

Barnes Farm Junior School

Henniker Gate, Chelmer Village, Chelmsford, CM2 6QH

Inspection dates 22–23 April 2015

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Outstanding | 1 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Leaders and managers are not rigorous enough in reviewing the school’s effectiveness and ensuring consistency across the school. They do not check important records in the school meticulously enough.
- The quality of teaching varies too much across the school. Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve, particularly in lower Key Stage 2.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in a number of subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching assistants are not always used effectively across the school. They sometimes have little opportunity to support the progress of groups of pupils during lessons.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and that of lower ability pupils is not yet good enough. This is because the work is often not appropriately matched to their needs and capabilities.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunity to develop their writing at length or to extend their mathematical understanding by applying it in other subjects. This results in some groups of pupils making less than expected progress.
- Pupils do not make enough progress in the lower years of the juniors as not enough is expected of them.
- Governors do not have a good enough grasp of achievement information to be able to hold school leaders fully to account.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils’ behaviour is good. They enjoy their learning and have good relationships with each other and with adults.
- Work is regularly marked. Teachers often give feedback that helps pupils understand what they need to do to improve their work.
- School leaders and teachers provide well for pupils’ spiritual, moral spiritual and cultural education.
- Attendance is good. Children are happy and they enjoy coming to school. The school provides interesting activities for pupils before and after school resulting, in them receiving a rich and varied experience.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection took place because of concerns about falling standards in achievement.
- Inspectors observed learning in 26 lessons, six of which were jointly observed with senior leaders.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, looked at books to take account of the quality of work and the progress that pupils make over time, together with the use of support staff.
- The team held meetings with pupils, headteacher, key leaders, four members of the governing body and met with representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of school documentation, including the school’s self-evaluation documentation and school improvement plan. In addition, the school’s systems for assessing, tracking and evaluating pupils’ progress were examined.
- Policies and procedures for the safeguarding of pupils and arrangements for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs were examined, including a scrutiny of the single central register.
- Inspectors took account of the 88 responses from parents who responded to the Ofsted’s online questionnaire (Parent View) and spoke informally to parents in the playground.
- Inspectors analysed 19 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, Lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Deborah Pargeter

Seconded Inspector

Bob Bone

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a larger than average junior school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is around the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and supported by pupil premium is well below average. The pupil premium provides additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by local authority.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well below national average.
- The school meets the government's current national floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher was appointed in 2012.
- The leadership work collaboratively with seven other schools through the STEP partnership.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so all pupils make faster progress by:
 - using the information from assessments to plan interesting and challenging learning opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils
 - choosing the most appropriate teaching strategies and resources well for lessons, so that pupils can learn in an effective and systematic way.
 - providing pupils more opportunities to write at length and to extend their skills in mathematics by applying them in other subjects
 - making better use of teaching assistants so pupils receive the timely support and intervention that they require during all parts of the lesson.
- Raise achievement by:
 - raising the expectations of all teachers and teaching assistants so they can accurately meet the needs of all pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs and pupils in lower Key Stage 2
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to write at length and apply their mathematics skills
 - providing skilled, timely support and intervention for pupils who are not making enough progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that self-evaluation of the school is rigorous, resulting in better outcomes for pupils and more sharply focused planning
 - strengthening systems and processes within the school so that all leaders and staff are held to account for the quality of education being provided
 - commissioning high quality governor training about pupil achievement so governors can hold the school to account more effectively and perform their statutory duties well
 - ensuring all leaders, including subject leaders, robustly check the quality of learning and teaching in their areas of responsibility so that they are consistently good or better across the school.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Self-evaluation is not robust enough. Although school leaders have a broad understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in pupil achievement, they do not set precise targets that are measurable and communicated well enough to the school community. As a result improvement is not systematic and progress is inconsistent across the school.
- The headteacher, supported by the new leadership team is determined to improve outcomes for all pupils in the school. They provide good quality professional development for the new middle leaders. As a result, the middle leaders are tackling key weaknesses with enthusiasm and energy. They are starting to improve the progress of groups of pupils. The new English leader is helping pupils develop their love of reading through organising events such as World Book Day. Pupils commented on how much they appreciated this.
- Leaders have created a warm and inviting school environment where pupils' ideas are valued. Representatives of the school council meet regularly with the deputy headteacher to discuss ideas for improvements in the school. They are then given time in class to relay the outcomes of these meetings. This results in pupils demonstrating the school values 'be positive, be respectful, be responsible' well and developing their understanding of democracy and preparing them for life in modern Britain.
- Although all pupils are safe and cared for within the school day, leaders do not regularly check that all the necessary safeguarding records are properly kept and up-to-date. This results in information being kept in too many places with insufficient staff accountability in place.
- New middle leaders in the school benefit from good quality professional development. As a result, they are tackling key weaknesses with enthusiasm and energy which, in turn, is starting to improve the progress for groups of pupils. The new leader for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is tackling previous weaknesses in provision for these pupils quickly. This is resulting in disabled pupils and those with special educational needs getting better support for them to make faster progress.
- The headteacher and phase leaders hold pupil progress meetings every half term. This is bringing a sharper focus on using assessment information to secure and speed up pupil progress. However teachers use this information inconsistently when planning learning.
- Leaders have worked hard on introducing the new curriculum to the school. However, some teachers are reluctant to leave their old plans and have not raised their expectations sufficiently. As a result, the quality of the curriculum, provided within the school day, is not always sufficiently interesting.
- The use of pupil premium was externally reviewed in January 2015. Leaders are beginning to evaluate the impact and spend the additional funding in a considered and effective way. Older pupils have benefitted from an online learning package in mathematics. As a result, gaps in achievement are narrowing.
- Leaders use the sports' funding well. This has resulted in increased levels of participation by pupils in a wide range of sporting activities, particularly before and after school. Pupils have a greater opportunity to be involved in competitive sports as a result of these additional funds.
- Leaders have created a warm and inviting school where pupils are provided with a range of opportunities to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural knowledge and understanding. For example, links with two international schools are helping pupils gain a good understanding of school life elsewhere in the world.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils well. This results in pupils actively participating in assemblies, confidently presenting to a large audience of parents and pupils from the infants school.
- The local authority has offered robust challenge and pertinent support to the school, which has resulted in

them now working together to raise outcomes for pupils.

■ The governance of the school:

- Governors are too reliant on the information given by the headteacher to monitor the school's performance. As a result they do not always use a wide enough range of data to fully hold school leaders to account for the performance of the pupils.
- Governors have commissioned external support to carry out the headteacher's performance management to ensure quality of provision. They make decisions about teacher performance and pay decisions accurately.
- Safeguarding procedures and processes are adequately reviewed annually by governors, but they do not check safeguarding records robustly enough. Governors ensure the school provides good value for money. They have ambitious plans for developing the school grounds so that it benefits the pupils. The refurbishment of the entrance along with the new library has provided warm and welcoming additions to the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

requires improvement

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Attendance is above average and exclusions are extremely rare. Pupils are rarely late and settle to learning quickly at the start of the school day. As a result of clearly established routines, pupils move around the school sensibly and purposefully.
- Pupils develop a mature and sensible approach to each other. In one lesson where pupils were discussing their residential trip, they were able to discuss and present their views fairly and with respect for each other. All responses were valued. As a result pupils were positive and explored issues about gender and relationships well.
- Pupils display a very positive attitude to learning and are keen to learn. They are proud of their school and enjoy the activities which enrich the curriculum. For example, they appreciate the many special events, adventure residentials, sporting competitions and outside visitors that make learning fun.
- Pupils enjoy holding roles of responsibility, such as school council representatives, and carry these out well. They show respect for each other's views and explore options before making decisions democratically. They say that adults listen to them at school so they feel valued.
- When pupils join from other schools, they are given 'buddies' to help them settle quickly. This helps them gain greater confidence in their learning.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about the recent changes to the way homework is set. They appreciate the clear structure and longer tasks that have been given, resulting in them completing home learning more frequently.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure requires improvement.
- School safeguarding procedures are not meticulously recorded and are not monitored robustly enough. Not all staff have received the necessary training in order to keep pupils safe.
- Pupils are safe and feel safe in school. Pupils are clear about how to be safe when using the internet both in school and at home.
- Pupils know how to report issues or concerns about bullying and are confident that staff at school will deal with them fully. One pupil commented 'we can tell anyone and they will help us'.
- Adults ensure that all first aid measures are in place and pupils are well cared for if they have a minor

accident while at school.

- While a very large majority of parents agree that the school keeps their children safe at school, some commented on not receiving enough information about how pupils are encouraged to keep safe.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning across the school is too variable. Teachers do not expect enough of the pupils in too many classes. This results in insufficient challenge so pupils do not make expected progress, especially in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In some classes teachers have high expectations of pupils and have established positive learning environments. This has resulted in high levels of pupil engagement and evident enjoyment. In these classes pupils make good progress in their learning.
- Teachers do not always make the best use of teaching assistants because too often the pupils who could benefit from additional help do not receive it. When deployed effectively, teaching assistants use their questioning skills well and help pupils to make progress.
- Teachers have received training on how to assess pupils' work accurately. This information is not fully used to plan learning by all teachers to accelerate progress for individuals or groups. Where it does happen, pupils thrive, enjoy their learning and fully participate in lessons.
- Staff new to the school have brought good skills. In one lesson the teacher skilfully used her excellent subject knowledge to engage pupils in the learning of spellings. Pupils were interested and participated keenly, resulting in them making good progress. However, this does not reflect the quality of teaching overall. Often teachers do not explain the learning clearly enough or fully establish the learning points before moving on to the next task.
- Some teachers do not choose the most effective teaching strategy or adapt their teaching to suit the needs and abilities of the learners. Too often teachers do not give the more able pupils extended activities to challenge their thinking or deepen their learning and understanding. As a result they spend too much time waiting for the next activity and not working hard enough.
- Pupils are not provided with enough time to write at length or independently to fully develop their own skills. This is preventing them from achieving higher level writing skills. This is particularly the case in lower Key Stage 2.
- Handwriting is not consistent across the school. Some older pupils are still not using a cursive script and this is not corrected. Where teachers model handwriting during lessons pupils take a greater pride in the presentation of their own work.
- Pupils experience a wide range of sporting activities during the school day. Trained sports coaches teach physical education lessons, though the quality of this teaching varies. Pupils benefit from many differing sporting clubs before and after school to develop their team work and physical well-being. This is a particular strength of the school.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils start the junior school with skills and abilities that are above average for their age in reading, writing and mathematics. Standards have been gradually declining over the last three years with pupils achieving significantly below pupils nationally in mathematics at the expected Level 4.
- Too many pupils make less than expected progress by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics and this is set to continue this year. Pupils are expected to make up too much ground in the older classes. As a result not enough of them achieve the standards of which they are capable.

- Not enough has been expected of pupils during the lower Key Stage 2 years, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, together with lower achieving pupils. This has resulted in the achievement gap widening for them over time.
- The achievement of disadvantaged pupils is beginning to improve because leaders are ensuring that there is more targeted provision and tracking of achievement. This year, disadvantaged pupils are still achieving less well in reading and writing. They make as much progress as their classmates in mathematics and are on track to reduce the achievement gap.
- The achievement of pupils in reading is variable. They do not always enjoy the texts adults choose for them from the reading schemes so do not develop a love of reading. This results in slower than expected progress, especially in lower Key Stage 2 and particularly for boys.
- The most able pupils achieve well. The number of pupils that achieve the highest national 6 level in mathematics is rising, and evidence from school data and the work seen in pupils' books indicates that this will continue. The most able pupils make good progress in reading but do not make enough progress in writing. This is due to teachers not giving enough extended opportunities for pupils to develop their skills across the school.
- The achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs requires improvement. Although there are new and more effective interventions in place for these pupils, they have yet to make a difference to the progress of these pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. In some year groups the achievement of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is beginning to improve because there are better tracking systems in place, together with action plans that are effectively monitored.

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

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| Unique reference number | 115019 |
| Local authority | Essex |
| Inspection number | 461564 |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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|--|-----------------------------------|
| Type of school | Junior |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 7–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 358 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steve Andrews |
| Headteacher | Ross McTaggart |
| Date of previous school inspection | 20 November 2007 |
| Telephone number | 01245 467973 |
| Email address | admin@barnesfarm-jun.essex.sch.uk |

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