

Barley Hill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123034
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	340262
Inspection dates	24–25 September 2009
Reporting inspector	David Carrington

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	574
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Nicholas
Headteacher	John Hulett
Date of previous school inspection	6 February 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 21 lessons, and held meetings with governors, members of staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at curriculum planning, information from the monitoring of pupils' progress and the quality of provision, a sample of work from the previous school year, assessment data and school improvement planning. Ninety-two parental questionnaires were evaluated.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- how far improvements have been made to attainment and progress, especially in English
- the success of measures taken by senior staff and the governors to tackle any weaknesses
- the effectiveness and reliability of the safeguarding of children, including the childcare provision
- the promotion of community cohesion through the school's links to other groups in Britain and overseas.

Information about the school

Barley Hill Primary School is much larger than most schools for pupils aged 4 to 11. The pupils are mostly from White British families. Very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities is less than usually found in primary schools. Most of these pupils have behavioural, social and emotional needs or moderate learning difficulties.

The school has Investors in People status, the International School Award, Healthy School Standard, the Activemark and Eco-Schools Silver Award. Governors manage the Barley Hill Childcare provision. This was inspected by the team.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Barley Hill Primary is a good school. The pupils and parents agree. It has improved consistently well across a wide range of its work during the past three years, especially in raising progress and attainment in English. It has good capacity to continue this improvement. The following stand out as strengths of the school.

- Pupils make good progress and attain above average standards because their work is interesting, enjoyable and well motivating.
- They develop well as people, behave well and work together in good harmony.
- The school is a happy community where pupils look after each other carefully.
- The quality of teaching is good because lessons are brisk, full of hands-on activity and are focused effectively on the development of skills and knowledge.
- Leaders and managers at all levels and the governors share the ambition to make the school even better. They work determinedly to achieve this.
- The school's partnerships with others are outstanding and enable all pupils to succeed in their learning. Such partnerships ensure the school can provide a stimulating range of experiences to build on pupils' interests.
- Parents are extremely well involved in the life of the school and their children's learning. They have very positive views of the school.
- All pupils are safeguarded carefully and their welfare needs are met effectively. The school maintains a vigilant watch over the needs of vulnerable pupils.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage enjoy exciting learning and make good progress in their personal and academic development. They are having increasing opportunities to extend their learning outside.
- Barley Hill Childcare provision is fun and enjoyable and benefits all the children attending.

School leaders and governors maintain careful checks to ensure areas for improvement are recognised and completed speedily. For example, they are working to improve the school's links with people of other cultures and beliefs in Britain so that pupils understand and celebrate the society of which they are a part. They acknowledge that there are two key areas for further work.

- Over the past three years, the results of higher attaining pupils have moved up and down. In part, this is due to some imprecise planning and in part, because pupils have not always been given clear enough indications of what they should achieve and how, nor given sufficient opportunities to evaluate their own work.
- The school has developed a good programme of interesting themes for the whole school to work on together during a special day or week. For example, everyone talks enthusiastically of the Town Carnival when the school's visitors from its

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partner school in Uganda led the procession with a rhythmic dance. The pupils say these special days and weeks are fun, stimulating and often intriguing. Senior staff recognise that everyday work does not always enthuse the pupils in the same way and that this sometimes reduces the pace of work and the progress made.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the challenge for higher attaining pupils by:
- strengthening planning to show more clearly how the higher attainers will be given additional challenge
- involving pupils more productively in the identification and evaluation of progress towards their next steps in learning.
- A realistic deadline for achieving this target fully and consistently is the end of April 2011.
- Develop innovative approaches to everyday learning in order to make lessons more interesting and enjoyable and to improve the rate of pupils' progress and their motivation.
- As the completion of this priority will benefit progress with the first area for improvement, a sensible deadline is the end of December 2010.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

The school has improved the progress made by children in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that they build well on their basic grasp of skills and knowledge when they start in Reception. Progress is outstanding in children's personal, social and emotional development. Their progress in aspects of literacy has not always been as good, but due to successful strategies to raise achievement, it is now good. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, attainment is above average.

Attainment and progress are rising well in Key Stage 1. The pupils in Year 1 and 2 are keen to do well and they achieve successfully because of good teaching. Their attainment is above average and there are some pupils who are reaching high standards, especially in mathematics and reading. The pupils work well in lessons and are keen to do well.

In Key Stage 2, the three-year trend in the Year 6 national test results has been above average, although attainment dipped last year. This year, as lessons and pupils' books show, progress is good and standards are above average in all four years of the key stage. Writing standards have risen due to successful initiatives to make writing more appealing, especially for boys. Pupils enjoy lessons and work productively and purposefully. On many occasions the pupils ask as many questions as they answer and opportunities for them to talk together are frequent. This gives them good understanding of what they are learning but does not always allow them to make thoughtful judgements of their own progress. Higher attainers generally do well, although some are capable of even higher attainment. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the teaching assistants provide

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well tailored support.

Pupils develop good personal qualities. Good behaviour and above average attendance contribute well to their good achievement. Pupils know how to keep safe and healthy. For example, Year 5 and 6 pupils talk knowledgeably of the risks that the current building works may present and Reception children know why a cold compress is applied to a bumped head. Pupils' cultural development is effective because they have excellent opportunities to contribute to many events involving the local community and their links with people overseas are a particular strength of the school. Links with people of different cultures and faiths elsewhere in Britain are not yet as well developed.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching quality is consistently good in all years and stages of the school. Inspectors observed some outstanding teaching where the pupils were enthused to learn everyday skills and knowledge in English and mathematics. In a Year 6 lower set mathematics lesson, the pupils made outstanding progress because the work was introduced in very carefully planned small steps. Pupils were given every chance to talk about their learning

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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and throughout the lesson they worked with enthusiasm and interest. The needs of each individual pupil were met with conspicuous success.

In one or two lessons, while teaching was securely satisfactory, the learning was more ordinary. For example, when teachers took too long to explain tasks or develop the introduction to lessons, the pupils tended to ease back in their efforts. Nonetheless, there were compensating factors in these lessons that ensured progress was satisfactory. These included good use of questions to encourage and coax pupils in their learning and first-class relationships between adults and pupils. Some very good partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same strides in their learning as the other pupils.

Assessment is thorough and reliable and is used effectively to chart pupils' progress and to plan their next steps in learning. There are not always enough opportunities for pupils to give their own thoughts about how well they are meeting their targets.

The curriculum is successful in assisting pupils to build basic skills in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. It is brought alive by the visits, theme weeks and the stream of visitors who share their expertise with the pupils. The programme of out-of-school activities is good. The school has identified that, within this, some games and physical activities do not motivate the pupils well enough. Curriculum and lesson planning does not always make clear the expectations for different groups of pupils, especially the higher attainers.

Pupils' welfare and personal, social and health needs are catered for well. The school's outstanding partnerships with external groups and agencies contribute strongly to this good provision. Barley Hill Childcare sessions before and after school are well planned, organised and supervised to ensure the children attending have fun, mix well and respond enthusiastically. The school does not have a permanent special educational needs coordinator at present and, while the temporary arrangements ensure pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities continue to learn effectively, not all the duties of the coordinator can be covered in full.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

School leadership is steered very successfully by the headteacher, who sets high expectations and who has created an efficient and thorough system of auditing pupils'

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progress and the quality of their work. Senior leaders share the same expectations and show similar determination to bring improvement where it is needed. Governors are rigorous in their evaluation of the school's successes and weaknesses. Subject and year team leaders have the qualities to make a strong force for improvement, although they do not yet have enough opportunities to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their subject or year group.

Statutory requirements are met, and are promoted well by governors, including the school's duty of care and safeguarding for every child, especially the vulnerable pupils. This includes those present at the Barley Hill Childcare sessions. The current building works are subject to regular risk appraisals and staff are vetted in accordance with up-to-the-minute guidance from central government and the local authority. Prompt action is taken if risks or concerns are identified. While the school has some remaining work to complete to raise the challenge for higher attaining pupils, it promotes pupils' equality of opportunity well. Such opportunity is enhanced by its vigilance on safeguarding matters.

The school has forged outstanding partnerships with parents, local schools and others to further strengthen the pupils' education. Its local and international links are a model of good practice. Pupils have direct links with children in Uganda and other parts of Europe that add greatly to their understanding of the lives, cultures and beliefs of people overseas. The links with communities elsewhere in Britain are satisfactory, and the school has formal plans to extend these to make sure pupils' contact with others is equally effective locally, nationally and internationally. Overall, the school promotes community cohesion well. It also evaluates its community- related work carefully for success.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in Reception are benefiting from much improved provision. Effective leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage has ensured children have an effective blend of adult-led and child-chosen activity. Provision centres on hands-on activity, which both boys and girls relish. Indoors, the intervention of teachers and teaching assistants to help children consolidate and extend their learning is good. The Reception classrooms are bristling with equipment and displays that the children relate to with enthusiasm. They talk animatedly about the greetings cards they are designing for their parents, especially the fact they can 'write' their names. At the same time, other children play happily together, building with construction kits, using the computer to make patterns and pictures and watching a film that invites them to count small numbers. The children respond equally well to formal teaching and to their independent activities.

For much of the time, adults observe the activity and compile a record of progress which they use to plan the next stage of the children's learning. The progress of children in all activities outside is not as thoroughly observed and recorded as those inside and some opportunities to maximise learning are missed, for example when talking with the children about the tomatoes they are growing. However, the children make good progress, including in literacy, numeracy and their social development. In observations it was evident that this quite capable Reception Year group are being given increasingly demanding challenges, as seen in one group's work to count forward and backwards on a number line and to recognise and count numerals in everyday use.

The children's welfare is firmly at the heart of the good provision. The children respond positively to the care and guidance they are given. Occasional over-exuberance when riding tricycles outside, for example, is controlled successfully.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

With one or two exceptions, parents hold very positive views of the school. A very small proportion of parents have reservations about the way the school deals with unacceptable behaviour, meets their children's particular needs and takes account of the parents' views. A few also indicated concerns about their children's progress and the way the school helps them support their children's learning. On the other hand, all

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parents believe the school is well led and managed and that it keeps their children safe. The overwhelming majority say their children enjoy school and that teaching is good. Inspectors support the few concerns about meeting children's needs because of the increased challenge required for higher attaining pupils. However, they disagree with the other concerns because behaviour is well regulated and the school takes parents' views seriously and builds their ideas into its improvement planning. It also works with parents to help them support their children's learning more effectively. Pupils make good progress in school, as the data and lesson observations show. Inspectors fully support the many very positive views shared by parents.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Barley Hill Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 92 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 574 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	61	67	29	32	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	77	21	23	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	31	34	52	57	5	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	33	48	53	3	3	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	39	43	48	52	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	36	40	47	52	4	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	47	44	48	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	46	51	37	41	2	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	36	45	50	8	9	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	28	44	48	9	10	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	22	24	51	56	7	8	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	41	45	46	51	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	51	56	37	41	2	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



28 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Barley Hill Primary School, Thame OX9 3DH

Thank you for the warm welcome and help you gave us when we visited your school recently. Like you, we think you go to a good school. We have written in our report about the many good things we saw in school.

- You reach above average standards and make good progress.
- Children do well in Reception because their work is exciting and fun.
- Your behaviour is good and you work well with adults and other pupils.
- You enjoy your work a lot.
- You are well taught.
- The adults look after you well and make sure you are kept safe.
- Your school is well led and managed.
- Everyone has fun at the Barley Hill Childcare sessions.
- The school works really well with your parents to make sure you do well.
- It also works very successfully with other schools and groups to improve what it does.

We have also asked your school leaders to improve two things:

- To provide more challenging work for those of you who are capable of reaching high standards and to involve you more in checking your own progress.
- To make sure that your everyday work in lessons is as interesting and exciting as the special topics you study.

We know that your teachers will work hard to make these improvements. You can help by talking to them about how well you are learning and how you think your lessons could be improved.

We wish you every success in your studies.

Yours faithfully

David Carrington

Lead Inspector

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