

# Barrowford School

Rushton Street, Barrowford, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 6EA

**Inspection dates** 15–16 June 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	Inadequate

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Senior leaders and governors acted swiftly and successfully to eradicate the weaknesses found at the last inspection.
- Leaders complete regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning across the school. This has resulted in consistently strong learning for current pupils who are making good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. In classes, around school and outside, pupils' behaviour is good. Strong relationships exist between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.
- The curriculum is purposeful, interesting and teaches pupils lessons in life. It is broad and balanced and enables regular assessment of pupils' learning. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life after Barrowford.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and disabilities, and other pupils with barriers to learning, make good progress because their needs are well met. This aspect of the school's work is particularly strong.
- Governors know the school well. They visit regularly to check on the quality of provision. They receive the information needed to hold leaders to account and share the ambition of leaders to provide a high standard of education. They have been key players in the school's recent improvement.
- The quality of provision, teaching and learning in the early years has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This provision is led well so that children make good progress from their starting points.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The role of middle leaders is not fully established. They are not fully involved in improving teaching and learning within their subjects.
- Teachers' performance management targets are not closely aligned to whole-school improvement priorities.
- Changes to the provision for most-able pupils have yet to deliver consistently strong outcomes for this group of learners.
- Leaders have more work to do with some parents to explain the positive impact of behaviour strategies.

## Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - middle leaders develop a more strategic overview of standards and become more involved in evaluating and developing the quality of teaching within their subjects
  - performance management of staff is incisive and is more closely aligned with whole-school priorities for improvement
  - parents gain a clearer understanding of the school's approach to behaviour management and the positive impact it has on pupils' learning and conduct.
- Further improve outcomes, especially for the most able, by providing more opportunities for pupils to develop, consolidate and deepen their understanding and skills across the curriculum.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher and senior leaders have embarked on a rigorous journey of improvement since the previous inspection. Although disappointed, they accepted the findings of the previous inspection and have been steadfast in their ambition to be a good school again. As a result, the quality of teaching and the outcomes for current pupils have improved and are now good.
- Leaders complete regular checks on the quality of teaching and learning and provide detailed feedback to staff, outlining where there are strengths and what could be improved. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. Support is targeted in the areas needing most improvement and good practice is shared so that all teachers aspire to be as good as the best. A good example of this is the much improved provision in the early years and in Year 1. Teachers share the high ambitions of leaders, resulting in a consistent approach to teaching across the school.
- Leaders have an accurate view of strengths and weaknesses because of the regular checks they complete. Plans for improvement are detailed and focused. They also provide regular opportunities for leaders and governors to check on the progress they are making towards clear targets. Although teachers are held to account for their overall effectiveness, performance management targets are not consistently challenging enough and are not always focused on the key priorities for whole-school improvement.
- Vulnerable pupils and those who have special educational needs and disabilities make good progress because their needs are well met. This aspect of provision is well led and managed. Leaders have a thorough understanding of pupils' needs and work well to overcome any barriers to learning. Leaders and staff are particularly successful in meeting the needs of pupils who have transferred into the school from other settings. A significant number of pupils and parents reported how leaders and staff have helped new pupils settle quickly into school life at Barrowford, and how they now have a positive experience of school. One such parent commented, 'It has transformed our daily life coming here; our family is much happier.'
- The curriculum has been developed around core learning values, called 'Rounded and Grounded', which are displayed around the school. These learning values are skills for life, such as being flexible, determined and adaptable, and showing compassion and respect for others. Leaders also ensure that pupils learn the key skills of the national curriculum, supplementing everyday teaching with a range of clubs to ensure a broad and balanced approach. Learning is given purpose, for example by pupils studying 'learning heroes' and finding out how well-known figures achieved success in life, despite having to overcome obstacles.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. They are given responsibility from an early age, for example, when planning a recent celebration to mark the Queen's 90th birthday. They learn about the monarchy through whole-school events and also through their studies, which are currently completed in Year 2 and Year 5. Pupils are taught to celebrate difference. All pupils, regardless of ethnicity, culture or sexuality feel accepted and are not treated differently from anybody else. Work in pupils' books, displays around school and discussions held with inspectors show that pupils learn about different faiths and cultures. This helps to ensure that pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness is well developed.
- Additional funding received by the school is used well. Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide the support needed for pupils to engage well with their learning. It is also used to provide specific academic support where disadvantaged pupils are not making the progress expected of them. School records and the progress seen in pupils' books show that disadvantaged pupils make good progress overall. The gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are closing. Governors accepted a recent offer from the local authority to complete a review of pupil premium spending. This has resulted in an even more strategic approach to this provision and has reaffirmed governors' commitment to continue to close the achievement gap for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders make effective use of sport premium funding. This is used to provide training for staff and also allows pupils to have access to specialist sports coaching. Furthermore, funding is used to maximise opportunities for pupils to take part in competitive sport against other schools.
- The local authority provides effective support to the school. They have assisted leaders in checking the standard of teaching across the school and have also completed checks to ensure that teachers' assessments of pupils are accurate. Officers have written an effective statement of action, in consultation with school leaders, which helped to sharpen the focus needed to effect improvement.
- A large proportion of teachers are new to the school and are still developing their skills in leading different subjects. They do not have a strategic overview of whole-school performance within their subjects, and their roles in checking and developing teaching are still developing.

- The perception of approximately one quarter of parents is that leaders do not do enough to ensure that pupils are well behaved. This position has not changed since the last inspection and is far removed from the positive behaviour observed by inspectors and described by pupils. Leaders are aware that they need to work closely with parents to allay any fears and explain the positive work they are completing in this area.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governors have remained committed and resolute in helping to improve the overall effectiveness of the school. They have embraced the support and challenge received from outside agencies, such as the local authority, and have acted quickly to help secure improvement.
  - Governors visit the school regularly to check on the progress being made by leaders. For example, they join leaders on learning walks around the school to check how well pupils are engaging with their learning and to follow up other actions noted in the improvement plan.
  - Minutes of meetings show that governors take their responsibilities seriously and attend regularly. They are provided with the information they need to challenge leaders and hold them to account. They are not afraid of making difficult decisions when necessary.
  - Governors have ensured that the pupil premium and sport premium funding have a positive impact on pupils' outcomes and opportunities. A designated governor monitors the progress of disadvantaged pupils regularly.
  - Governors are aware that teachers' performance management targets need to be more closely aligned to whole-school improvement priorities.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systematic checks are completed on new members of staff to make sure that pupils are safe. Leaders and staff work closely with vulnerable pupils to ensure that their needs are met and that families receive strong support. When concerns are raised, staff are quick to deal with these and involve other agencies where required. There is a comprehensive programme of staff training which helps to safeguard pupils. Safeguarding policies are up to date and reflect the most recent legislation. The vast majority of pupils spoken to said that they feel safe in school. A small minority of parents reported that the school does not keep pupils safe but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that this is the case.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good**

- There is a consistent approach to teaching across the school, which has been secured through regular checks from leaders and the subsequent guidance given to teachers. The vast majority of pupils engage well in their learning because it is interesting and relevant. The high expectations of staff result in pupils having good attitudes to learning. Any disruptions to learning are rare.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are strong. Staff know individual pupils very well and this helps staff to plan activities which challenge pupils at all levels of ability. Support staff are used effectively and are targeted to provide help where it is most needed. Pupils cooperate well and share their ideas enthusiastically when asked to: for example, in a Year 2 lesson where pupils discussed the features of a castle.
- Teachers make effective use of time. Resources needed for teaching are prepared and are ready to use. No time is wasted, for example, when pupils move from one stage of a lesson to another. Teachers' clear explanations and guidance ensure that pupils are able to get on with their learning without delay.
- Teachers use effective questioning to understand what pupils already know and then guide pupils' thinking towards new learning. Teachers' strong subject knowledge allows them to follow a clear path in directing pupils' understanding of new topics. Teachers are adept at assessing pupils' learning during lessons and putting them back on the right track where they are struggling to understand.
- The vast majority of teachers consistently follow the agreed marking policy of the school. Consequently, current pupils are making good progress over time.
- The teaching of writing is a particular strength. Pupils enjoy writing because their learning has real purpose, meaning that pupils are engaged and interested in what they are writing about. Teachers provide clear guidance to pupils of all abilities to help them remember the key features of writing in different styles and genres. The teaching of reading has been a key focus since the last inspection. Pupils have more opportunities to read independently and to read for pleasure. Work in mathematics books shows that pupils develop a broad understanding of mathematics through the teaching of calculation skills and the full range of mathematical topics. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and apply their

mathematical understanding to a wide enough range of problem-solving activities. As a result, pupils, especially the most able, have limited opportunities to use mathematical reasoning on a regular basis. Changes in the provision for most-able pupils are relatively new and the impact of these practices is yet to be seen.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The 'Rounded and Grounded' approach to the curriculum helps to ensure that pupils are confident and self-assured about their learning. The core learning values are interweaved throughout teaching and help pupils to be determined and to persevere. This was displayed in lessons observed where the vast majority of pupils were fully engaged in their learning and enjoyed achieving.
- Pupils take pride in their work. What is noticeable across the school is the high standards expected in terms of presentation and the production of pupils' best work. Leaders have a clear focus: for example, on developing a clear handwriting style, which is developing well in all classes.
- Pupils enjoy physical education and other activities, such as after-school clubs which help them to stay healthy. Older pupils also explained how school dinners had improved over time and include daily, healthy options.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different types of bullying and what to do if this ever happens. This includes bullying that might happen when using the internet. Pupils said that bullying happens occasionally but it is quickly dealt with by staff.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- In classrooms, around school and outside, the behaviour at Barrowford is consistently good. Pupils play well together and playtimes are well supervised. Playtimes have also been rearranged so that the best use is made of the limited space available. Disruptions to learning in classrooms are rare. No incidents of poor behaviour were observed by inspectors.
- Behaviour incidents are recorded carefully and leaders analyse this information to assess where improvements can be made. This results in additional support or training being given where it is needed most. The impact of the support given is clear to see: for example, in the much improved attitudes to learning witnessed in the early years and in Year 1.
- Pupils attend school regularly and no groups of pupils suffer from low attendance. Leaders work well with families who struggle to make sure that pupils attend regularly and maintain close contact. Few pupils suffer from missing school on a regular basis.
- Differences are respected at Barrowford. Leaders work hard to ensure that the rights of all pupils are respected. Pupils spoken to say that everyone is treated the same. They also say that 'everyone has a voice' at the school and that they are able to have their say on different matters. They say that bullying happens occasionally but that it is quickly dealt with.

## **Outcomes for pupils are good**

- Work in pupils' books confirms that current pupils make good progress from their starting points in a wide range of subjects. Pupils are well prepared for learning harder work in the next class because teachers focus on their understanding of basic skills, such as using the correct grammar and punctuation. Discussions held with pupils about their work confirmed their understanding: for example, when learning about castles in history or about Greek myths.
- By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils making at least the progress expected of them is broadly in line with the national average. The proportion of pupils making more than expected progress in reading is also broadly in line with the national average. However, a greater proportion of pupils than is typical nationally make more than expected progress in mathematics and writing. This shows that the progress made by pupils across key stage 2 is strong.

- By the end of key stage 1 in 2015, the proportion of pupils achieving the standards expected of them in reading, writing and mathematics was broadly in line with the national average and improved from previous years. From low starting points when these pupils joined the school, this constitutes good progress over time.
- The proportion of pupils who passed the phonics check in Year 1 was in line with the national average in 2015 and shows ongoing improvement over the last three years. The proportion of pupils who manage to pass this check has moved from being well below the national average to being in line with it.
- In 2015, the gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in key stage 1 and other pupils widened slightly. However, in key stage 2, the attainment gap narrowed from the previous year. The progress of current disadvantaged pupils in all year groups is good overall. In most year groups, disadvantaged pupils are achieving similar standards to their peers and, in others, above those of their peers.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress because of the effective support they receive. Their progress is checked regularly and plans are put in place where progress is slower than expected. Both academically and socially, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress during their time at Barrowford.
- In key stage 1 in 2015, the attainment of the most able pupils in writing was in line with the national average, but in reading and mathematics it was below the national average. In key stage 2, the attainment of the most able was broadly in line with the national average in mathematics and writing but was well below the national average in reading. Leaders have been quick to address this issue and have made changes to the provision for the most able as a result.

## Early years provision

**is good**

- The quality of provision in the early years has improved significantly since the last inspection. The early years leader has a strong understanding of her role and an accurate view of the strengths and weaknesses in her setting. This is because she has a firm understanding of performance information and checks this regularly to ensure that improvements are focused where they are most needed, for example on children's early writing skills.
- Children enjoy their learning and are supported well by staff. Staff have an excellent knowledge of individual children and this helps to ensure that their needs are well met. Regular checks on learning help to identify children who are not making the progress expected of them. Where this is the case, staff intervene well and make sure that children have the support they need to make the progress expected of them. Staff have high expectations and explain tasks clearly to children. As a result, the learning environment is calm, purposeful and supports effective learning. Children behave well and follow instructions swiftly.
- The quality of teaching in the early years is good. Leaders and staff have accepted all the support offered since the last inspection. Staff have visited other successful settings to share ideas and this has helped to shape the provision at Barrowford. Specialist early years advisers have also visited the setting regularly to help fine-tune the provision. As a result of these changes, children now engage well in their learning, both in structured and unstructured sessions. There is a wide range of activities provided to support children's learning and engagement. Children display characteristics of effective learning by maintaining focus, persevering with tasks, sharing and collaborating with their friends, and enjoying success.
- Work in children's learning journals shows that current pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Most children enter the setting with skills that are below those typical for their age. In 2015, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development by the time they left the setting was in line with the national average.
- Pupil premium funding is used to help disadvantaged children overcome any barriers to learning. Additional staff are employed by the school who provide extra learning support where children's progress is slow. As a result, disadvantaged children are making good progress from their starting points.
- Links with parents are well developed. Parents are welcomed into school for coffee mornings and also to take part in workshops to help them support children's learning at home. Many parents engage with children's learning through an online learning system.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119166
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10013076

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	383
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Doug Metcalfe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Rachel Tomlinson
<b>Telephone number</b>	01282 615644
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.barrowford.lancs.sch.uk">www.barrowford.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@barrowford.lancs.sch.uk">head@barrowford.lancs.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	7–8 July 2015

## Information about this school

- This is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are mainly of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is slightly above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the current government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is below the national average.
- The school provides a breakfast and after-school club and a nurture room.
- The school employs a social worker, play therapist, executive special educational needs coordinator and an inclusion leader in addition to its teaching staff.
- A new assistant headteacher was appointed in September 2015. Staffing has been more settled in the last year after a period of turbulence.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in the vast majority of classes and in a range of subjects. The headteacher and deputy headteacher observed learning in 10 classrooms, alongside the lead inspector, on the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms and assessed the school's promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Inspectors observed pupils in the playground and during lunchtime.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, inclusion leader, the early years leader and subject leaders. An inspector met with the chair of the governing body. A meeting was held with the school improvement adviser from the local authority.
- A group of pupils discussed their opinions about the school and their learning with inspectors. Inspectors also spoke informally with pupils on the playground.
- Inspectors considered the responses of 85 parents from Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View (, emails from three parents and a letter sent to the lead inspector. Responses from 12 parents dropping pupils off at school were also considered.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documents including minutes from meetings of the governing body; information on pupils' outcomes; the school's evaluation of its own performance; the local authority's statement of action and the school's post-Ofsted improvement plan. Behaviour and attendance records and information relating to safeguarding were also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Ian Hardman, lead inspector

Ann-Marie Dimeck

Gary Bevin

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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