

# Barley Croft Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120050
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicester City
<b>Inspection number</b>	313490
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Mike Capper

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	227
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barry Byford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevin Lacey
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 December 2003
<b>School address</b>	Malham Close Beaumont Leys Leicester LE4 0UT
<b>Telephone number</b>	01162 359008
<b>Fax number</b>	01162 353497

---

<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 November 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	313490

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school takes pupils from a very wide range of backgrounds, and an above average number of pupils are eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well above average. The school has a higher number of pupils than usual who join or leave the school during the school year. The attainment of pupils when they start school in the Reception Year is well below nationally expected levels.

The school has a Speech and Language Unit for up to 20 pupils between the ages of four and eight. Pupils come to the unit from the city of Leicester as well as from Leicestershire..

The headteacher took up post in September 2007. There was an acting headteacher for the whole of the last academic year.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and pupils' progress in English.

Although pupils are very well cared for, and are given good quality personal support, their achievement is inadequate. After making a satisfactory start in the Reception class, pupils do not do well enough in Years 1 to 6. The school's data show that, from year to year, significant groups of pupils fall behind in developing basic skills, particularly in English. Consequently, standards are exceptionally low by the end of Year 6. This means that pupils are not prepared well enough for the next stage of their education. Currently, all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do better in mathematics than in English because teachers are more successful at meeting differing needs in numeracy lessons. In English, expectations are not always high enough and the pace of learning, although recently improved, continues to be too slow. Assessments of how well pupils are doing are not always accurate and this makes it difficult for teachers to pitch work at the right level. Nevertheless, teaching has improved over the last year and is satisfactory overall. Teachers are hard working and enthusiastic, but there is too little good teaching. This means that while progress has picked up in the current year, pupils are not catching up quickly enough in English. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and manage behaviour well.

Provision for children in the Speech and Language Unit is good. Teaching is consistently good and the pupils' individual needs are met effectively. Pupils in the unit are very well cared for and are fully involved in school life. Consequently, they make good progress.

The school provides a haven of calm and most parents value the school highly. They are right when they say that their children are well looked after. As one parent wrote, 'Adults are wonderfully positive and enthusiastic with the children.' This contributes well to pupils' satisfactory personal development. Pupils are very friendly and welcoming to visitors and most thoroughly enjoy school. Pupils especially enjoy the good range of clubs, visits and visitors that enrich the otherwise satisfactory curriculum; as one pupil said, 'The clubs are fun.' Pupils who find it hard to behave well are given outstanding support by learning mentors and other staff. The school also works very effectively to involve parents in their children's education. The opportunities given for parents to learn new skills have had good effect by breaking down the barriers between home and school.

The relatively new leadership team is moving the school forward. The new headteacher has quickly established a clear understanding of what needs improving, and is already building on the good start made by the acting headteacher last year. With the support of the local authority, there have been many useful initiatives that have helped to improve teaching and learning across the school. These recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on progress, especially in mathematics, and demonstrate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve further. The headteacher is ensuring that procedures for checking pupils' progress are more thorough although not enough use is yet being made of this information to check that all are doing as well as they should or to set challenging targets for improvement.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

Provision in the Foundation Stage has improved in the current year. Children are now making at least satisfactory progress in all areas of learning, although standards remain lower than those found nationally by the start of Year 1. Teaching is satisfactory, with a strength being adults' consistently high expectations of children's personal development. Adults are kind and sensitive and they ensure that children settle quickly and soon develop independence. Adults are beginning to assess children's progress thoroughly by making detailed ongoing observations of learning so that they can get a clear picture of progress over time. The school acknowledges that in the past not all assessments have been accurate. As a result, work has not always met differing needs well enough. There is a satisfactory curriculum that includes some interesting role-play activities where children can explore their own ideas. The new Reception Year teacher has rightly identified that the outdoor area is not yet used well enough to support learning across the curriculum.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that teaching is consistently pitched at the right level for all pupils so that there is a better pace to learning and progress improves, especially in English.
- Ensure that assessments are accurate and are used sharply to identify the next steps in learning.
- Improve the use of information about how well pupils are doing to find out where there is underachievement and to set challenging targets.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 4

Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception Year. In the rest of the school, there have been some improvements in the current year as a result of better teaching, but progress is still too uneven, especially in English. In mathematics, a recent trend of improving progress has been maintained although results were well below average at the end of Year 6 in 2007. In English, national assessments at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 were exceptionally low in 2007. Pupils are working at similarly low levels in English in the current Year 2 and Year 6. Older pupils have weak basic literacy skills, especially in writing. In English, progress is improving, but teaching is not yet good enough to make up for the backlog of underachievement seen in the school's own assessments. These show that significant numbers of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, do not make enough progress from year to year. In the Speech and Language Unit by contrast, good support means that pupils make good progress and their communication skills improve rapidly.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

The school is a harmonious community where all pupils, including those from the Speech and Language Unit, get on well together. As one pupil said, 'You soon make friends here.' Throughout the school, pupils are polite and courteous and they respond well to the praise given by members of staff who recognise and celebrate their efforts. This helps to raise pupils' self-esteem. Pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory. Teachers and learning mentors ensure that occasional poor behaviour does not have too great an effect on learning. Pupils work hard

in most lessons but do not always take enough care with their written work. The school is doing all it can to raise rates of attendance but they remain stubbornly below the national average.

From starting school in the Reception class, pupils quickly learn to care for each other and to appreciate and celebrate different cultures. They develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. Pupils are very happy to take responsibility and they contribute satisfactorily to the community. For example, they help organise a community barbeque and raise funds for charities. The pupils' understanding of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe is good. They participate enthusiastically in physical activity at playtime, happily eat fruit and are aware of the risks of substance abuse.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Although satisfactory overall, teaching has some emerging strengths as a result of support from external agencies and senior managers. Teachers are becoming better at using questioning to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. Marking procedures have developed significantly and the monitoring of pupils' progress is becoming increasingly thorough. However, not enough use is being made of this information to check that work meets the pupils' learning needs, especially in English. In some lessons, the pace of learning is too slow and this leads to pupils losing interest in their work. Teachers do not always do enough to ensure that pupils present their work neatly.

Teachers get on well with pupils and manage behaviour effectively. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make the same progress as others in most lessons, except when they are taught in small groups when their needs are met effectively. In the Speech and Language Unit, teachers plan work that builds very closely on pupils' starting points, ensuring that skills improve quickly.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school is beginning to link work in different subjects and this is helping to make learning more purposeful. Currently, this remains inconsistent in quality across the school and so, for example, some pupils do not get sufficient opportunities to practise their writing skills in different subjects. In the Speech and Language Unit, adults plan a wide range of stimulating activities that build effectively on the pupils' own interests. This good practice is less evident in the rest of the school where planning does not always identify expectations for different groups of pupils.

Enrichment of the curriculum is good and helps to provide pupils with a wide range of experiences outside lessons. Creativity is fostered very imaginatively through art and music and after-school clubs are popular and successful. There are a good number of visits and visitors, including residential trips for pupils from Year 2 onwards. These activities are greatly enjoyed and have a good effect on pupils' personal development by helping them to learn to live together.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 3

This is a very caring school where all adults give pupils good pastoral support. Consequently, pupils say that they know who to talk to if they have a worry. Learning mentors play a key role in providing outstanding help to pupils who find school or home life difficult and they are always available to resolve problems quickly. A very well attended breakfast club, at no cost to parents, gives a good start to the day for many pupils. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are robust. The school works successfully with outside agencies to ensure the well-being of all pupils.

Academic support is improving because the new headteacher has quickly taken steps to tackle inaccuracies in assessments, although this is not yet consistent across the school. Assessment information is not yet used well enough to identify the next steps in learning for all pupils. The school sets targets for pupils to aim at, but these do not carry over from year to year, limiting their effectiveness over time. The school identifies pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities quickly and sets them clear targets for improvement. This is most effective in the Speech and Language Unit where support is of consistently good quality.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Senior managers are committed to improving the school. They are moving the school in the right direction based on a clear understanding of what needs to be done. There is no complacency and they are taking decisive action. Over the last year, with the support of external agencies, there have been many useful initiatives. These are already helping to improve progress. For example, a new approach to teaching reading skills to younger pupils is having a good effect on skills. Teaching that is more closely matched to individual needs in mathematics has ensured that recent improvements in progress in Years 3 to 6 have been maintained.

The new headteacher has quickly established satisfactory systems for checking how well the school is doing that give greater responsibility for this to all members of staff. The headteacher has rightly identified that, to improve self-evaluation further, better use needs to be made of the wealth of test data available to the school. This is not yet used sharply enough to set challenging targets or to identify where there are pockets of underachievement.

Provision for pupils in the Speech and Language Unit is well managed. This has ensured that good quality support has been maintained since the previous inspection.

Governors are supportive and are kept well informed by the headteacher. They have rightly identified that they now need to do more to find out for themselves how well the school is performing. Available resources are deployed satisfactorily and are rightly focused on raising standards, supporting pupils who are finding school life difficult, and building links with parents and the community.

**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](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## 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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
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	4

### 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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 November 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barley Croft Primary School, Leicester, LE4 0UT

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for showing us your work. You were polite and friendly to us. Your school is improving slowly but you are still not making enough progress in English. For this reason, we are recommending that the school be given some extra help over the next year.

Some of the other things we found out about your school:

- You settle quickly in the Reception class and make steady progress. You make slower progress in Years 1 to 6, especially in literacy, because teaching does not always challenge you enough.
- You enjoy school and play together well. It is great that you are so keen to take responsibility.
- You are taught all the subjects you should be. There are many interesting things for you to do out of lessons. The steel band was making wonderful sounds when I popped in on Monday!
- All adults in school are kind and caring. The learning mentors are very good at helping those of you who are having difficulties to get over your problems.
- Your headteacher, teachers and governors know that they need to do more to make the school better. They have started to take the right steps to improve things.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Ensure that teachers always give you work that is not too hard or too easy for you so that you learn more quickly, especially in English.
- Make sure that when teachers assess your learning, they do it accurately and use this information carefully to identify what you need to learn next.
- Use information on your progress to find out where you are not doing well enough and to set challenging targets for improvement.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking to you about your work and watching you learn and we wish you all well for the future. We hope you continue to help your teachers by trying your best all of the time and taking more care with your work.

Best wishes

Mr M Capper Lead inspector