

Banister Primary School and Nursery

Archers Road, Southampton, SO15 2LS

Inspection dates 1–2 October 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher leads the school with passion and commitment and has ambitious aspirations for its further development. This leads to the school's calm, purposeful and inclusive ethos. Other senior leaders and governors share her vision, and offer good support. As a result, the school continues to improve.
- Parents are exceptionally positive about the school. Every parent who took part in the online survey agreed that they would recommend the school to another parent.
- Senior leaders make regular checks on all pupils' progress. The headteacher checks the quality of teaching termly. Leaders' accurate view of the school's performance leads to improvement planning of good quality.
- The school's curriculum has breadth and balance. Together with assemblies, excursions and the range of extra-curricular activities, the school makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They are confident to involve an adult when difficulties occasionally arise.
- Attendance has improved and is broadly average now because of effective action by school leaders.
- Teachers and other adults create good working relationships with pupils. They set high expectations for pupils' behaviour and achievement.
- Much teaching, but not all, offers a good level of challenge for pupils.
- Teaching assistants make good contributions to pupils' learning.
- Pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 2 has mostly been broadly average in recent years. This represents good progress from starting points that are typically well below average.
- Across the school, all groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- Children settle quickly into the Nursery and Reception classes. They make good progress as a result of the good teaching. Teachers assess children's learning accurately.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although leaders have clearly established the expectation of appropriate levels of challenge for all pupils, teaching does not in practice meet all learning needs consistently well. Teachers do not always set tasks that offer good challenge for all groups of pupils.
- Because of the high proportion of less experienced staff, the school does not have a sufficiently large team of middle leaders taking responsibility for key subjects and aspects of the school.
- Governors do not challenge senior leaders or hold the school to account to the extent that they should.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in 17 lessons, of which three were joint observations with members of the senior leadership team. Inspectors also scrutinised samples of pupils' work in English and mathematics. They heard a sample of pupils in Year 2 read.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, members of the school's staff, the Chair, the two Vice Chairs and two other members of the Governing Body. A telephone conversation was held with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors analysed the 31 responses that were recorded on the online survey (Parent View) by the end of the inspection. Inspectors also spoke with small numbers of parents accompanying their children to school. In addition, inspectors received a written communication from one parent.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to the questionnaire for school staff.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current attainment and progress, planning documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding, performance management, the pupil premium, the primary sports funding and the curriculum.

Inspection team

Chris Grove, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Stephanie Matthews	Additional Inspector
Michael Elson	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a primary school that is larger than average in size.
- It is a former infant school which has been re-designated as a primary school and had its first intake into Year 3 in September 2013. The school is expanding year by year and will receive its first intake into Year 6 in 2016.
- The school moved into a new building in September 2013.
- The school draws its pupils from across the city of Southampton.
- Well above average numbers of pupils are admitted to the school at times other than the usual point of entry. Significant numbers also leave the school because their families move out of the city or return to their country of origin.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is exceptionally high. For every six pupils, five come from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is more than three quarters of all pupils. This is very much higher than the proportion found in most schools. Between them, these pupils speak about 40 different first languages. Many of these pupils have only very recently arrived in England, and speak no English on first coming to school. Some start school shortly after arrival in England.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (which provides additional funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children in local authority care) is broadly average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is well below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well above average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of a Nursery and two Reception classes. In the past, only a small proportion of the children who attended the Nursery transferred into the Reception year. In September 2014, however, about one in every two children in the Nursery entered the Reception classes.
- The school has a high proportion of recently qualified and newly qualified teachers.
- The breakfast club is managed by the governing body and formed part of this inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the school more consistently meets the learning needs of all pupils by setting tasks which provide appropriate challenge for different groups.
- Devise and implement an improved policy for computer use to inform pupils and parents about risks including accessing inappropriate material on the internet and the possibility of cyberbullying when using e-mail.
- Enhance the impact of the school's leadership, management and governance by:
 - creating a team of middle leaders (those who have responsibility for key subjects and other key aspects of the school)
 - supporting the development of middle leaders' skills
 - developing the skills of the governing body to provide greater challenge to the senior leadership team, and to hold the school to better account for its performance.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher brings a committed style of leadership and strong convictions to the school. The result is the school's highly inclusive ethos and its calm and purposeful climate for learning. The headteacher communicates an ambitious vision for further improvement and high expectations. The senior leadership team, other members of staff and the governing body share the headteacher's ambition. Those who completed the staff questionnaire were unanimous in expressing their pride in the school, and their agreement that leaders know what they are trying to achieve as a school.
- Senior leaders make checks on pupils' progress regularly. They ensure that teachers and assistants provide extra support for any pupils who do not make the progress expected. The headteacher undertakes regular observations of teaching, and other leaders are involved in a range of other activities to check the quality of pupils' learning. Leaders then accurately evaluate the work of the school. The resulting improvement planning reaches a good standard.
- Because the school has recruited a high proportion of less experienced teachers, members of the senior team undertake a number of responsibilities, such as the leadership of English and of special educational needs, which typically middle leaders would exercise. It is therefore an important priority as the school develops into a large primary school to create and train a broader team of middle leaders.
- A very successful component in the approach to improvement is the 'coaching' programme by which senior leaders develop the teaching skills of other staff. This has improved the quality of teaching.
- The school has devised and is developing a curriculum that maintains breadth and balance of subjects and is aimed at engaging pupils to become life-long learners. The curriculum recognises the importance of ensuring that pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, and of providing opportunities to apply writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. The school's wide ethnic and linguistic mix, and the harmonious community that leaders have fostered, lend themselves to the promotion of tolerance of those with different faiths and cultures. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about democracy and British values through the election of school council representatives. The curriculum, the themes in assemblies, local trips and the residential excursion, and the programme of out-of-school activities, together make a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Leaders use the primary sport funding to good effect. The school has employed sports coaches through an external agency. The principal purpose is to enhance the quality of provision for games, dance and gymnastics, within the curriculum and as extra-curricular activities.
- Leaders focus meticulously on all aspects of child protection and safeguarding, which fully meet requirements.
- In the light of its confidence in the capacity of the senior leadership team, the local authority has judged that the school requires only relatively light-touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very supportive of the school. Governors have a secure understanding of its context and are proud of its positive ethos. Governors also meet their statutory obligations. They undertake the management of the headteacher's performance competently, and are aware that the school has effective arrangements to set targets for other staff. They know whether salary progression is merited and link this closely to teachers' performance. Governors know how the school spends its pupil premium funding, and of its positive impact. Although they have some understanding of the school's performance in recent times, governors are less clear how it could improve further. The governing body recognises the importance of holding the school to good account, and is keen to provide greater challenge to senior leaders. However, governors have not had sufficient training to do so effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils appreciate the school's positive ethos. They say that other pupils behave well. Adults create positive relationships and set high expectations for pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils regularly display very positive attitudes to learning in class. They listen carefully to teachers and to other pupils. They willingly take part in lessons, respond well to teachers' questions and work well with 'talk partners' (short conversations between pairs of pupils, for example, to explore their understanding of a particular point or to prepare an answer to a question).

- Pupils are polite when they meet adults around the school and move sensibly around the building. At playtimes, pupils behave well in the playground. In the hall where pupils eat their lunch, the atmosphere is calm and orderly with little need for any adult intervention to manage pupils' behaviour. In whole-school singing assemblies, pupils behave well and show enjoyment when given the opportunity to sing.
- Almost every parent who took part in the online survey agreed that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved. All the members of staff who completed the questionnaire agreed that behaviour is good and is consistently well managed.
- Attendance is broadly average and has improved very considerably after senior leaders' effective action.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They also say that they learn how to keep safe. However, they are not very well informed about the risks of cyberbullying and about safe use of the internet. In their responses to the surveys, nearly all the parents agreed that their children are safe in the school, and are well looked after. All the members of staff who completed a questionnaire judged that pupils are safe at school.
- Pupils know what constitutes bullying and understand its persistent nature. When difficulties with other pupils occasionally arise, pupils say they are confident to involve an adult in the school.
- There have been no permanent, and few fixed-term, exclusions.
- Pupils who attend the breakfast club have a highly enjoyable experience. The two supervisory members of staff ensure a safe and caring environment, and set high expectations. They provide a healthy meal. As well as cereals and drinks, a hot breakfast is available. Afterwards, pupils have good access to a wide range of games and toys.

The quality of teaching

is good

- The good quality of teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning, leading to their good progress over time. This includes the teaching of reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the online survey of parents, nearly all agreed that their children are well taught, and make good progress. Without exception, those parents who spoke to inspectors expressed positive opinions about the school and the teaching staff. For instance, several spoke warmly about the good communication between the school and families, and the easy access to teachers who adopt friendly attitudes to parents.
- Teachers, teaching assistants and other adults are good at creating strong working relationships with pupils, and between the pupils from a diverse range of backgrounds. This is an important way in which the school manifests its positive ethos and makes a reality of its expressed intention to 'unite countries into one community'.
- Teachers' high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement reflect the headteacher's high expectations of the teaching staff. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards the adults who work with them indicate the respect in which they are held.
- The school has clear expectations that teachers match the tasks set to pupils' prior attainment, in order to provide appropriate challenge for all groups. Much of the teaching offers good levels of challenge for pupils. For instance, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3, the teacher played a clapping game with most pupils designed to reinforce their understanding of the two-times and five-times tables. Meanwhile, more-able pupils completed a more demanding task. They tested one another against the clock on randomly presented questions on the same two tables.
- Teachers often set appropriately different work to meet the needs of pupils who are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. In a science lesson in Year 3, for example, one teacher sensitively recognised the needs of such pupils. While others completed the challenging task of distinguishing between facts and reasons in considering the extinction of the dinosaurs, the pupils learning English as an additional language watched a video designed to extend their knowledge of scientific vocabulary.
- However, the match of tasks to pupils' learning needs is not consistently good. There are instances where groups of pupils would have benefited from more and less challenge through tasks that were different from those given to others.
- Classteachers deploy teaching assistants well, so that they make good contributions to pupils' learning.
- The school's approach to marking is a strong feature. Teachers mark pupils' work conscientiously, and give them very good feedback. Pupils regularly respond to teachers' marking, and this helps them to understand what they need to do to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Over the three years to 2013, pupils' overall attainment by the end of Year 2 has mostly been broadly average though results dipped in 2013. Preliminary information indicates that overall attainment in 2014 improved and is closer to average.
- In the 2013/14 session, those pupils in the first Year 3 group made broadly typical progress in reading and mathematics, and good progress in writing.
- Those pupils who are learning English as an additional language and who remain at the school in the longer term make at least good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The more-able pupils consistently make very good progress in all three subjects because they often benefit from good teaching.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make progress in reading, writing and mathematics that is mostly good, because teaching assistants support them well.
- In assessments at the end of Year 2 in 2013, the gap in attainment between those supported by the pupil premium and other pupils narrowed considerably in writing when compared with results in 2012. In mathematics, by contrast, there was no gap in 2012, but a gap opened up in 2013. The gaps equated to about a half of one term in writing and one term in mathematics. These gaps are smaller than those found nationally, especially in writing. In the case of reading in 2013, the school completely eliminated the gap. Evidence shows that pupils eligible for the additional funding make good progress in all year groups.
- The school spends its pupil premium funding appropriately and in ways which fulfil the strong commitment to promoting equal opportunities and to tackling discrimination. It has used the funding to employ a family engagement officer to research the external factors that hinder pupils' progress and address those barriers. Leaders have also recruited an additional assistant to support pupils learning English as an additional language, and their parents. The funding has also enabled small-group support, for instance in phonics and mathematics, for disadvantaged pupils. In addition, the school has used the funding to subsidise disadvantaged pupils, for example to provide places at the breakfast club.

The early years provision is good

- When children first start at the school, either in the Nursery or in the Reception year, their knowledge and skills are typically well below those that are expected for their age. Children make good progress in the early years. They develop a firm foundation for later learning, especially in their personal skills and in their skills in communication and language.
- By the end of the Reception Year in 2012/13, the great majority of children reached the expected level of attainment in their personal and physical development and in communication and language skills. Furthermore, the proportions of children whose attainment exceeded expected levels were higher than the national figures. In 2013/14, children's levels of attainment were similar to the previous year. This indicates especially good progress in these areas.
- In reading, writing and mathematics, increasing proportions of pupils have reached the expected level of attainment over the last two years, though only a small proportion exceeded expectations.
- Children's good progress shows that teaching has a good impact. Teachers and teaching assistants set a very positive atmosphere for children's learning. There is a strong focus on aspects of literacy and mathematics, and on suitable approaches, for example that actively involve children in the learning. Adults use resources well, including the interactive whiteboards, to engage and motivate children.
- In both whole-class and small-group work, teaching is effective. This includes the teaching of phonics (linking sounds and letters).
- Teachers have ready access to assessment information on children's progress, which is clearly recorded.
- Parents are appreciative of the school's provision. The learning journals provide them with good indications of their children's progress.
- Children display enthusiastic attitudes to school and to work, and show real enjoyment of learning activities. They mostly behave well, but just occasionally a few children show lapses in concentration. Children have a good understanding of what constitutes safe conduct and behave accordingly.
- Leadership and management are good. Teachers' classroom practice has improved as a result of the supportive training opportunities arranged by leaders, including good support for any less experienced staff. There is now a much better balance of work that is led by teachers and assistants and provision of experiences that allow children to learn independently of adults.
- The safeguarding procedures that leaders have put in place are fully effective.

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	116116
Local authority	Southampton
Inspection number	447756

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	338
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Peter MacBride
Headteacher	Kate Vincent
Date of previous school inspection	13–14 June 2013
Telephone number	02380 393313
Fax number	02380 393001
Email address	info@banisterschool.co.uk

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