

Barrow 1618 CofE Free School

Barrow, Broseley TF12 5BW

Inspection dates

15–16 June 2016

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The dedicated and inspirational leadership of the headteacher has been key to the significant improvements made since the last inspection.
- Leadership throughout the school is of high quality and those appointed at the start of the academic year are already demonstrating some positive impact in their area of responsibility.
- All leaders have established a culture of high expectations within the school which is shared by all staff and pupils.
- Children in the early years make excellent progress because they are developing highly effective learning habits, such as staying on task, listening attentively and working together in groups. They are prepared well for Year 1.
- Outstanding teaching over time has resulted in excellent achievement for pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave Year 6.
- Teachers make sure that work is well matched to pupils' capabilities, including the most able, enabling them to gain skills, knowledge and understanding rapidly.
- Teachers check very carefully how well pupils are learning in lessons. Any misconceptions are picked up quickly through thorough marking.
- Governors and the trust support the school and challenge leaders exceptionally well to ensure the school maintains very high standards.
- The curriculum is wide ranging, varied and particularly well adapted to this free school's vision. Pupils' learning and development are enriched by a great deal of outside work experiencing the local environment, as well as numerous residential visits.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and permeates the school's work. This is an inclusive school that celebrates diversity. As a result, pupils demonstrate respect for others irrespective of their age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief.
- Pupils' behaviour is impeccable at all times. They are polite and caring, and have a strong sense of right and wrong.
- Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they have an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe at all times, including when using the internet.
- Parents are overwhelmingly pleased with the school and what it does for their children. As one parent said, 'I am proud to be part of the Barrow family. My child has thrived at this school'. All parents and carers who gave their views would recommend the school to other parents.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by continuing to develop the capacity of middle leaders, particularly those recently appointed, to improve teaching and outcomes for their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher has provided exceptionally strong leadership in the school's drive for improvement since the last inspection. He has established a culture of high expectation and ambition to provide the best possible education for pupils.
- The headteacher is ably supported by his assistant headteacher and a highly supportive and knowledgeable governing body. Leaders' passion and determination to raise the quality of teaching, middle leadership and pupils' progress have driven rapid improvements.
- Subject leaders' roles have been developed significantly since the last inspection. They work extremely well to ensure that their work maximises pupils' learning and progress. They implement the school's high-quality systems for monitoring pupils' progress to ensure that any pupils at risk of falling behind are swiftly identified and support is put in place to ensure that progress is rapid. The school is aware that new leaders should continue to receive training to further develop their skills.
- Senior leaders have developed extremely robust systems to monitor and improve the quality of teaching. The headteacher and assistant headteacher set challenging targets for staff and ensure that they benefit from tailored mentoring and training. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved. Leaders monitor the work of teaching assistants to the same high standard. Teaching assistants are set robust targets to improve the progress of the individuals and small groups of pupils in their care, which has a positive impact on promoting rapid progress for those pupils.
- Improvement planning is highly focused and precise. Ongoing review of targets for development ensures that improvement continues at a swift pace.
- Pupils' knowledge and understanding are deepened and their progress accelerated as a result of a wide range of interesting, engaging and motivating lessons and extra-curricular activities. Pupils are genuinely excited about their learning and are keen to talk about their successes. Regular outdoor lessons in a local forest and residential visits stimulate pupils' interest and creativity. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to apply their reading, writing and numeracy skills across a range of subjects and activities. For example, in a Year 3 and Year 4 history lesson, pupils were investigating how Victorian scientists would look at plant life in the forest and using only tools and information available at the time. This led to some stunning descriptive and scientific writing.
- The leadership of provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is excellent and a strength of the school.
- The leadership of the early years provision is outstanding. Areas for improvement identified in the previous inspection have been addressed. For example, the outdoor area has been greatly improved. As a result, the quality of teaching, care and support is highly effective and children make outstanding progress from their starting points.
- Although few pupils are eligible for support from the pupil premium, this additional funding is used very effectively. The pupils' progress is monitored and checked in great detail, with clear plans to provide academic or other support where necessary. Any barriers to learning are quickly minimised and as a result, disadvantaged pupils make outstanding progress.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is also used effectively. Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting activities both after school and at lunchtimes. There are also opportunities for pupils to be involved in sports competitions with other local schools. Sports coaches visit school regularly to offer activities. Pupils talk enthusiastically about taking part in a wide range of sporting opportunities. The funding has also enhanced teachers' own skills in teaching sports and PE lessons.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the promotion of British values, have a high priority in school. The weight given to being a good, caring citizen is evident through the way pupils engage and cooperate with each other. Pupils instigate their own fund-raising for charity and often visit groups in the local community. For example, pupils in the school choir who visited a local care home demonstrated great insight and compassion for the older people they met. Pupils are extremely proud of the responsibility they have in school, particularly those chosen to be 'buddies'. These pupils are trained to look out for others who might be upset on occasion, and the understanding and skills they gain equip them well for life in modern Britain.
- Parents commented that staff are 'open, friendly and approachable'. They said that as parents they are well informed through newsletters, messaging and the website, through meeting staff informally when they bring their children to school each day, and through parents' evenings.

- The school effectively commissions the support it needs. For example, a school improvement partner has provided well-targeted support for school leaders.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know their school extremely well; they are articulate and passionate about education, and are confident in asking appropriately challenging questions. They are committed to their role and meet regularly to monitor the school development plan. They are often involved in evaluative activities, such as observing around the school, with leaders, focusing on their subject area.
 - Governors play an important role in school improvement. They are skilled at looking closely at pupils' progress. As a result, they have a good level of understanding about the progress pupils are making and need to make.
 - Governors have a thorough understanding of performance management procedures. As well as holding teachers and leaders to account, they ensure that the management of teachers' pay is effective. Through detailed checks, they ensure that the pupil premium and the PE and sports grants are spent effectively and make a difference to pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Rigorous and robust systems are in place, and are understood by staff. Regular and appropriate training for staff is undertaken and up to date. Consequently, safeguarding is a high priority in school. Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. Timely and effective relationships with other agencies ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Since the time of the previous inspection, there has been significant improvement in the quality of teaching and learning, confirmed by school's monitoring records and inspection evidence. This is due not only to the introduction of rigorous and valuable performance management and professional development, but also to the willingness of all staff to improve their skills and knowledge. The impact is clear: standards have risen and progress has accelerated for all pupils.
- Pupils are highly self-motivated and focused on their learning, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. They are successfully encouraged to take responsibility for their learning by deciding (through an increasing in difficulty colour-coded star system) the skills they need to practise and develop. Teachers skilfully guide younger pupils to make these decisions, but as pupils get older they accurately assess for themselves what they need to learn about, and what skills they need, to get the best out of lessons. Pupils tackle tasks and are equally comfortable dropping down a step if they feel that they do not quite understand what they are learning, or moving on to the next step where the challenge is increased.
- The most able pupils make good use of the information they are given about the increasing difficulty of tasks. They are alert for opportunities to move on and make good decisions about when to do so. As a result, their work shows a high level of challenge and attainment.
- Teachers and leaders know their pupils extremely well and check on pupils' learning frequently. Teachers use assessment information very effectively to plan for pupils' needs over time and in lessons. As a result, teachers know exactly where pupils are in their learning and what they need to do next to appropriately challenge pupils of all abilities. Leaders, endorsed by teachers, set extremely challenging but achievable targets.
- Staff have high expectations for what their pupils can achieve. They ensure that learning is always meaningful and builds on pupils' interests. 'Work is fun' and 'We learn lots of new things' were typical pupil comments. Favourite lessons include mathematics, art, physical education and topic, showing enjoyment of all subjects across the curriculum. In a Year 5 and Year 6 lesson, the teacher's expectation that pupils apply their persuasive writing skills led them to produce some high-quality pieces of work.
- Pupils do very well in mathematics as they have numerous opportunities to practise calculating and solving problems quickly and accurately. Pupils' knowledge and understanding are increased through the effective use of challenging questions and problems. This was particularly noticeable, for example, in a mathematics lesson, where pupils in Years 3 and 4 were practising their mathematical reasoning skills. The pupils were able to show a clear understanding of the strategies needed to develop their work to reach the highest level. Homework is linked effectively to what pupils learn in lessons.

- Pupils' work is marked meticulously, in line with the school's policy. The school's marking system, used consistently by all staff, ensures that pupils know exactly how well they have done. Useful feedback gives them clear guidance so they understand how to improve their work. Pupils respond thoughtfully to their teachers' verbal and written comments.
- The teaching assistants are well trained and skilled, provide knowledgeable support and make a valuable contribution to pupils' progress, especially pupils who are vulnerable or who need extra help with their learning.
- Although pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are small in number, the help they are offered is highly personalised, thorough and of an excellent quality. Pupils' needs are identified and addressed quickly, drawing on a wide range of support to remove barriers to learning and ensure that pupils make excellent progress.
- Phonics is taught effectively in the early years and key stage 1 and where necessary in key stage 2. It is having a positive impact on developing pupils' early reading skills and understanding of what they have read. Reading for pleasure is promoted throughout the school. Pupils regularly read fiction and non-fiction books available to them in each classroom, and information provided by the school shows that pupils frequently take books home. As a result of this work, pupils throughout the school read well, with fluency and expression, and demonstrate a good understanding of what they have read.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding and is a strength of the school. Pupils' understanding of tolerance, diversity, respect, equal opportunity and rights and responsibilities is enhanced through thought-provoking teaching and other activities such as assemblies and visits to places of worship. The school's focus upon 'Barrow values' actively promotes fundamental British values and teaches pupils how to make a positive contribution to local, national and international communities. Prejudices and stereotypes are confronted and challenged. As a result, pupils play and work together happily and with confidence and all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed and do well.
- Pupils feel safe and are well looked after. All of the parents who completed Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, agree. An extensive programme of personal, social and health education teaches children how to identify and address potential risks and dangers. Pupils have the skills to be safe when using the internet. They also know what to do should anyone try to persuade them to be unlawful or anti-social, or to do something against their will.
- Pupils interact well with adults and visitors to the school. They have good social skills and are polite, cooperative, considerate and thoughtful.
- Pupils learn how to live healthy lifestyles and look after themselves with a curriculum full of opportunities to develop well-being. A particular strength is the focus on outside learning, which raises awareness of caring for the environment, and looking after the school's farm animals. These activities contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As one pupil explained, 'We learn a lot working in the forest about nature and looking after it'.
- The small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well cared for. They participate fully in all that the school has to offer and benefit from high-quality teaching, which is carefully planned to remove barriers to learning and ensure their progress.
- Pupils, parents and staff agree that bullying is not an issue. Pupils know that bullying takes different forms and can happen in different ways, such as by text or cyber-bullying, and they would know what to do if it happened to them.
- The comment, 'If you have a problem, tell a teacher and they sort it out' shows that pupils trust staff and feel very safe, and their parents agree. For example, because of the school's particular location there has been a focus on road safety activities to teach pupils how to look after themselves and care for their own safety and that of others.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding and makes a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Leaders have successfully made sure that pupils manage their own behaviour. Consequently, low-level disruption in lessons is very rare and behaviour around the school is exemplary. All staff have high expectations of

pupils' behaviour and apply the school's behaviour policy consistently. As a result, the school is calm and orderly.

- Pupils are keen to learn and do well. Their work is always well presented, neat, accurate and completed. Pupils respond eagerly and positively to teachers' written and oral comments about their work.
- Pupils' attendance is above the national average. The systems for monitoring attendance, absence and punctuality are rigorous and effective. Good attendance is rewarded and has a high profile in school.

Outcomes for pupils

are outstanding

- Sustained and focused school improvement work has secured a significant upward trend in outcomes at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 since the last inspection. At the time of the last inspection, pupils attained slightly above-average standards by the end of key stage 1 and below average in key stage 2. In 2015, pupils attained significantly above-average standards at the end of key stage 1 and broadly average in key stage 2.
- Inspection evidence, pupils' work books and current school assessment records show that progress is accelerating securely for all groups of pupils. All pupils, including the small number who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, make the progress expected of them and a significant proportion exceed this.
- Pupils' reading skills develop quickly as a result of effective phonics teaching and successful strategies to improve pupils' understanding of what they have read and to promote a love of reading. In 2015, by the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the phonics screening check was significantly above average. Information provided by the school shows that this exceptional progress is set to continue.
- Results show that the most able pupils make progress significantly above that of their peers nationally. Evidence from inspection indicates that this remains the case.
- Information provided by the school shows that those currently on roll are set to sustain, and in many cases exceed, the high standards of those who have left the school in the past two years. The work in pupils' books confirms that a high proportion of pupils are achieving standards well above those expected in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' high level of achievement and the excellent progress they make in their personal development mean that they are confident, resilient learners who are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Children start school with broadly typical skills for their age, although the very small numbers of children in each year group means that skills profiles vary considerably from year to year. Exciting activities quickly capture their interest and they are soon very busy investigating and exploring the setting, moving happily between the indoors and outside learning areas. They make rapid progress and the vast majority reach a good level of development by the end of Reception class.
- The children quickly form positive relationships with other children and with staff. The children are confident and have the ability to manage their feelings and emotions. They adapt swiftly to the school's rules and routines. Children share, take turns and are happy to play and work with other pupils. Their behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent as a result.
- Leadership of the early years provision is outstanding. The early years leader has used self-evaluation effectively to identify accurately the many strengths and the few areas for improvement. Swift action has been taken to improve the early years provision since the previous inspection. For example, the outdoor learning and play area has been greatly improved.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that activities are very carefully planned for the different and varied needs of each child, including the small number who have special educational needs or are disadvantaged. Staff have high expectations for the children and constantly keep a very close eye on their progress so that they can plan learning activities, challenge them to move on quickly if they are able, or let them take more time if they need to.
- Mathematical skills develop well through varied practical activities, such as children using tablet computers to carry out addition and subtraction calculations of increasing difficulty. Staff take every

opportunity to extend children's thinking skills, using carefully phrased questions, such as, 'What might happen next?' to elicit children's ideas and develop their communication skills.

- The overwhelming majority of children have good oral skills, and put these to very good use when discussing and organising their activities. The rich range of creative possibilities really stimulates ideas and extends learning in all areas. Children are confident enough to share their learning at frequent 'magic moments' where all of the children listen to one of their classmates explaining something they have recently learned.
- Daily phonics activities prepare children well for early reading and writing. During the inspection, children enjoyed working with their teacher and teaching assistant, listening very carefully for different letter sounds and then reciting rhymes to remind them of shapes for different letters.
- Parents are very effectively engaged in their children's learning. Parents who spoke with the inspector praised the regular contact through their child's 'All about me at home and out and about' journals, where they can look at and discuss their child's progress at home and at school with teachers. Parents spoke very positively about the school and their children's development. A typical comment was, 'I'm so glad I chose this school'.

School details

Unique reference number	138268
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10012424

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	84
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Selina Graham
Headteacher	John Newton
Telephone number	01952 388640
Website	www.barrow1618school.co.uk
Email address	john.newton@barrow1618taw.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	13–14 May 2014

Information about this school

- Barrow 1618 CofE Free School is linked to the Church of England diocese of Hereford.
- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by pupil premium funding is below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well below that in most schools.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average compared with similar schools nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school seeks to provide a curriculum focusing on learning opportunities presented by the natural environment and learning through 'hands-on' experience. Pupils are taught for part of the week in a nearby forest.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector made observations in seven lessons or parts of lessons. A number of these observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at work in pupils' books and listened to pupils read. He met a group of pupils to gain their views of the school. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime, lunchtime and at the end of the school day, as well as in lessons.
- The inspector looked at a range of documentation, including: assessments and records of pupils' progress; the school's checks and records relating to safeguarding, child protection and attendance; records of how teaching is managed; minutes of governors' meetings and the school's improvement plans.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and middle leaders. The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. Discussions were also held with the school's improvement partner.
- The inspector took account of the 52 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and talked to parents at the beginning of the school day. He also considered the views expressed in 14 questionnaires returned by school staff.

Inspection team

Steven Cartlidge, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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