

Barley Croft Primary School

Malham Close, Beaumont Leys, Leicester, Leicestershire LE4 0UT

Inspection dates

1–2 May 2019

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils and staff are justifiably proud of their school. It is clear to see how the school lives up to its aim: 'to provide a stimulating and challenging learning experience'.
- Senior and middle leaders work together effectively. They have high expectations for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. There is strong capacity to ensure continuous improvement.
- Leaders and staff are currently re-designing the curriculum to ensure that it is broad, balanced and relevant to the school's context.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They use questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective teaching and support, both in the designated specialist provision and in mainstream classes. Consequently, these pupils thrive and make increasingly strong progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is orderly, calm and polite. They show natural respect for adults and for each other. Pupils value diversity, saying, 'It's good to be different'.
- For the past three years, pupils have made consistently strong progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. The progress of disadvantaged pupils has also been consistently strong, in the top 10% or 20% nationally.
- Standards of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics have fluctuated over time. In key stage 2, the combined figure for attainment dropped to well below average in 2018.
- Occasionally, teachers set activities that are not well matched to pupils' abilities, especially for the most able pupils and in mathematics.
- Leaders and governors have not made sure that their plans for spending the pupil premium and physical education and sport funding are systematically reviewed. This means that they do not have an up-to-date overview of the impact of the spending.
- Leadership and teaching in the early years are good. Children make strong progress and are well prepared for Year 1. However, adults in the early years are not consistently skilled in encouraging children's language development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by:
 - continuing the development of the curriculum, so that pupils can study the full range of subjects in depth
 - systematically reviewing and evaluating the impact of the additional funding for the pupil premium and physical education and sport.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - ensuring that teachers consistently set work that is closely matched to the needs of the most able pupils so that a greater proportion attain at the higher standards of which they are capable, especially in mathematics.
- Ensure that adults' interactions with children in the early years are fully effective in promoting children's learning and language development.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully addressed the shortcomings identified at the last inspection and have ensured that the quality of education provided by the school has gone from strength to strength. Senior leaders have established high expectations for the quality of teaching. Because they carry out regular checks, leaders have a clear view of strengths and weaknesses across the school.
- Middle leaders are also given time to carry out checks on the quality of teaching and learning in their respective subjects. Those who spoke with inspectors expressed drive and enthusiasm for their work, based on their strong desire for all pupils to achieve as highly as possible.
- There is a strong sense of teamwork among staff at all levels, inspired by the senior leaders, who are described by staff as 'hands on' and 'supportive'. The staff team is stable and settled. Long-serving members of staff reflect on how standards and behaviour at the school have significantly improved over time. They value the training they receive and the ways in which they are trusted and encouraged to be innovative in their teaching.
- The middle leader with responsibility for coordinating provision for pupils with SEND is new to her post. She has accurately prioritised the areas she wishes to develop and meets regularly with senior leaders to agree what needs to be done. The school has a designated specialist provision for pupils with SEND. Pupils of all ages attend this provision, where they receive highly effective teaching and support. This ensures that they remain included in mainstream education. Pupils with SEND make increasingly strong progress from their starting points.
- Leaders and staff are in the process of radically revising their approach to the curriculum so that it is better suited to the school's context and the needs of pupils. The changes made so far have resulted in pupils being more interested and involved in their learning than previously. The quality of the school environment, both inside and outside, is a key element of this work. It provides inspiration and enrichment, through the school's project-based approach to learning. Leaders have accurately identified the next steps in refining the curriculum, namely to make sure that the core knowledge and skills they wish pupils to acquire are clearly identified. Leaders do not currently have the assurance that all subjects are studied in sufficient depth, or that pupils retain deep learning over time.
- The curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. During the inspection, pupils were keen to describe, with pride, how they are developing as young citizens. For example, older pupils willingly take on responsibilities, such as becoming 'young consultants'. Pupils of all ages are involved in charity fund-raising and environmental activities such as recycling, growing produce and creating animal habitats. Pupils have a natural awareness of, and respect for, a range of religions and cultures. They are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Pupils understand the meaning of democracy and the rule of law, explaining carefully that they have no school rules as such, but 'expectations' that have consequences.

Governance of the school

- Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They attend school events and take part in regular monitoring visits, alongside leaders. These visits involve activities such as talking with pupils about their learning, discussions with teachers and touring lessons with leaders to gain an overview of the school.
- Governors have due regard for safeguarding and have made sure that the school's procedures are in order.
- The minutes of their meetings show that governors ask some probing questions to hold leaders to account for the school's performance. However, governors have not challenged leaders regarding the lack of current plans for the spending of the pupil premium or physical education and sport funding. They have not fulfilled their statutory duty in this regard.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All of the school's procedures for recording concerns and carrying out employment checks are thorough.
- Leaders have established a highly coordinated and proactive approach to pupil welfare and safety by means of the 'removing barriers team'. This team comprises senior leaders, the coordinator for pupils with SEND, the family link worker and the attendance, behaviour and pastoral support worker. Through frequent meetings, this team makes sure that there is a strong overview of any concerns as soon as they occur. Staff training is up to date, external agencies are involved as necessary and a culture of care and vigilance is widespread across the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- In almost all classes, teachers promote positive attitudes by setting activities that move pupils on in their learning.
- Pupils follow well-established routines, making good use of resources and frequently supporting each other well through paired activities and group work.
- In many cases, adults use questioning and assessment carefully to develop pupils' understanding, in a range of subjects.
- Pupils with SEND who attend the designated specialist provision receive highly effective teaching. For example, inspectors observed pupils of all ages fully absorbed in a geography-based activity in which they were supported to build successfully on their prior learning.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics, is effective. During the inspection, pupils who read to inspectors did so with confidence and skill. Pupils are provided with a range of books that is closely matched to their reading ability. Reading and a love of books are widely promoted throughout the school. For example, the attractive

playground 'book nook' contains an inviting stock of books for pupils to borrow, take home, return or keep as they wish.

- The quality of work in pupils' books is stronger in some classes than in others. Where it is strong, expectations are high, pupils present their work with pride and their progress from the start of the year is clear. Occasionally, however, care and pride are less evident. This means that, sometimes, errors such as spellings are not addressed consistently, and, in mathematics, the most able pupils do not have enough opportunities to apply their mathematical reasoning through problem-solving.
- Teachers are in the early stages of introducing 'project books', in which pupils record their learning across the curriculum. Currently, these books do not provide evidence of a depth of learning across the full range of subjects.
- The teaching of mathematics is improving, following the introduction of a new scheme of work. The impact of this new approach has been mixed. Leaders acknowledge that there is more work to do to ensure that the most able pupils receive a greater degree of challenge, and to ensure that there is a clear progression in learning over time, in all year groups.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils of all ages speak positively about the school. They describe, with appreciation, the wide range of activities available for them, especially in the outdoor areas and through the very high uptake of extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders and staff are keen to provide interesting and unusual activities for pupils that will broaden their horizons and 'ignite little fires' of interest and awareness of life beyond their immediate locality.
- Pupils also speak positively about their learning, praising the school's 'connected curriculum' that, they say, helps them to make links between subjects and build on prior learning.
- During discussions with inspectors, pupils stated that they feel safe in the school and spoke about their understanding of bullying, confirming that is it a rare occurrence. Pupils emphasised the importance of respect for others, saying: 'You don't need to be the same as everyone else. It's good to be different.' In learning about the religions and cultures of others, pupils are clear that: 'It's so we can understand people and make them feel welcome.'
- The school offers a busy programme of activities to enhance pupils' experiences through the world of music, sport, creative and environmental themes.
- The school runs a daily well-organised breakfast club, where pupils are encouraged to make healthy food choices and enjoy a positive start to the day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons is typically calm and respectful.
- It is clear, from discussion and by observing pupils' conduct, that they have a clear moral code. They made it clear that discrimination and unkind behaviour are unacceptable. Although the school does not have an explicit set of rules, leaders and staff promote a list of positive 'expectations'. Pupils showed understanding of the consequences of breaking these expectations.
- Pupils who have challenging behaviours as a result of their special educational needs receive effective support to remain in the school. Rates of fixed-term exclusions are decreasing.
- Leaders have refined their procedures to reduce absence. This year to date, rates of absence are below the national figures. The absence of disadvantaged pupils has reduced and is closer to the national average. The member of staff who leads on this aspect of the school's work has a thorough overview of patterns of absence. She makes sure that external partners are involved, if necessary, and that governors receive regular reports regarding attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics have been consistently strong, and often above average, over the past three years. This applies equally to the progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- The school's latest internal assessments show that pupils in the current Year 6 are in a strong position to sustain the positive rates of progress for a further year. Evidence from learning in lessons and from pupils' workbooks confirms the accuracy of teachers' assessments.
- Progress in some other year groups is currently weaker, for example in Years 3 and 4, especially in mathematics.
- Standards of attainment at the end of key stage 1 improved to be closer to the national averages in 2018, in reading, writing and mathematics, both at the expected standard and at greater depth.
- Standards of attainment at the end of key stage 2 have fluctuated over the past three years. In 2018, the combined figure for attainment at the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics declined to well below the national average. No pupil has attained at the higher standard in all three subjects for the past two years.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has been consistently below the national average. As a result of a revised approach to the teaching of phonics, a greater proportion of pupils is currently on track to achieve the standard in 2019. The teaching of reading across the school is strong.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and teaching in the early years are effective in supporting children's learning and development. Children enter the early years at a stage of development that is generally below, and often well below, that which is typical for their age. By the end of the Reception class, children make good progress and are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders' carefully chosen approach to the curriculum is applied consistently across the Nursery and Reception classes, in both the indoor and outdoor areas. The impact of this consistency is clear to see in children's confident participation in the activities and their quick and sensible responses to routines and expectations. By the deliberate use of 'real life' resources and natural materials, leaders and staff successfully promote and encourage children's curiosity in exploring their environment.
- Leaders and staff plan specific activities to develop children's vocabulary and spoken language, such as the daily 'talk time' and 'Andy Alien' puppet. Activities designed to support children who are in the early stages of learning to speak English are expanded to include children with a wider range of needs. This work is beginning to have a positive impact on children's learning. However, further training is required to ensure that all staff are equally skilled in their interactions with children, to guide and accelerate language development.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years classes is effective. The adults have good subject knowledge and children have plenty of opportunities to practise their phonics and reading skills.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective. Training is up to date and staff are aware of the school's procedures for raising concerns. Children are well cared for and there is a calm and nurturing atmosphere across the early years classes.
- Staff make sure they are readily available to liaise with parents and carers, both face to face and through the popular online assessment and communication tool. Parents who spoke with inspectors expressed positive views about the quality of care and teaching their children receive.

School details

Unique reference number	120050
Local authority	Leicester
Inspection number	10087289

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Isaac
Headteacher	Kevin Lacey
Telephone number	01162 359008
Website	www.barleycroft.leicester.sch.uk/
Email address	office@barleycroft.leicester.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20 June 2018

Information about this school

- Barley Croft Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club, which is overseen by the governing body.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is almost three times the national average.
- The school runs designated specialist provision for pupils with SEND. The provision offers up to 15 full- or part-time places for pupils from Years 1 to 6, all of whom are supported for their speech, language and communication needs through an education, health and care plan. This provision was inspected as part of this inspection.
- The school hosts on-site specialist provision (Oaklands @ Barley Croft) for up to eight pupils who are on roll at the nearby Oaklands Special School. Although Oaklands pupils

currently have some social interaction with pupils at Barley Croft Primary School, the Oaklands pupils receive all of their teaching from the special school staff. This satellite provision was not inspected as part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in 27 lessons or part lessons, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors visited the school's designated specialist provision, which provides teaching and support for pupils' learning, social and emotional needs and their special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Inspectors looked at work across an extensive range of pupils' books and considered the school's assessment information on the progress and standards achieved by current pupils.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked with them about their reading.
- Inspectors met with several groups of pupils from key stage 2 and spoke with pupils informally, in lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors observed a whole-school assembly.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and leaders with responsibility for mathematics, English, the early years and pupils with SEND. Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, bullying and exclusions, the curriculum, disadvantaged pupils and the sport premium. Inspectors also spoke with a range of other teachers and support staff.
- The lead inspector met with a group of governors, including the chair.
- The lead inspector held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of both school days. The inspectors considered the nine responses to Ofsted's online survey Parent View, the responses to Ofsted's online staff and pupil surveys and the responses to the school's own recent parent survey.
- The inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's improvement plan and self-evaluation summary, minutes of meetings of the governing body, the school's current information on pupils' attainment and progress, attendance records, behaviour and bullying logs, external reports on the work of the school, monitoring and evaluation records and a range of documents relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

Christine Watkins, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Stuart Edmonds	Ofsted Inspector
Di Mullan	Her Majesty's Inspector

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