

Barrowford School

Rushton Street, Barrowford, Nelson, Lancashire, BB9 6EA

Inspection dates

11–12 September 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school because:

- The majority of pupils across the school are now making good progress from their starting points.
- Teaching is good. Lessons are carefully planned to appeal to pupils' interests and delivered with great enthusiasm. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well and is a feature of most lessons.
- The individual needs of pupils are met well. 'The Place', for example, is a well-staffed nurture room that provides a welcoming and supportive environment for pupils and their families when required. The more-able pupils are regularly provided with opportunities to extend their learning. Pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs make good progress due to accurate assessment and monitoring.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. They feel that they make a valuable contribution to the school and that their views are listened to and acted upon. Pupils feel safe. Attendance is average but improving.
- The headteacher has a strong vision and aspiration for the school. She is supported well by a governing body that provides consistent challenge and support. The staff are united in the drive for school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected progress from their starting points is not yet high in comparison to national data.
- Teaching is good. However, there are occasions when a few teachers do not provide sufficient challenge for all ability groups during whole-class teaching. This is because they do not always make effective use of information about pupils' progress.
- Middle leaders are not yet involved enough in monitoring their subjects. They do not have a sufficiently clear overview of attainment and progress in their areas of responsibility. This prevents them from contributing fully to the drive for further improvements in standards in their subjects.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of short visits to lessons and small group sessions.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, parents and carers, members of the governing body, a local authority representative, an independent consultant and school staff.
- Inspectors took account of 64 online questionnaires (Parent View), a letter and telephone call from parents and carers and 23 staff questionnaires.
- A range of documentation was looked at, including the school’s pupil progress data, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Louise Murphy, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
John Ellwood	Additional Inspector
Jean Tarry	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Barrowford School is a larger-than-average primary school that is growing in pupil numbers. During 2011/12, 46 pupils joined the school later than the usual start date.
- Almost 18% of pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium; this proportion is slightly below the national average.
- Approximately 4% of pupils are supported at school action and 3% of pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs; both proportions are below the national average.
- Most pupils are from a White British background and the majority speak English as their first language.
- The school currently meets the government's floor standard, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that the majority is outstanding by:
 - consistently planning lessons that take into account prior learning to ensure that any whole-class teaching is at the correct level to meet the needs of all pupils
 - increasing opportunities for teachers to observe examples of outstanding teaching.
 - Develop the role of subject leaders so that they have a greater involvement in monitoring teaching in their subject to give them a clearer picture of attainment in their areas of responsibility.
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Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- From their starting points, which are generally below age-related expectations, children in the Reception class make good progress. Adults provide a warm, welcoming environment that builds confidence and supports children to settle very quickly. After only a few days in school, children were interacting well and listening carefully to adults and each other. One boy brought his plant into school and was able to tell a group of children how he looked after it. The children were very curious and listened attentively. They were supported well by staff to develop their questioning skills.
- The attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 has now improved. The proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in reading is above average. Writing and mathematics are slightly below average but progress from pupils' starting points is good in each subject.
- Attainment at Key Stage 2 has been on an upward trend since the last inspection and is now broadly average in English and mathematics. Most pupils reach Level 4 in English and mathematics although more pupils reach the higher level in mathematics. Improving writing has been a priority for the school and although levels of attainment are improving, fewer pupils achieve at the higher level in writing than in reading.
- Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of the prompt assessment and very effective support that they receive.
- Senior leaders ensure that the pupil-premium funding is used effectively to raise the achievement of pupils eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after. It contributes toward the costs of employing additional staff to deliver small group teaching activities precisely focused on the needs of the learners. The progress of these groups of learners is monitored carefully and gaps are narrowing.
- Pupils have daily opportunities to practise reading. A slot is made available on the timetable to allow them to read material that appeals to them. This, together with the regular teaching of reading and linking letters and sounds, has resulted in an improvement in the reading skills of pupils across the school and has increased attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Achievement is good, but it is not outstanding because the proportion of pupils making and exceeding expected levels of progress is not high in comparison to national data.

The quality of teaching is good

- There is reliable assessment and tracking information available to teachers to help them plan next steps in learning. However, sometimes these are not used effectively to ensure that all pupils are challenged during whole-class teaching.
- ICT is used very well across the school to assess and enhance learning. In the Early Years Foundation Stage teachers and teaching assistants record observations using hand-held electronic devices. Parents and carers can access and contribute to the information online, so that no developmental milestone is missed and progress can be built upon.
- Teachers mark work regularly. The bubble and block method identifies an aspect of work that the pupils have done well and provides a suggestion about how to make their work even better. Pupils say that this helps them to understand how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They oversee learning tasks set by teachers, which allows the teacher to focus attention on pupils in need of additional support. This strategy has resulted in an increased number of pupils making expected progress.
- Pupils are taught a set of skills and then complete a menu of tasks and activities throughout the day. This allows them to develop and practise their new learning across all curriculum subjects. This has a very positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning and the development

of independent learning.

- A range of strategies to meet the needs of learners is available at Barrowford. The more-able pupils engage in higher-level activities on a regular basis. An educational psychologist regularly visits school to ensure that teachers set appropriately challenging tasks for pupils with additional social or academic needs.
- The work in pupils' books shows that the majority of pupils are making good progress and that teaching over time is of a good and improving quality.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. One boy said that he enjoyed struggling to learn new things because when he struggles he knows that he has worked hard to learn something new. His friends in the group agreed.
- Barrowford is a highly inclusive school. The policy not to exclude and to welcome all pupils including those excluded from other schools results in there being a range of effective strategies, expertly used to help pupils manage their own behaviour. 'The Place' provides a nurturing environment to support pupils with social or emotional difficulties. Parents and carers of pupils who have transferred from other settings made a point of speaking to inspectors to explain how well the school had supported their children to settle quickly.
- Some parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that bullying is not dealt with effectively. However, pupils insist that they feel safe in school, that they understand the different forms that bullying can take and that since the anti-bullying drive, which took place last year, the school is free from bullying of any type.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of what is right and wrong. They recognise that some pupils 'kick off sometimes' but they also recognise that this behaviour is dealt with effectively by staff and does not disrupt lessons.
- Play and lunchtimes are flexible. Classes take breaks when it is convenient and this minimises disruption to learning. Consequently, there is always plenty of space on the playground, which helps to maintain good standards of behaviour.
- Through the pupil council all pupils are able to contribute toward developments within the school. For example, pupils wanted more playground equipment. The pupils planned money-raising events but recognised that they had not budgeted for the soft surfacing. They continued to raise the money until they were sure they had the funds they needed to enjoy their time on the playground and to stay safe.
- Most pupils arrive at school on time. Attendance is improving and is now average due to strategies put in place. For example, text messages to parents and carers are used when the school does not know why a pupil is absent. The number of holidays taken during term time has an adverse impact on attendance.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because, when teachers do not provide the correct level of challenge for all pupils during whole-class teaching, some pupils can become distracted. Attendance is average.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership and has high aspirations for the school. She has the support of a staff fully committed to the philosophy and ethos she articulates.
- Teaching is monitored rigorously by senior leaders and professional development is closely linked to school-improvement priorities and individual needs. This has had a positive impact on the quality of teaching, which has improved since the last inspection. However, there are limited opportunities for teachers to observe outstanding teaching.
- The school offers a curriculum that meets the needs and interests of the pupils. It is enriched

further by the after-school activities available to all pupils and the visits arranged which link with curricular themes. The curriculum is good because it has contributed to the acceleration in progress observed across the school over time and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education.

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is a strength of the school. The curriculum continuously reinforces positive attitudes towards learning and the development of skills and qualities such as perseverance, reasoning and empathy. The school has a range of links with other cultures. For example, a group of pupils engage in Skype conversations with youngsters from the Middle East in order to share their perspectives on bullying.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. The school strives to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.
- Leadership and management are not yet outstanding because middle leaders do not yet have a whole-school view of progress and attainment in their subjects.
- The majority of parents and carers agree that the school is led and managed well.
- The local authority has provided light touch support for this good school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are ambitious for Barrowford School. They are extremely supportive of the headteacher and the new strategies she has introduced. They question and challenge school leaders regularly. They are kept up to date with school initiatives through detailed reports about specific aspects of school life presented by staff. Governors also meet pupil councillors and canvass the opinion of parents through the distribution of questionnaires to ensure that they are aware of the views of all those involved with the school.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	119166
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	405836

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	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stewart Cooper
Headteacher	Rachel Tomlinson
Date of previous school inspection	14 February 2011
Telephone number	01282 615644
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	head@barrowford.lancs.sch.uk

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