

# Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	100091
<b>Local authority</b>	Camden
<b>Inspection number</b>	376343
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 June 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Denise Morris

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Special
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	38
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jeremy Johnson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Karen Simpson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	February 2009
<b>School address</b>	105 Camley Street London N1C 4PF
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Denise Morris

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed nine lessons jointly with the headteacher, taught by five different teachers over a period of five hours. Meetings were held with senior leaders, members of the governing body, staff and pupils. The inspector took account of the responses to the on-line Parent View survey in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, curriculum documents, minutes of recent governing body meetings, pupils' work and assessment information. The inspector received 21 responses to the inspection questionnaires from parents and carers. Several staff and pupils also completed questionnaires.

## Information about the school

Frank Barnes Primary School is a smaller than average special school. It caters for profoundly deaf children in the London Borough of Camden as well as taking children from many other London boroughs. Nearly all pupils travel to and from the school by local authority transport. About three quarters of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds and many come from families where English is their second language. All teaching is through the medium of British Sign Language. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs for hearing impairment or are being assessed for one. Over two thirds have additional needs, mainly associated with multi-sensory disabilities, learning difficulties and/or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The school moved to a new temporary site a year ago while awaiting the completion of a new school on a shared campus with a new primary school. The school holds the Investor in People and Healthy School Awards. There is provision for children from the age of two in the Early Years Foundation Stage class.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- Frank Barnes School is outstanding. It provides exceptional opportunities for deaf pupils, enabling them to take a full and active part in all that the school offers. The school has maintained its strengths and has improved the assessment system and the curriculum since the last inspection.
- The vast majority of pupils, including those with additional special needs, achieve outstandingly well. They make excellent progress in developing their communication skills, many of them using British Sign Language fluently and accurately. Progress in reading, writing and mathematics is excellent, from often low or very low starting points. Reading skills have improved recently because of the sharp focus on the teaching of visual phonics (matching letters and sounds through pictures, photographs and lip shapes). Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also make excellent progress.
- Teaching is outstanding. The very high quality of attention paid to the teaching of British Sign Language extends pupils' language skills very well and ensures that they have equal access to a rich and exciting range of learning opportunities that fully meet their needs and abilities. Assessment procedures are rigorous and pupils know their targets very well.
- Behaviour is outstanding because pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are very well cared for and they and their parents and carers overwhelmingly, and rightly, say that the school is safe and secure. They are confident that behaviour is excellent. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- The headteacher has successfully led the school through the move to the current temporary site. Together with other leaders and the governing body, she has created an exceptionally supportive ethos in which all groups of pupils flourish. Leadership of teaching and management of teaching are excellent. The rich new curriculum supports pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, although the application of some key skills, particularly in numeracy, is not yet embedded across subjects. Leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses and recognise the issue identified for improvement in this report.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Embed the use of key skills, particularly for numeracy, across the curriculum so that pupils have more opportunities to learn about the use of numbers in real-life situations.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

All of the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaires rightly say that their children achieve well. They are particularly pleased with the way that the school promotes pupils' communication skills through British Sign Language (BSL). 'I am delighted with the fluency and accuracy of my child's BSL,' is a typical comment. Inspection evidence supports this view. Because of the high number of pupils with additional special needs, no overall judgement on standards is being made in this report. However, pupils whose only difficulty is their deafness often attain standards similar to those found nationally for their age. All pupils make excellent progress in communication, so that by the end of Year 6 the more able pupils are fluent and eager to express their views and join in conversations. In a literacy lesson, the older pupils, for example, showed how they enjoy problem solving as they planned 'Olympic' events for the younger ones. They discussed which activities would be suitable and safe for young children, making lists and testing their hypotheses, negotiating any changes with each other. They modelled different races to check suitability, working very well together and respecting each other's opinions. Pupils with additional special needs also make excellent progress in gaining communication skills and use BSL well to express themselves.

Pupils' progress in reading and writing has improved because of the exciting approaches used to teach visual phonics. Training for all staff has embedded this provision securely across the school so that the vast majority of pupils now make rapid and sustained progress in literacy lessons. Achievement in mathematics lessons is also excellent and pupils enjoy the challenge of working with numbers, although opportunities to do so in subjects other than mathematics are more limited. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage also make very good progress in their learning. In a phonics session, for example, children in the Nursery and Reception class improved their phonic skills through games by using objects and photographs and were quickly able to identify a range of different letter sounds.

The strong promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development ensures pupils make outstanding progress in their personal development. One Year 6 pupil explained that 'it is really nice to be able to talk to each other at lunch times.' Older pupils regularly take on simple responsibilities such as preparing for assemblies and organising classrooms.

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## Quality of teaching

Parents and carers are right when they say that their children are well taught. The fast pace of learning ensures that pupils make much better than expected progress in lessons. Exciting learning begins in the Nursery class and is continued throughout the school. This was fully exemplified in Years 5 and 6, where pupils worked quickly to describe their weekend activities. Pupils used BSL very well to engage each other in conversation and in asking questions. The very good addition of individual word banks helped pupils understand differences in verb tenses and the use of grammar so that they made very good progress. Teachers make excellent use of the exciting, rich and creative curriculum to design their lessons, matching tasks to individual pupils' needs and extending their abilities. For example, pupils with additional special needs regularly have visual resources to ensure that they fully understand what is required of them. Questioning is also a strength because it helps pupils to search for answers and deepen their knowledge and understanding. This was evident in a literacy lesson where younger pupils made much better than expected progress because the teacher challenged them to use accurate punctuation in their writing. She questioned each pupil carefully to ensure that they understood how to use capital letters and full stops in sentences.

Visual approaches are used regularly and very successfully to help pupils learn. In a mathematics lesson in Years 3 and 4, pupils developed very good understanding of the language of number because the teacher provided high quality visual resources to help them distinguish the position of different shapes. Pupils enjoyed this challenge and worked quickly to find answers. Regular use of visual timetables across the school helps pupils to maintain a clear view of their daily activities.

Assessment is rigorous and helps pupils move to their next steps, providing an accurate view of individuals' progress. Homework for older pupils is regular and targets are well known by pupils. Teaching promotes pupils' excellent personal development through the use of very effective topics that extend their knowledge of the local area and the wider world, so preparing them very well for their futures.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

All groups of pupils behave exceptionally well and are fully aware of what constitutes safe behaviour both in and outside school. The vast majority of parents and carers who returned the inspection questionnaires rightly said that behaviour at the school is good and that their children are kept safe. Pupils agree and, during discussions, pupils told the inspector that there was absolutely no bullying of any kind at the school. One Year 6 pupil commented, 'There may be some teasing but staff quickly deal with it; but we don't really tease each other, everyone gets on well.' Pupils listen extremely carefully while others are talking and they watch intently to follow signing. They enjoy the responsibility of their daily tasks and jobs. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted very well through the rich curriculum.

During the inspection, older pupils were preparing for their residential visit. They

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showed high levels of excitement as they began to make lists of the healthy food they needed to take with them. They found it difficult to decide 'how much' food was needed and negotiated with each other, watching each pupil sign their ideas of different viewpoints before making the final decisions. Regular visits to local places of interest and topics such as the recent focus on conserving water help to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Daily assemblies promote pride in their deafness and ensures that they are proud of who they are. Pupils really enjoy all aspects of school life and this is evident in their rising attendance.

Records show that incidents of negative behaviour have decreased rapidly in the past two years and there is no evidence in records of any bullying, including bullying related to disability, special educational needs, race, religion, or gender. Pupils have a clear awareness of how to stay safe in school and in the community. This is evident in the way the older ones are making plans about staying safe for their forthcoming trip.

### **Leadership and management**

Leaders and managers, including the governing body, work successfully together to provide the best possible education for the pupils. 'Frank Barnes is a fantastic school where there are no barriers. A deaf child at Frank Barnes is involved in every aspect of school life. There is very strong leadership at the school' is a typical comment from a parent. The headteacher has an excellent vision for the future and has very high aspirations for every single pupil. Leaders embed their ambition and drive improvements through high quality rigorous training for all staff and through regular monitoring and checking of teaching and pupils' achievements.

The highly successful curriculum is rich and varied and is based on realistic topics that ensure pupils develop a clear awareness of the world around them. It promotes plenty of opportunities to extend pupils' literacy skills in many different subjects, such as in history where they study famous events from the past and have completed in-depth accounts of the recent Diamond Jubilee activities. In geography, they regularly write about different countries and learn about places that are dissimilar to their own. Planned opportunities to improve pupils' numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics are less well developed. Opportunities for regular swimming for all pupils, visits to many London attractions and the teaching of French to older pupils show how well the school is preparing pupils for their futures and promoting their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Close and supportive links with other schools, along with the very strong support of parents and carers and the excellent track record since the last inspection, demonstrate the outstanding capacity there is for sustaining improvements. There is a sharp focus on performance management which is proving very effective. This is clearly evident in the way that all staff successfully promote the strategy for the teaching of visual phonics.

Leaders are rigorous about tackling any discrimination. They promote equality very well through the outstanding curriculum. As a result, the needs of all groups,

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including the high proportion of pupils with additional special educational needs, are very well met. The school's safeguarding procedures are rigorously applied, fully meet statutory requirements and give no cause for concern.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



27 June 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Frank Barnes School for Deaf Children, London N1C 4PF**

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave me when I inspected your school recently. It was good to meet and talk with you. I was really impressed with the way you are developing very good use of British Sign Language. You had lots of things to say about your school. You told me that you really enjoy lessons and that your school is very good. I agree with you. I found your school to be outstanding.

From the answers to the questionnaires I received from you and your parents and carers, it is very clear that you are happy at school. I can tell this by the way your attendance is improving. Well done! There are lots of excellent things in your school, such as your achievement and the teaching. Your headteacher and staff are doing a very good job, ensuring that you all make excellent progress. I find that you are kept very safe and that your behaviour is excellent.

Your skills in signing, reading, writing and mathematics are very impressive. I can see that you have been working very hard to do well. I enjoyed listening to some of you read your books. You told me you enjoy reading and I could see that by the way you talked about your books to your teachers. I know your parents and carers are very pleased with the way you are achieving. I can see that your writing is improving because you use your skills in lots of other subjects, such as in history and geography. I am asking your leaders to help you use your numeracy skills a bit more in other subjects than just mathematics. I hope you will help with this by working hard.

Thank you again for your help.

Yours sincerely

Denise Morris  
Lead inspector

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