

Barncroft Primary School

Park Lane, Havant, Hampshire PO9 3HN

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| Inspection dates | 12–13 July 2016 |
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management | Good |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | Good |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare | Good |
| Outcomes for pupils | Good |
| Early years provision | Good |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- This school has improved significantly in all key aspects of its work since the previous inspection.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher provide exceptionally strong and effective leadership. Their close partnership and dynamic teamwork have meant that the pace of improvement has accelerated this year.
- The effective work of the governing body and local authority supported the school well through a change of headteacher. As a result, this improving school lost no ground at that critical point.
- Rightly, the new headteacher has quickly earned the support and respect of staff and parents.
- Standards across the school are rising because teaching is good. Adults use skilful questioning to check pupils' understanding and challenge their thinking.
- This is an exceptionally caring and inclusive school. The dedication and commitment of the staff team, and the close attention they pay to nurturing each individual pupil academically and personally, are exemplary. As one parent said: 'The staff genuinely care about their welfare.'
- Pupils enjoy school. Their behaviour and attitudes have improved significantly and continue to do so.
- Different groups of pupils make similarly good progress, including disadvantaged pupils, pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and the most able.
- The improving early years provision enables children to catch up quickly, often from low starting points.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The level of challenge is not matched precisely to pupils' needs often enough to secure the highest achievement.
- Teachers do not consistently use support from teaching assistants well enough when teaching the whole class. Consequently, they do not have as much impact on pupils' learning as they could.
- Although improving, standards in subjects other than English and mathematics lag behind.
- At times, a small minority of pupils do not manage their own behaviour well enough or demonstrate excellent attitudes to learning.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching and learning, including in the early years, challenges pupils consistently well and promotes the highest achievement, including for the most able.
- Consistently deploy teaching assistants effectively so that they have a positive impact on learning throughout lessons.
- Strengthen the quality of the curriculum and teaching, especially in subjects other than English and mathematics and in the early years, so that it enables pupils to make strong and sustained progress across the school.
- Build on the existing improvements to secure consistently excellent attitudes to learning and the highest standards of behaviour.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- Under the excellent leadership of the new headteacher, very ably supported by a highly competent and experienced deputy, this already-improving school has moved forward this year with renewed vigour.
- Senior leaders and governors have united the team to all work together towards achieving a simple, clear and effective vision. Staff that completed the inspection questionnaire were overwhelmingly positive about the school and unanimously proud to work there.
- The headteacher and deputy have a firm understanding of the school's effectiveness. All decisions, discussions and actions focus sharply on what the difference will be for pupils. Their diagnostic approach means that they take the right actions at the right times to secure improvements.
- This is a highly, and successfully, inclusive school. Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Under the guidance of the knowledgeable coordinator, pupils' needs are met very well. Pupils and parents are given good opportunities to have a say in the support that they receive. The innovative tracking systems help pupils and parents see the progress pupils are making, especially when this is in smaller steps owing to their level of need.
- Effective use of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils means that overall these pupils achieve well. Leaders consider both pupils' academic needs and their personal development needs before targeting support. Leaders follow up their spending choices with rigorous checks to see what difference they have made, adjusting future spending plans accordingly.
- Governors and leaders are taking deliberate action to begin to raise the aspirations of pupils. In regular mentoring meetings for each individual pupil involving them, their parents, their teacher and a senior leader, pupils set their own goals from Reception onwards. Older pupils have visited lawyers, councillors and mechanics to broaden their view of the sorts of opportunities that might be open to them in the future.
- Leaders make detailed and varied checks of the quality of teaching, learning and pupil progress. The accurate and helpful feedback they give to teachers means that they are clear about how to improve their practice. Teachers are very receptive to this feedback and keen to improve. As a result, teaching is now typically good across the school.
- Leaders responsible for particular subjects or age ranges within the school are developing their leadership skills well. They have a firm understanding of their responsibility for improving teaching and outcomes. So far, this has had the strongest impact in English and mathematics, where there has been most focus. The impact of leaders on the quality of other subject areas is at an earlier stage of development.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide variety of learning opportunities across different subjects. This ranges from appreciating the work of artists such as Lowry or Picasso to studying coastal erosion to carrying out scientific investigations. Great excitement was evident when a Year 2 child succeeded in making an electric circuit to light a bulb. However, compared to English and mathematics, leaders recognise that the depth and quality of learning and progress in other subjects, although improving, remains more variable.
- The thoughtful and well-planned promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. The philosophy programme provides pupils with high-quality opportunities to reflect and express an opinion. Trips are used well to give pupils a wider range of enriching experiences and, in one pupil's view: 'Trick children into learning while they have fun!'
- Leaders have checked carefully that teaching promotes British values. For example, pupils learn about and experience voting for their school councillors. Drama activities and visits to local places of worship are used to promote tolerance. Pupils learn about the similarities and differences between different religions. As one pupil put it, 'That's their belief and we should respect it.'
- The carefully considered use of additional sports funding has led to a significant increase in the range of extra-curricular opportunities available for pupils and the resulting take-up. Over half of all pupils now participate in extra-curricular sport or physical activity. Benefiting from a school pool, Reception children make rapid progress gaining confidence and starting to swim, while all of the current Year 6 are leaving primary school able to swim at least a short distance.
- Most parents that responded to Parent View were rightly positive about all aspects of the school. The regular mentoring meetings have dramatically increased parents' engagement with their children's education.

- The local authority has provided very effective and well-judged support for the school. The strong partnership established with school leaders has meant that this support has been targeted in the right areas and contributed well to improvements in a range of areas. Improvements are evident in early years, English, mathematics and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance is effective. Working in partnership with the local authority, the governing body played a key strategic role in planning carefully and successfully for the smooth transition during the change of headteacher.
 - The governing body capitalises on the wide range of members' skills and experience, considering carefully what additional skills would be useful when recruiting new governors. This varied skillset and experience is supplemented by further training to bring the necessary support and challenge to school leaders.
 - Governors know the school well. Throughout their work, they focus strongly on the different groups of pupils that the school serves to check that the school is meeting their needs as well as it can.
 - Minutes of meetings provide good evidence that governors interrogate the performance data to question leaders. As the school's tracking systems continue to develop, governors have rightly made clear their expectations of how the leaders should present the information in helpful ways.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders readily make use of established links with other professionals and agencies to seek advice or support. Governors carry out systematic checks to ensure that policies and procedures meet requirements. Effective training and teaching means that both pupils and staff make use of procedures for raising concerns, and these are followed up diligently.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders' successful actions have secured a typically good quality of teaching, learning and assessment across the school, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Questioning by teachers and teaching assistants is a key strength. They prompt pupils well to develop their reasoning and use their growing vocabulary to explain their thinking. Adults check pupils' understanding carefully and quickly identify and tackle misconceptions.
- Teachers make explicit links to previous teaching and pupils recall their prior learning well. Teachers model key learning points precisely so that pupils are clear about what they are learning through particular tasks. Pupils know how to do well and understand the next steps they need to take to improve their work. Teachers give regular and helpful feedback in line with the school's policy.
- Adults focus strongly on developing pupils' language, including technical vocabulary. Increasingly, pupils are learning the correct terminology to express and discuss their mathematical thinking and reasoning. Teachers provide frequent opportunities for pupils to use and apply their mathematics skills in different ways. The most able pupils are often challenged to explain their thinking or show their working in different ways.
- Higher expectations of how hard pupils should work are clearly evident in the quantity of good-quality work and progress, especially in pupils' English and mathematics books. Teachers provide opportunities for pupils to expand and develop their skills through varied writing tasks. The most able writers are challenged to choose their language carefully to create a particular atmosphere. While improving, the quality of work over time in other subjects lags behind.
- Pupils with a very wide range of special educational needs and/or disabilities are very successfully included in lessons. Specially adapted resources enable them to access the learning. When set tasks, teaching assistants check their understanding and provide support as necessary.
- Pupils are routinely made to think hard, including the most able pupils. However, sometimes the level of challenge is not pitched precisely enough to secure the highest level of achievement for pupils of different abilities, including the most able.
- In some cases, teachers and teaching assistants work in very close partnership to help move pupils on quickly in their learning. However, overall during whole-class teaching, teachers do not use this very generous allocation of support effectively. At these times, teaching assistants are often observers and so have a very limited impact on learning.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are confident, friendly and welcoming.
- Staff have carefully analysed potential risks or vulnerabilities to pupils' safety and wellbeing. They have used this successfully to adapt the curriculum and teach pupils how to protect and look after themselves to stay safe and healthy.
- The home-school link worker has strong relationships with parents, pupils and staff. Her relentless drive ensures that any concerns are identified quickly so that pupils and families receive the support that they need.
- The regular assertive mentoring meetings for every individual child in the school, which consider pupils' needs personally and academically, are typical of the determination that every child will do well. Staff consider the full range of each pupil's needs forensically and constantly check that the action they take is improving their outcomes.
- Pupils feel safe and almost all parents that responded to Parent View agree. Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe, for example when using new technologies. They can talk about things that you should and shouldn't do and know what action to take if they are concerned at any time. Parents commented on the 'valuable extra pastoral care' and said: 'The school has been very supportive and nurturing.'
- Strong links with the police community support officer means that pupils speak positively about how the police can help protect them and provide support to tackle problems such as cyber bullying.
- Pupils speak maturely and intelligently about bullying and associated issues. Some say that bullying does sometimes happen, but this usually relates to complex friendship issues. They are confident that adults help them sort out potential friendship or social issues. Documentation and discussions with staff demonstrate that they take any concerns seriously and investigate them thoroughly. The large majority of parents agree. On the rare occasions that bullying is found, the school keeps parents informed, issues appropriate sanctions to the perpetrator and uses expert advice from outside agencies.
- Following a healthy and plentiful breakfast and well-structured, enjoyable play, pupils that attend the popular breakfast club are well prepared for the day ahead.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Across the school, the atmosphere and climate for learning is positive, calm and orderly. There is no doubt that pupils' conduct, attitudes and behaviour have improved markedly since the previous inspection and monitoring visit. Pupils behave sensibly and courteously as they move around the school, in the dining halls and during assembly.
- The views of pupils, expressed through their elected school council, have played a strong part in making lunchtimes a much happier experience for pupils. They say that the zones for different activities and the buddy stop that they wanted are working well.
- Relatively few pupils are regularly absent and their overall attendance is catching up well with the national average, including disadvantaged pupils.
- During lessons, pupils are mostly well engaged and sometimes highly focused, especially where lessons maintain the level of interest and challenge throughout. Pupils say that the behaviour of other pupils during lessons is usually good.
- Despite the considerable success and improvements, not enough pupils are yet adept at managing their own behaviour to a consistently high standard throughout the day. Occasionally in lessons a small minority of pupils do not stay focused and stop working. Consequently, they do not achieve as much as they could, although this seldom disrupts others.
- Raising expectations of acceptable behaviour led to an increase in fixed-term exclusions in the first part of the academic year. However, the use of fixed-term exclusions is now falling. Pupils' individual behaviour plans are very effective in minimising the impact of their behaviour on their academic progress and leaders check this rigorously. The 'learning to learn' provision encourages more positive attitudes to learning and helps sustain strong academic progress.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Across the school, pupils make similarly good or better progress from their different starting points. Consequently different groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, disadvantaged pupils and the most able, achieve well.
- As pupils are making better progress than they have in the past, so standards across the school are rising. Achievement is consistently strong in English and mathematics and improving in other subjects.
- In recent years, gaps between the performance of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally and in school have reduced well by the time pupils leave. Making up half of the school's population, disadvantaged pupils are represented among all ability groups. The most able disadvantaged pupils do similarly well from their starting points. Leaders constantly check any gaps across the school, targeting and refining their use of pupil premium accordingly. Consequently, in most cases, gaps for current pupils are reducing similarly well.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make at least the same good progress as others in school and all pupils nationally. As a result, their attainment is steadily rising, preparing them well, alongside other pupils, for their secondary education.
- Last year's published data for the school shows that most pupils attained the expected level at the end of primary school in all of reading, writing and mathematics. These results continued a strongly improving trend in recent years, closing the gap with the national average, which represents good achievement from pupils' often lower starting points.
- Most-able pupils make similar good progress as their peers, even though the proportion that exceeds age-related expectations remains lower than seen nationally. Pupils learn to work systematically in open-ended mathematical tasks. The most able writers confidently use a range of complex and simple sentences to good effect. Leaders are rightly now turning their attention to making sure that any pupils currently working within the expectations for their age with the potential to do even better are helped to do so.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils that meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check remains below the national average. Improvements to the teaching of phonics this year made a significant difference in one class, but overall results were hampered by disruptions to teaching in the other class. Pupils close the gap well and catch up in Year 2. Current Reception children are also making good progress towards the expected standard and are further forward than in previous years.
- The improvement for current pupils compared with historical performance data are particularly marked in key stage 1 and in mathematics across the school. Current Year 2 pupils have risen well to the higher expectation and challenge of the new national curriculum. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and others at the end of key stage 1 this year is tiny. Across years, current pupils are making similarly good progress in mathematics as they are in reading and writing. Pupils enjoy learning in mathematics, one pupil going so far as to say: 'Maths is an adventure.'

Early years provision is good

- Effective leadership in school and support from the local authority have ensured that the early years provision is improving strongly. Outcomes have risen significantly this year, building on steady improvements in recent years. Current children are making good progress and achieving well.
- From starting points that for many are considerably lower than those typically seen, current children have caught up quickly. Consequently, the proportion of children that have developed the range of skills, knowledge and understanding expected at the end of early years has risen above last year's national average. Adults' assessments of children's capabilities are accurate.
- Children's communication and language skills are often particularly low when they start. Throughout activities, adults place a strong emphasis on developing children's speaking and listening skills. Working with other professionals and using speech and language therapy training supported by additional funding, adults identify and target specific needs quickly, including for disadvantaged children.
- Children select their own activities well and for the most part remain focused and engaged. Children sometimes choose to write, including making a 'visitor badge' for the inspector, although opportunities for mark marking are not as plentiful and varied as they could be. The shared outdoor area is inviting, well organised and provides a rich range of opportunities.
- During more formal teaching sessions, children are attentive and follow adults' instructions cooperatively,

preparing them well for Year 1 teaching and learning. As in the rest of the school, adults' questioning is a strength. Teachers balance open and closed questions well to check children's understanding and extend their thinking. In a taught session about shape, teachers asked children: 'What can you tell me about a cube?', for example, before moving on to asking children to guess what the shape was from a series of clues.

- Excellent support for children's welfare and well-being helps get their schooling off to a good start. Close links with parents, including through the allocation of a particular key worker, encourages them to be involved in their learning. Children are confident, mix well and are keen to share what they are doing with visitors. Their good behaviour and conduct indicates that they feel safe and secure.
- Independent use of the food stop for fruit and drinks helps children to learn how to take responsibility for their own health and well-being and also provides a positive social and learning time.
- Leaders have a robust and accurate view of the strengths and areas requiring further attention in this rapidly improving provision. They recognise that there is still more to do to make sure that children are properly challenged and learning well enough when choosing their own activities, especially the most able.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 136078 |
| Local authority | Hampshire |
| Inspection number | 10012317 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 409 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Martin Ash |
| Headteacher | Julia Roberts |
| Telephone number | 02392 482331 |
| Website | www.barncroftprimary.co.uk |
| Email address | admin@barncroftprimary.hants.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 25–26 June 2014 |

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average, as is the proportion that have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- Approximately half of all pupils are known to be eligible for pupil premium funding, which is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or in local authority care. This is roughly twice as many as the average school.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set out minimum expectations of pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The headteacher took up her post in September 2015 and the deputy headteacher took up her post in January 2015, since the previous inspection.
- The on-site pre-school provision is managed separately and was not part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors made visits to all classes and a range of additional sessions for individuals and small groups to observe the teaching and learning that was taking place. They made most of these visits accompanied by the headteacher, deputy headteacher or special educational needs coordinator. During these visits, they took the opportunity to look at the work in pupils' books and talk to them about their learning.
- The inspection team gathered evidence from a wide range of people through informal discussions and as part of scheduled meetings. This included pupils, parents, staff, leaders, members of the governing body and a representative of the local authority. An inspector listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors gave careful consideration to 75 responses to the online survey Parent View as well as analysing 34 questionnaire responses from staff. No pupils completed the online survey, but the inspection team took account of the school's own recent surveys. Inspectors considered all of the written comments added to these carefully alongside other inspection evidence.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and reviewed a range of the school's documentation, including scrutinising arrangements for safeguarding pupils.

Inspection team

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| Clive Dunn, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Christine Bulmer | Ofsted Inspector |
| Susan Gadd | Ofsted Inspector |
| Penelope Orme | Ofsted Inspector |

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