

Barrow Island Community Primary School

Trinity Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria, LA14 2SJ

Inspection dates 20–21 May 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	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.

- The exceptionally caring school community is highly valued by pupils and their families.
- Pupils' achievement and attainment have improved to good since the previous inspection. Whatever their starting points, most pupils make good progress throughout their time at school.
- By the time they leave school, pupils reach higher than the national average in mathematics. They reach expected standards in reading and writing and are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Teaching has improved and is now consistently good. All staff and volunteers encourage pupils to aim high.
- Pupils enjoy learning. Activities are planned carefully to meet the varying needs of all pupils.
- The school works extremely well with families and external agencies to support pupils whose circumstances might put them at risk. As a result, pupils say they feel very safe.
- Behaviour is good. From an early age, pupils develop a strong desire to find out things for themselves. The 'Golden Rules' help pupils to choose appropriate behaviour.
- The headteacher is inspirational. She has a clear view of how successful the school can be. Only the best is expected of pupils and staff.
- All staff work well as a team and are passionate about ensuring pupils' personal development as well as their academic achievement.
- School leaders, including governors, have taken firm steps to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. The school continues to get better.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There are missed opportunities to relate pupils' numeracy work to real-life situations.
- Pupils often use incorrect grammar when speaking and this is reflected in their writing.
- Reading records do not always show how well pupils are reading, both in school and at home.
- Some middle leaders are at an early stage in developing their areas of responsibility.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons. In addition, the inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with: school staff; groups of pupils; members of the governing body; a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, the school’s procedures for gaining an accurate view of its own performance, its development plans, records of pupils’ standards and progress, documents relating to attendance and behaviour, and pupils’ work in their books.
- There were 23 parental responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View). The school’s recent surveys of parents’ and pupils’ views were also taken into account as were the seven responses to the inspection questionnaire for staff.

Inspection team

Naomi Taylor, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Gillian Salter-Smith

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Barrow Island is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium is much higher than that found nationally. (The pupil premium is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children that are looked after by the local authority.)
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is higher than that found nationally.
- The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also higher than average.
- The large majority of pupils is White British. Very few are from minority ethnic backgrounds or speak English as an additional language.
- The deputy headteacher is the chair of the Furness Inclusion Group and the literacy co-ordinator is a member of the Furness Enterprise Committee.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has returned to its original school site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that it is outstanding in order to raise pupils' attainment and achievement by:
 - increasing the opportunities for pupils to use their numeracy skills in situations they would come across in day-to-day life to make learning relevant
 - encouraging pupils to use correct grammar when they are speaking to help them improve their grammar when they are writing
 - improving the use of pupils' reading records so that pupils, parents and staff are better informed of the progress being made at home and at school.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management further by developing the skills of middle leaders in measuring the progress made by pupils and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children settle well when they join the Reception class. This is as a result of very effective links between school, home and nurseries. Children start school with skills that are below, and for some, well below those typically expected for their age. For many, social and emotional skills as well as speech and language skills and number recognition are particularly weak.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage ensures that pupils develop skills in basic counting and writing, together with recognising letters and the sounds they make. This prepares children well for Key Stage 1.
- Staff are highly skilled in the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make). As a result, in the 2013 Year 1 screening check in phonics the proportion of pupils achieving the expected level was higher than the national average and that has again been improved upon this year. Year 2 pupils now reach standards much closer to those expected at the end of Key Stage 1. Following a significant decline in standards in Year 6 in 2012, there is a rapidly improving picture and current pupils across Key Stage 2 are making good progress with their reading.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the teaching of writing. Because of this, current Year 2 pupils have made good progress across Key Stage 1 and are likely to reach standards expected for their age by the end of this term. There is now consistently good progress across each year group in Key Stage 2. In 2013, most pupils reached the standards expected of them and a similar proportion to the national average reached Level 5. Work in books shows current Year 6 pupils are in line to show further improvement in their test results.
- The decline in standards in mathematics at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 in 2012 has been dramatically reversed. Year 2 pupils now reach standards expected for their age, with a few pupils expected to reach the higher Level 3. In 2013, most Year 6 pupils reached standards expected for their age and the proportion reaching the above average Level 5 was well above the national average, with a small number reaching Level 6. This rapid improvement is continuing.
- The school provides good support for the most-able pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Pupils from these groups are learning well and are making at least good progress across school. This is because their needs are identified early and additional learning activities that challenge pupils to think hard are delivered by well trained staff.
- Pupils whose first language is not English make good and sometimes better progress as a result of tailored support and guidance. This demonstrates the school's commitment to equality of opportunity.
- The vast majority of pupils known to be eligible for support through pupil-premium funding make good progress. In 2013, this group did much better than this group nationally in test results at the end of both key stages. However, Year 6 pupils were approximately two terms behind their peers in mathematics and writing and one term behind in reading, but the gaps are closing.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved and is at least consistently good. This has ensured that pupils' progress has improved and continues to improve. A noticeable feature of the teaching is the calm working atmosphere that is created in all of the classes, which allows all pupils to concentrate well.
- There is a whole-school approach to teaching mathematics which has had a dramatic impact on pupils' enjoyment of and progress in mathematics. 'Learn It' sessions have a significant impact on improving pupils' knowledge of number facts. Tasks are challenging and competitive and the use of new technology is effective as it suits how many pupils like to learn and outstanding progress can be seen. However, occasionally, not enough attention is given to making it clear to

pupils how their numeracy skills can help them in real-life situations.

- Numerous trips beyond school inspire pupils to write about their anticipation of what they will see and do and their actual experiences beyond their local environment. This was seen first-hand when Year 5 pupils were writing about and sharing their thoughts on what they might experience during their imminent residential trip to Eskdale. The work produced was of a high standard in terms of content and presentation and pupils were keen to share and help improve each other's work. One pupil exclaimed 'I want to hear more' as she was so captivated by the work of another pupil and was clearly enjoying learning. All pupils made good progress.
- When pupils talk, they regularly use inaccurate grammar and this is reflected in some of their written work and leads to errors with spellings.
- The teaching of phonics is effective and no time is wasted. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage clearly enjoy practising learning new letters and combinations of letters and the sounds they make. 'Tricky Word Bingo' is a favourite of the children and there was a huge amount of excitement as the teacher read out words with sounds that they had written out on their boards. Good progress was clearly being made in developing how to link letters and sounds to form unfamiliar words. Pupils enjoy stories and like to read. However, across the school, some reading records lack enough detail to inform pupils, parents and staff how well pupils are reading, both at home and at school.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been improvements in the quality of marking to help pupils understand how to improve their work. Pupils regularly improve or correct their work in response to teachers' marking.
- Effective teamwork by teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures a high level of support for all groups of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave very well together and are polite and friendly towards staff and visitors to the school. They are keen to learn and interruptions to learning in lessons are very rare indeed. With an atmosphere of mutual respect and compassion towards one another, all parents who spoke to the inspectors told them how happy their children are at school. This is reflected in the current higher-than-average attendance.
- Parents believe that their children are extremely well cared for by a totally dedicated staff team with an 'open door' policy. All of the parents who completed Parent View would recommend Barrow Island to other parents.
- Older pupils enjoy taking responsibility for younger children and there is a rota for escorting them from the playground back to class after breaks.
- A small minority of pupils exhibits challenging behaviour from time to time but the learning mentor and SERIS worker (social and emotional resilience in schools) provides strong support to help and encourage pupils to choose appropriate behaviour.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding.
- The exceptionally strong links with professional agencies beyond school contribute to supporting pupils and their families who may be at risk of being vulnerable. Highly qualified and experienced school staff make great strides in developing pupils' social and emotional resilience through sometimes very traumatic experiences.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and clearly know how to stay safe when using computers in school and at home. They say that bullying is rare in school but as one pupil made clear, they would 'say no, walk away and tell a trusted adult' if they felt they were being bullied. Incident logs show that there are very few incidents of poor behaviour.
- The primary school sport funding is used to provide additional sporting activities, including girls' football sessions and tennis. Some of these activities are taught by external coaches. This helps to improve pupils' well-being as well as teachers' skills, so that they can teach a wider range of sporting activities to an even higher standard. This experience contributes well to encouraging

pupils to stay fit and healthy.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher has a very clear vision for the success of the school and has led a number of positive changes since the previous inspection. Together with the deputy headteacher, she has taken the initiative to provide effective training, including peer coaching for teachers to help them develop their skills. This has led to improvements in the quality of teaching and learning and in pupils' performance.
- The headteacher and governing body have considerably strengthened the way in which teachers are accountable for their performance and do not allow staff to be rewarded unless they are successful in helping pupils to make at least good progress. The quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are regularly and accurately checked so that things can be put in place rapidly to address any concerns.
- The school has an accurate picture of its strengths and areas to be developed and because of this the quality of teaching and progress of pupils are securely improving.
- However, some middle leaders who are relatively new to their roles are at an early stage in developing skills to measure the progress being made by pupils and taking action to raise achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- There are plans to further develop the Early Years Foundation Stage areas to allow pupils similar opportunities to learn and play both in the classroom and outdoors.
- Leaders and managers work with other schools to develop training opportunities for staff in the local area which is ensuring that the school is up to date with new initiatives nationally. This is contributing to improving the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The headteacher has chosen to invest additional support from the local authority which has been effective in improving teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Systems and procedures for improving pupils' attendance are fully in place and improvement to above average attendance is now evident.
- The curriculum has been revised to include creative curriculum themes, and now includes an emphasis on developing basic skills through topic work which is clearly having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning. There is a vast range of visits and, for each year group in Key Stage 2, annual residential trips which contribute extremely well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Their recent visit from Italian students has provided a flavour of other cultures overseas.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors are very supportive of the school. They are aware of the school's strengths and future developments because they visit school when they can and receive accurate, detailed reports from school leaders and pupils. The Chair of the Governing Body has been instrumental in encouraging an increased level of involvement of governors with their links to classes and subject areas and in developing efficient systems to record and share their observations from these visits. Governors have a good understanding of data showing pupils' achievement and how this compares with other schools. This enables them to challenge school leaders effectively. They check the progress of the pupils supported by pupil-premium funding to make sure that spending has a good impact on improving their achievement. They have a good overview of the quality of teaching and how it is directly linked to the salary structure of staff. They undertake statutory duties, making sure safeguarding meets requirements so that pupils and staff are extremely safe. Planning for the appointment of new staff has been well supported by the local authority.

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	112236
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	442373

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	165
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carly Buckingham
Headteacher	Janet Dixon
Date of previous school inspection	20 November 2012
Telephone number	01229 820302
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	headteacher@barrowisland.cumbria.sch.uk

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