

Bar Hill Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110625
Local Authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	325183
Inspection dates	27–28 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Raymond Jardine

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 on roll	
School (total)	240
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Richard Sharman
Headteacher	Mrs Lin Whyte
Date of previous school inspection	14–15 September 2005
School address	Gladeside Bar Hill Cambridge CB23 8DY
Telephone number	01954 273305
Fax number	01954 273306

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

The school is about average in size; its roll has reduced considerably since its last inspection, reflecting local demographic changes. Nearly all pupils come from the village of Bar Hill. The great majority are of White British origin but a small and rising proportion comes from other ethnic backgrounds, mainly Eastern European; none is at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or difficulties has increased in recent years and is currently average. Attainment on entry to Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) varies year on year, broadly around that expected for children in Reception Year. The school has achieved Healthy School, Activemark and International School awards for its work in promoting health, fitness and understanding of global issues. Provision is made for an after-school club, The Play Station, which is privately run by a separate company.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Bar Hill Community is a good school. It provides a secure and encouraging environment that enables its pupils to enjoy their learning and to achieve well, both academically and in their personal development. The school's successful work to promote community cohesion is a distinctive feature. Through imaginative projects, both locally and through schools in other countries, pupils contribute much to their own and the local community and they acquire a wider global dimension to their learning. The overwhelming majority of parents are very pleased with their children's education. The very experienced headteacher in particular is highly respected by parents and staff. She has successfully steered the school through a recent difficult period of falling numbers of pupils and considerable staffing changes. Staff morale remains high and they work very well as a team under her leadership.

Standards in both Year 2 and Year 6 are typically above average, although they have tended to fluctuate in Year 6 between the average and above. Pupils achieve well, most consistently so in mathematics and science. In 2007, some underachievement in English resulted in an overall dip in standards. The school has robustly tackled the uneven teaching quality across Years 3 to 6 that particularly affected progress in English. Consequently, the 2008 Year 6 assessments showed signs of recovery and standards currently are above average again. A key reason is that teaching quality across Years 1 to 6 is now good. Good quality assessment and guidance that help pupils to improve their work and the way that teachers plan activities to stimulate interest and challenge are strong features. The support provided by the well-trained teaching assistants also contributes to good learning and progress. English standards continue to improve. Even so, the school knows that the gap between reading and writing standards is still too wide, particularly amongst boys, and improving writing remains a school priority.

The innovative and interesting curriculum serves pupils well. A good range of additional clubs and many sports and visits, including some abroad to Germany, broadens pupils' experiences. Pupils are confident, polite and respectful and they behave well in lessons and around the school. They contribute much to school life through, for example, their eco-council and school council, and they readily take responsibility. Lunchtimes are very social occasions, reflecting the harmonious relationships that pupils enjoy. Their excellent attitudes to living healthy and fit lives arise in no small part from the very good school lunches provided. The school takes good care of its pupils; arrangements for their safety and welfare meet current requirements. Pupils' progress to their targets is closely monitored and a range of additional support is given to those who need it. Pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities also receive good support and guidance; some parents and carers of these pupils have reported how much they value the help their children receive.

Governors form an integral part of the school's management and improvement cycle, providing good support and challenge to the headteacher and staff. The school rigorously reviews its performance and it consults widely. Consequently, school priorities are well founded and progress in them regularly checked. The momentum of improvement now well underway demonstrates the school's good potential to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage **Grade: 3**

Children quickly settle into school life because of the well-organised induction system, which results in their feeling secure and ready to learn. Parents appreciate the approachability of staff and their willingness to address any concerns quickly. The children make satisfactory progress during their time in Reception. They achieve well in literacy and numeracy because these elements are taught well. Children enjoy sharing books together and learning to sound out letters and words. They count confidently to ten and beyond, learn a good range of mathematical vocabulary and recognise simple two-dimensional shapes.

Children enjoy registering themselves each morning and choosing from the activities on offer, such as sharing books, working on simple computer puzzles together or making simple birthday cards. Too many formal activities led by adults during the rest of the day, however, hinder children's development as active, inquisitive and independent learners. The outdoor area is not organised well enough to promote learning across all areas and there is no covered area to ensure that children can be outdoors all year round. Staff give careful attention to children's welfare, health and safety. They maintain an overview of children's progress in different areas of learning but do not always use this information well enough to plan work that is sufficiently challenging for more able children.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement, focusing attention on improving writing to close the gap between reading and writing standards.
- Improve provision in EYFS, particularly to extend opportunities for more child-initiated and independent work and accelerate progress in children's personal, social and emotional development.

Achievement and standards **Grade: 2**

Pupils make good progress throughout Years 1 and 2 to reach typically above average standards by the end of Year 2. In 2008, good proportions of pupils attained above the expected levels in reading and mathematics, but writing standards were not as high. Standards by Year 6 have fluctuated in recent years, although they have been average to above average in range. In 2007, Year 6 standards dipped to average, mainly as a result of some uneven progress between classes and underachievement in English. Test results and teacher assessments for Year 6 in 2008 showed signs of a recovery, particularly in English, in moving towards above average standards once more, with science continuing to be a strength. The school analyses pupils' progress among different groups carefully to guide its work. Those from minority ethnic groups and those who speak English as an additional language do as well as others; girls do a little better than boys, and gifted and talented pupils progress particularly well. The recovery seen in 2008 is continuing; achievement is now more consistently good throughout the school. Year 6 pupils are currently on course to attain slightly higher standards in 2009, even though this group of pupils were lower attaining than the previous Year 6 when assessed in Year 2. Although

English is improving, writing, among some boys in particular, lags too far behind reading and continues to be a focus for improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils clearly understand the school's core values. They vote for 'Pupil of the week' and read out their nominations to friends and parents in a celebration assembly. 'You are a good friend because you're always there for me,' said one boy. Boys and girls play happily together in the playground and work well in small groups during lessons. They enjoy school, and attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy all the practical activities, especially in science. They know how to keep safe on the roads and how to deal with bullying. They are very aware of safety when using the internet at school and at home. Pupils have an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles, with about half of them opting to eat the well-presented, nutritious school lunches in the 'Ratatouille Restaurant'. Many take part in the diverse range of extra-curricular sport, including football, kickboxing and jazz dancing. They are proud of their contribution to the school community, describing their work in the Eco Group to reduce waste and save energy. They are developing a good understanding of cultures further afield through increasing links with schools in Europe and the United States. Pupils grow in confidence and leave the school as well-rounded individuals with good skills and abilities, well-prepared for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Relationships in lessons are very good and the stimulating contexts and activities for learning provided engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. In most lessons, teachers think carefully about how to help pupils to work independently, providing them with next step targets, for example, which pupils use to review their own work and that of their peers. Displays prominently show examples of good practice from pupils to help guide others. Teachers also plan to ensure that pupils are appropriately challenged; grouping arrangements between and within classes are used effectively. Skilled teaching assistants provide good levels of support, including to those who have specific learning difficulties and/or disabilities such as autistic tendencies or behavioural and emotional difficulties. On occasions when teaching is less effective, class discussions extend for too long so that some pupils are passive and teaching support is not engaged enough. Marking is regular and diagnostic in the guidance teachers give to pupils. This use of assessment is one key strategy currently being used to improve writing standards. Homework extends learning from lessons well; an innovative feature is the extended project 'discovery detective' that is provided each term.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum provides a good range of innovative and exciting opportunities for pupils to develop in all aspects of their learning. Lessons in Esperanto, for example,

prepare pupils for visits to partner schools in Germany and Hungary. There is an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. The school is working to improve standards in writing. Year 1 pupils, for example, made 'healthy' sandwiches, choosing from a range of vegetable and protein fillings. They tucked in with enthusiasm, then wrote a list of instructions to show how the sandwiches were made. Pupils often extend and practise their computer skills in different subjects. Reports, presentations and research projects are displayed prominently around the school. Pupils benefit enormously from an excellent variety of extra-curricular clubs as well as visits to places of interest such as Kentwell Hall. These help them to develop good personal and social skills as well as bringing different subjects to life. Links with other schools provide good opportunities for competitive sport, especially football, in which the school excels.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares for children well. Arrangements for safeguarding children meet current requirements. Risk assessments are fully in place. Staff are aware of child protection procedures and what they should do if they have any concerns. They know pupils well and are able to spot problems quickly, offering support and advice when needed. Successful procedures to encourage good attendance have resulted in fewer holidays taken during term time. Good links with the local secondary school mean that pupils are prepared well for transfer and settle in quickly. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive good levels of help and advice. Their needs are carefully identified and programmes implemented to help them take the next steps in their learning. Academic guidance is good. Pupils' progress is tracked in every subject, most closely in reading, writing and mathematics.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Senior leaders work well together in leading the drive for improvement. Day-to-day management routines are effective. Management responsibilities are distributed across the staff so that all contribute to the school's improvement; some are new to their roles but their influence is increasing. The school's evaluation of its performance is realistic and soundly based because pupils and parents are consulted about their views to add to those of staff and governors. The very thorough analysis that is made of assessment data to identify patterns and trends, and the regular monitoring of teaching quality, guide the focus of the school's priorities. Actions taken when the school's performance has dipped have proved effective in turning around weaknesses. Targets are used effectively with pupils to drive up standards, although those for the whole school are only now more appropriately challenging. Imaginative projects in the local community and with schools in several other countries, funded through the British Council, demonstrate a strong and successful commitment to promoting community cohesion. Governors monitor and challenge the school's work in many ways, including through focused visits related to school priorities. They have been very active in shaping the school's work; for example, in developing the use of information and communication technology and in helping to promote healthy lifestyles among pupils.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



1 December 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bar Hill Community Primary, Cambridge, CB3 8DY

Thank you for the warm welcome that we received when we visited your school recently. We spoke with many of you and I am now writing to tell you what we found out about the quality of education that you receive. Bar Hill is a good school. You and many of your parents told us how much you enjoy school life; your good rate of attendance reflects this and you work well together in lessons and at play. The way you have embraced healthy choices in your lives is very impressive. At lunchtime, we could see one reason why. Lunchtimes are very social occasions and the very healthy choices on offer are taken by very many of you. Those on the birthday table were certainly enjoying themselves! We also liked the way that you take responsibility, in lessons when you check your own work and through the various school councils and local community projects. Together you are making a good contribution to the school and locally in Bar Hill; well done! The school also provides you with many clubs, sports and visits that you clearly enjoy. The links that are now established with schools in Germany, Hungary and USA help you to learn about other cultural traditions and wider world issues.

You make good progress in your learning, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. Your lessons are interesting and challenging and the teaching is good. Standards are going up in the school. Staff are currently working hard to improve your writing skills so that they become as good as your reading, and we think that this focus on writing should continue. We noticed that many of you are helping your teachers by using your writing targets to check your work. Please keep this up as it helps you to work more independently - a skill that the school is rightly keen for you to acquire. Mrs Whyte, the staff and governors look after you well and regularly check on your progress. They also look for ways in which the school can be made even better. They agree with us that more should be done to improve education for children in Reception, particularly to help them to be independent and choose more activities for themselves.

With all good wishes for your future at Bar Hill Community Primary

Ray Jardine
Lead inspector