs, and outstanding links with schools in other countries.

Good leadership and management support the school's effective provision and positive outcomes. Clear leadership from the headteacher and senior staff is enhanced by effective management systems and positive work by year-group and subject leaders. Links with parents are very strong. Precise self-evaluation pinpoints what needs to be done to build on existing strengths, and means the school is well placed to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that work is always closely matched to the different academic needs of pupils.
- Make sure that pupils are given specific targets so they know how they can improve their work in English and mathematics.
- Ensure that adults working in the Foundation Stage make full use of incidental opportunities to enhance pupils' progress in different areas of learning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards. Improving provision in the Foundation Stage has raised achievement and children now leave Reception with average standards. They make good progress in Key Stage 1. However, the standards, as shown by national tests at Year 2, are just average because in previous years pupils often left Reception with standards that were below average. Good progress at Key Stage 2 means that standards by the end of Year 6 have been above average overall for several years. There has been some fluctuation in different years between different subjects. Reading has been consistently very good, and science steadily above average. Relatively weak results in mathematics in 2005 were addressed rigorously by all staff. Consequently, mathematics was the strongest subject in the 2006 results. Similarly focused action by the school on writing this year is raising standards in this subject.

Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make good progress overall, doing particularly well when they receive specific support outside the classroom. However, in class their progress is more variable, as work is not always closely matched to their needs. They often do better when they have good support from the skilled teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils display very positive attitudes to school. They are keen and eager to do well. The above-average levels of attendance show how much they enjoy coming to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils treat each other with kindness and respect and are very aware that some people are not as fortunate as they are. They take responsibilities conscientiously and contribute their views well through the school council.

Outstanding international links with other schools especially promote pupils' cultural development. Pupils like having pen pals in other countries such as Germany and Poland. Older pupils speak sensitively and maturely as they talk about raising money for children in Uganda, so that they too can have an education.

Pupils speak convincingly about why it is important to eat healthily. Two Year 6 boys spoke very knowledgeably about why brown bread was better for them than white. Pupils are well aware of the importance of exercise. One Year 3 girl said 'Exercise keeps your muscles and other bits healthy'. They appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in sporting activities. Pupils are confident about keeping themselves safe, both in and out of school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. A common approach, to making lessons interesting and practically based, means that pupils are engaged and enjoy their learning. Good relationships and clear expectations ensure that pupils behave well and work hard. Pupils are particularly enthused by teachers' effective use of interactive whiteboards to clarify and illustrate their explanations. A strength of teaching is the consistent way in which teachers explain what pupils are going to learn, and involve them in evaluating for themselves how well they have done. This enhances both their progress and their motivation. Lessons are planned clearly, but there are inconsistencies in the extent to which teachers match work to different pupils' varying needs. This means that sometimes pupils struggle with tasks that are too difficult, or are not challenged sufficiently. There are examples of very good marking which clearly show pupils how well they have succeeded and why. The best marking also tells pupils how they can improve. However, this is not yet consistent across the school.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and enables pupils to achieve success not only in academic subjects but also in developing their creativity, artistic awareness and emotional skills. There is a strong reading programme that results in most pupils making very good progress. Provision for writing across the curriculum has been strengthened and is starting to raise achievement. The effective curriculum in mathematics and science is especially successful in developing investigative and practical skills. Excellent links with schools in Germany, Poland, Spain and Uganda broaden pupils' horizons and make them appreciate the richness and diversity of children across the world. Special features, such as the termly theme weeks, add richness and variety and pupils can choose from a good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided with well-designed programmes of work, which help them to make good progress.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The good level of care, guidance and support provided for the pupils is an important factor in the success of the school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and robust. Pupils say that they feel that the adults look after them well and that they feel safe in school. Older pupils list reasons why the school is safe such as having signs by taps to show which water may be hot. They say that if they had a problem there is always someone who will help them. Good links with external agencies have been established to help provide for the specific needs of some pupils. Links with the secondary feeder school are excellent and enable pupils to make a swift transition. There are strengths in the academic guidance given to pupils. Their progress is tracked thoroughly. Pupils say they know how well they are doing; in fact most pupils correctly say that they are doing well. However, they are not always sure what they need to do to get better.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management at all levels help pupils flourish academically and personally. Much of the success is down to the very clear direction given by the headteacher and his wise decision to train and empower staff to lead developments. This they do well. Team leaders effectively co-ordinate pastoral support and learning in each year-group and subject co-ordinators are proactive in improving provision and helping staff to deliver the curriculum more effectively. A well-considered development plan takes good account of checks on pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. All those who have an interest in making the school better are fully involved in its construction and play a full role in bringing about improvements. The way the school gauges the wishes of parents in drawing up the plan is exemplary. A dedicated and businesslike team of governors are helping the school to get better. They play an active role in school life, effectively support the headteacher and are fine-tuning their role as critical friends.

Effectiveness of registered day care

Grade: 2

The outcomes for children are good.

Staff create a welcoming environment and children arrive at the out-of-school provision with enthusiasm. There is a range of relaxing activities that children may choose to take part in. They enjoy spending time with their friends and talking with staff. Some older boys said they enjoyed basketball and football, but would sometimes like a broader choice of challenging activities.

Staff are very caring. This is reflected in the positive, warm relationships they have with the children. They are aware of children's needs and encourage them to feel part

of the out-of-school facilities. Behaviour and relationships are excellent. Children of different ages mix well. The children elect a representative to attend the child care staff meetings and are able to influence the activities and the running of the provision.

Staff are trained and are knowledgeable about food hygiene. They take positive steps to ensure snack times are an enjoyable, social experience for children. A broad range of healthy, nutritious snacks is offered and children are supported in choosing what they want. Most children's dietary needs are known, but not always clearly documented.

Any risks posed by the large outside area are well assessed by the manager and staff manage systems well to ensure children's safety. Staff are trained in child protection. The partnership with parents is very good. Information is shared. Parents speak highly of the continuity of care provided by the different aspects of the out-of-school provision. The sessional care provides a safe and enjoyable extended day for Reception children, that parents find a very useful option.

Many aspects of the management of the out-of-school provision are outstanding. The manager is reflective about practice and includes all staff in the self-evaluation of the provision. Staff are trained and supported in their professional development.

The majority of recommendations from the previous report have been met. Systems of record keeping are robust, although there are occasional errors in their completion, particularly on the register. These make up the recommendations.

Since the last inspection there have been no complaints about the registered day care that required Ofsted or the school to take action so that the day care continued to meet the National Standards. The school is required to keep a record of complaints about the registered day care made by parents, which they can see on request. The complaints record may contain complaints about the registered day care other than those made to Ofsted.

Recommendations or actions to improve the registered day care

To improve the quality and standards of care further the registered person should take into account the following recommendations:

Within the documentation

- Ensure that the register accurately reflects children's hours of attendance.
- Ensure children's dietary requirements are clearly documented to ensure individual needs are met.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

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

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?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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	2
The behaviour of learners	2
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	2
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

The effectiveness of the registered day care

The quality and standards of the registered day care	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to be healthy?	2
How effective is the day care in protecting children and helping them to stay safe?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
How effective is the day care in helping children to make a positive contribution?	2
How effectively is the day care organised?	2
Does the day care meet the needs of the range of children for whom it provides?	Yes
Has the day care improved since the last inspection?	Yes
Does the day care require enforcement action?	No
Does the day care require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for all your help when we visited your school. You told us that Barley Hill is a good school and we agree.

You are making good progress in your learning. This is because of good teaching and your own hard work. You generally do well in lessons but, occasionally, when everyone gets the same work to do, some of you find it too hard or too easy. We have agreed with your teachers that they are going to try to make sure that everyone gets work that is just right for them in future.

The headteacher, staff and governors are very good at organising the school, and keep a careful eye on how you are all getting on. All the adults work hard to make sure you are safe and well cared for in school. We were impressed by your good behaviour and by how well you all get on with each other and with staff. You gain a lot from the links with the schools in other countries.

You have a good understanding of how you are getting on, but many of you are not entirely sure what you need to do to get better. Your teachers are going to work out ways of giving you targets in English and mathematics that will help you make even more progress in future. You can help by trying hard to reach your targets.

Children in Reception settle quickly and happily into school because the teachers are so good at making them feel at home. We have agreed with them that they are going to use some of the opportunities that just pop up during each day to help children learn even more.

We hope that you had a good half-term, carry on enjoying school and making good progress.

Best wishes,

Steven Hill (Lead inspector)