

Barley Mow Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	108373
Local Authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	301745
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Tony Kemp

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 on roll	
School	216
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr Neil Weatherley
Headteacher	Mr David Hewitson
Date of previous school inspection	1 September 2003
School address	Pembroke Avenue Barley Mow Birtley Chester le Street County Durham DH3 2DJ
Telephone number	0191 4102758
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Barley Mow is an average sized primary school. Pupil numbers are declining, mirroring the picture across the local authority. It is situated in an area that is socially and economically disadvantaged. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is well above the national average. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. A very small number of children have a statement of special educational need. The proportion of minority ethnic pupils is low and some have English as an additional language. Children start school with skills lower than those for most children of their age.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school. Standards in Key Stage 2 are average overall, with above average standards in mathematics, which is a strength of the school. Progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 is very good. However, in Key Stage 1, standards are well below the national average overall and a significant number of pupils do not make sufficient progress in reading and writing. Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage but standards are below those expected for children this age. Although a tracking system has been introduced to monitor the progress of all pupils, it is in the early stages of development and is just beginning to help identify those pupils who underachieve.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. They have good attitudes, are well behaved and enjoy school. They feel safe and secure and know how to adopt healthy lifestyles. Attendance is below average despite the school's efforts to persuade a significant minority of pupils about the importance of regular attendance.

Teaching and learning overall are satisfactory. Relationships are good and these underpin good behaviour management and create a good climate for learning. Teaching is good in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, planned activities do not always take account of the different abilities, learning styles and starting points of the pupils, and resources are inadequate and often inappropriate.

The curriculum is satisfactory and matches the ability and interests of most pupils. There is an appropriate focus on planning for the basic skills. The provision for personal, social and health education ensures that pupils learn how to stay safe, adopt healthy lifestyles and develop good relationships. In Key Stage 1, the curriculum does not always take enough account of the low attainment of pupils, many of whom are not ready for the challenges of the National Curriculum by Year 1. In the Foundation Stage, provision for outdoor learning is inadequate. Throughout the school, there is good provision for out of school clubs, visits and visitors, which enhance pupils' learning and allow them to develop special interests and talents.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school's pastoral care and support for pupils' personal development are good. Very good relationships ensure that pupils feel safe and happy in school and teaching assistants provide effective support in lessons. Guidance for pupils' learning is satisfactory but not all teachers consistently use assessment well enough to plan activities that closely match the needs of all pupils.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff work hard to promote the well-being of pupils. Governance is satisfactory and the vast majority of parents are very positive about the school. Good improvements in Key Stage 2 have led to very good achievement. However, as regards the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, senior leaders have not been sufficiently rigorous in analysing standards and progress and there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning. Although a tracking system is being developed to monitor the progress of all pupils, improvement plans have not had a sharp focus on raising achievement in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. The capacity for improvement is satisfactory.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve teaching in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 so that work set for pupils matches their needs and abilities.
- Improve the monitoring of pupils' progress to identify underachieving pupils.

- Improve the monitoring of teaching to show the teachers how it could be improved.
- Work to improve the attendance of the small minority of pupils who do not attend school regularly.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted Inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory and standards are average overall by the end of Year 6. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2.

Children enter school with a broad range of abilities but below what is typical for their age. In particular, there are weaknesses in their language development. Children in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress but standards by the time they enter Year 1 are below those expected nationally, and weaker in language, literacy and communication skills.

By the end of Year 2, standards are well below average in reading and writing and below in mathematics. Most children make satisfactory progress from their starting points at the end of the Reception year, although a significant minority should do better in reading and writing.

Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are average overall and have been rising for the past three years. In the national tests in 2006, pupils in Year 6 reached average standards in English and science and above average in mathematics. Their progress from the end of Year 2 to the end of Year 6 was very good. Boys did better than girls in mathematics and science and girls did better than boys in English. Pupils now in Year 6 are on course to meet challenging targets set for them this year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Personal development and well-being are good. Pupils' moral and social development is good; spiritual and cultural development is satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy lessons and cooperate well with each other in their learning. They behave well and show kindness and consideration for each other, creating a good atmosphere in which they all feel safe and secure and able to learn. Pupils' attendance is below average, because a significant minority do not come to school regularly or take holidays in term time.

Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles by eating sensibly and taking plenty of exercise; for example, in the very popular and successful skipping club. From the time they start school, children develop good levels of independence and confidence because they are expected to take responsibility for tidying the classroom at the end of lessons. The school council helps pupils become good citizens by making suggestions for improving the school and in helping to raise funds for improvements. The council was particularly pleased with the success of their disco last term. Pupils' confidence, their team skills and their secure basic skills in Year 6 prepare them well for the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. In Key Stage 2, teaching is consistently good. Relationships are very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and have a good awareness of how pupils learn. They have high expectations for them and plan appropriate activities to meet the needs of all learners. Well-established routines ensure good order and behaviour and so little time is wasted. Questioning is used well to check understanding and to challenge and extend thinking. Skilled teaching assistants are effectively deployed to provide additional support where it is most needed.

In the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, teaching and learning are satisfactory. Planned activities do not always take account of the different abilities, learning styles and starting points of the pupils to ensure that they build on what they already know and can do. Whilst teachers recognise that children learn best through play and practical activities, in both the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 the lack of suitable resources sometimes hampers this.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. It is planned to match the ability and interests of most pupils. Children are motivated to learn through many interesting activities; for example, they take pride in looking after the school garden. There is an appropriate focus on planning for the basic skills. The provision for personal, social and health education is good. It ensures that pupils learn how to stay safe, adopt healthy lifestyles and develop good relationships.

In Key Stage 1, there are weaknesses in the curriculum because it does not take sufficient account of the low attainment of pupils, many of whom are not ready for the challenges of the National Curriculum by Year 1. Not enough resources have been provided to allow teachers to plan learning through practical activities and play.

In the Foundation Stage, provision for outdoor learning is inadequate because there are insufficient resources and they are not all appropriate to the children's stage of development.

There is good provision for out of school clubs, visits and visitors, which enhance pupils' learning and allow them to develop special interests and talents. For example, an inter-generational project between the local Women's Institute and Year 6 pupils to exchange skills, has allowed the pupils to learn a range of traditional craft skills, while the visiting ladies have learned about computers.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school's pastoral care and support for pupils' personal development are good. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils, child protection and risk assessment are in place. Parents agree that their children are well cared for and that staff know their children well. Staff form very good relationships with pupils. This makes pupils feel safe and happy in school and ensures that they have someone to turn to with any problems that arise. Despite the school's efforts to improve attendance, they have been unable to persuade a significant minority of the importance of regular attendance.

The school's tracking system is at an early stage of development and does not give senior managers an accurate picture of progress in different classes. Assessment of learning is not yet regular or rigorous enough to alert senior staff to any underachievement at an early stage. Not all teachers use assessment well enough to plan activities that closely match the needs of different groups of pupils, and because of this there are some pupils who find the work either too difficult or too easy.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Staff at all levels work hard to promote the well-being of pupils through good pastoral systems. Also, effective improvements brought in have seen a rise in standards in Key Stage 2, and this is to be commended. However, the same rigour has not been applied to analysing data about standards and progress in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1. Improvement plans have not had a sharp enough focus on raising achievement in these key stages. In these key stages, there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning and no monitoring of standards and progress through such systems as work-sampling. Subject leaders are not given clear direction about monitoring activities nor time away from the classroom to monitor standards and provision.

The school has made good improvements in the upgrade of its information and communication technology (ICT) facilities to enhance learning. However, resources are inadequate in some aspects of learning in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.

Governors are supportive of the school and discharge their duties satisfactorily. The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school. One expressed gratitude at how her child had come on in 'leaps and bounds'. A good partnership exists with other local schools through the appointment of the Transition Teacher who ensures a smooth transition from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

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	3
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	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
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	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

26 May 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barley Mow Primary School, Birtley, DH3 2DJ

Thank you so much for the warm welcome you gave us when we visited your school. Thank you also for your excellent manners and for helping us to find our way when we got lost! Your behaviour was good and you are to be congratulated for that.

We really enjoyed spending time with you and seeing you hard at work in your lessons. The older ones amongst you came across as very confident in talking about your learning and you are certainly doing well and enjoy mathematics best of all.

The headteacher and staff are going to consider how the younger children might improve reading and writing. You can play your part by asking your parents to read with you at home and by practising every day.

Younger children especially learn by having time to play and do practical activities, and so we have asked your headteacher if it is possible to have more equipment in the Nursery, Reception and in Year 1 so that learning is even more enjoyable.

Quite a few of you seem to take a lot of time off school and when you do your learning suffers. We have asked your headteacher to work with you and your parents to try and make sure you attend school unless you have a very good reason.

Good luck to the Buddies and to the school council. Keep up the good work. You do a really good job.

We wish all of you all the best for the future and hope that you enjoy your school garden and the outdoors during the summer term.

Yours sincerely

A. Kemp

Lead inspector