

Barnes Farm Junior School

Henniker Gate, Chelmer Village, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6QH

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, working with his deputy, has effectively established a culture of high expectations. This is encapsulated well in the school motto of 'Aim High Fly Higher'.
- Leaders are unrelenting in their drive to improve the school. Consequently, standards of work are rising quickly and a good trend of improvement is evident in results at the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils across the school are making good progress in their learning. Pupils are attaining standards that are above the national average by the end of key stage 2.
- Pupils' skills in reading are exceptionally well developed and they develop in-depth understanding of the texts they are reading.
- While most pupils are making good progress in their writing, boys are not achieving as well as girls. In addition, the standards and quality of pupils' written work in other subjects are not as good as their work in English.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are very well supported and they make good, often strong, progress from their starting points.
- Attendance levels are above average.
- Teachers plan lessons well and they make good use of support staff to help pupils with their learning.
- While the work pupils are given in lessons is usually challenging, occasionally it is too easy, especially for the most able. Occasionally, some pupils find the work too hard.
- Pupils' learning is supported by a relevant curriculum that is well put together. Topics capture pupils' interests. Trips and visits out, and visitors to the school, broaden the curriculum and make it more exciting.
- The school has established its own core values and attributes for learning to support pupils' personal development. These make a positive contribution to pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Pupils behave well in and around the school. Lessons proceed smoothly and calmly. Pupils get on well with one another. They readily, and effectively, work together in lessons.
- Staff look after pupils well and keep them safe. Most pupils feel happy and safe in school.
- Parents express contrasting views. A small minority are concerned about the quality of education and behaviour. Many others give fulsome praise, recognising how the school has improved since its previous inspection.
- Governors provide very good oversight of the school's work and are planning well for the longer-term future of the school.
- The local authority provides good support.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and raise standards further by ensuring that:
 - teachers pick up more quickly in lessons if any pupils are finding work too easy or hard, and intervene to address this
 - pupils are even more consistently challenged, especially the most able
 - teachers ensure that, where there is a choice of tasks, all pupils are working on the one that is at the right level for their learning needs.
- Improve standards of writing further, especially for boys, by ensuring that:
 - teachers provide good opportunities for writing in subjects other than English
 - standards of written work in topic books are as good as those in English books.
- School leaders, including governors, develop their engagement and partnership with parents further in order to:
 - better understand their concerns
 - address the concerns and improve parental satisfaction with the school
 - tackle any misconceptions parents may have
 - ensure that parents have an accurate view of the school's educational provision.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher provides good leadership. He has maintained a relentless focus since the school's previous inspection on improving the quality of education and the standards that pupils achieve. As a result, the school is now providing a good-quality education for its pupils.
- Staff are proud to be working here. They say they are well supported by leaders and agree that leaders have created a culture that encourages calm and orderly conduct and is aspirational for all pupils.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well together to ensure that well-established systems and procedures are consistently implemented across the school. They and subject leaders check the quality of teaching routinely and provide effective feedback to help staff develop their practice.
- The performance management of staff is well organised and staff feel they benefit from the process. Information from performance management and monitoring of teaching and learning is used well to identify and address any training needs.
- Leaders provide good-quality professional development and training for staff to ensure that they are up to date with the best practice, and that teaching staff have the knowledge and skills to deliver effective teaching. This ensures that the quality of education and pupils' learning continually improve.
- Senior and middle leaders are rigorous in their analysis of the information about how well pupils are performing including checking how well different groups are doing. Where any pupil has fallen behind or is not making enough progress, additional measures are put in place quickly to address the potential underachievement.
- Overall, leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and develop well-considered plans to tackle the issues that their self-evaluation highlights. For example, the school has focused this term on developing pupils' skills in science, especially their experimental and investigative skills, because self-evaluation identified these as not being strong enough.
- The funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is spent very effectively on additional staffing, resources and expertise from external professionals to ensure that these pupils are well supported and achieve well.
- The school has a well-developed plan to help to narrow, and indeed close, the gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others nationally. Funding is aligned effectively to the plan, which identifies the barriers to learning and the support needed to remove these. Leaders also direct funding towards the needs of the most able disadvantaged pupils to ensure that they achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- The curriculum is successfully underpinned by the school's core values and aims. These include promoting equality and diversity so that pupils respect others and learn to value difference.

- Staff, with the guidance of school and subject leaders, have put together units of work and topics very effectively to deliver a varied curriculum. This engages pupils and appeals as much to boys as girls. For example, the topic on virtual reality sparked the imaginations of both boys and girls.
- Pupils enjoy the wide range of trips and visits as well as visitors to the school, and these both support the delivery of the curriculum and widen pupils' horizons. Consequently, these contribute well to pupils' personal development and growth.
- A wide range of extra-curricular activities supplement the main curriculum exceptionally well. Staff check to see where pupils are not engaging in extra-curricular clubs and why. They then provide clubs aimed at the interests of these pupils to try and involve them all.
- The primary sport premium funding provides extra after-school clubs as well as opportunities for experiencing a wider range of sports in lessons. Money is also targeted at developing pupils' understanding of how to remain healthy. The funding is having a positive impact on pupils' health and activity levels. The way the sport premium funding is spent helps the future sustainability of sports and physical education at the school.
- School leaders speak highly about the support they have had from the local authority to help them to improve the school since the previous inspection. This support has been consistent and good. It has had a positive impact on the school's development.
- While the school provides parents with considerable information, such as a weekly newsletter, and holds regular events for parents, a small but significant minority raise a wide range of concerns. Many are concerned about behaviour, including bullying, and also progress. Some are unhappy about homework, communication or leadership. Most of the concerns are not substantiated by the inspection evidence.
- Conversely, many other parents are very positive about the way the school works and engages with them and, indeed, the leadership of the school. Governors and leaders acknowledge that they have more work to do to turn parental views around where these are based on misconceptions or perceptions about the school which are not borne out. In addition, the school has not done enough to gain more in-depth understanding of parental dissatisfaction.
- The school has a good working relationship with the infant school with which it shares the site. Staff work well together to ensure a smooth and seamless transition from infant to junior school. This is also helped by having common approaches or practices where possible. For example, all pupils are allocated a 'house' when they join in Reception, and the junior and infant schools both have the same houses. Hence, a pupil will stay in the same house from Reception to Year 6.

Governance

- The governing body is ambitious for the school and keen for it to be even better. Members are actively engaged in the school's work and visit regularly to check on how well the policies they agree are being implemented. During every visit, governors check the behaviour of pupils because they are aware that it is a concern for some parents.

Their reports indicate that they, as did the inspection team, find behaviour to be consistently good.

- Governors are diligent in formulating policies and plans, and ensuring that these are fit for purpose and that all required policies and plans are in place. They are thorough in their examination of the school's performance and in questioning leaders about the performance of different groups. Governors are equally probing about the quality of teaching and how this is impacting on pupils' learning.
- The governing body manages the school finances prudently and also looks ahead in order to anticipate future needs. It is planning well to secure the school's future viability.
- Governors engage with parents in a variety of ways. However, they are aware that they, and the school, are not reaching some groups of parents, especially those who express concerns or negative views about the school. Members of the governing body are keen to extend their engagement with parents, including to put in place a wider range of mechanisms to communicate with parents and gain feedback from them.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school has a culture of care and one within which pupils' safety is of paramount importance. Staff are well trained and know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil. They know pupils well as individuals and are aware of those who require extra support or help.
- Safeguarding records are well kept and managed, and the school is systematic in following up any concerns including with external professionals and agencies.
- Leaders implement a rigorous system for checking that all staff employed to work at the school, and all volunteers and visitors, are checked properly before being allowed to interact with pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching is consistently good over time across the school. This is a significant improvement since the school's previous inspection.
- Lesson plans are rigorous and teachers make sure that they plan and prepare well for their classes. They make good use of information from marking and their checks on pupils' learning from the previous lesson to inform their planning.
- Teachers set high expectations of pupils and this is evident in the good level of challenge in most tasks provided in lessons. For example, pupils in Year 6 are designing and developing a computer app which is really making them think. Pupils rise readily to these high expectations and try their best.
- The most able are usually extended well by the work they are given. Sometimes, work is a bit too easy for these pupils. Teachers are usually good at reshaping tasks and reorganising pupils into different groups if tasks are too easy or, for that matter, too hard for some. However, they do not always pick this up during the lesson.

- Teachers provide tasks with up to five different levels of challenge, for example 'chilli challenges' where the most difficult task is the hottest – five chillies. Pupils often choose the level of difficulty they want to work at. Many teachers guide pupils' choices effectively. However, where they do not, pupils do not routinely choose the task that is of the right level of difficulty for them.
- Teachers and teaching assistants probe pupils' understanding effectively. Pupils respond well to teachers' good questioning about the work they are doing and provide effective extended answers and explanations.
- Pupils are taught a wide range of skills in relation to reading. Staff continue to teach phonics to the small number of pupils who still need these skills to be reinforced. They effectively teach pupils to analyse texts and to read between the lines.
- Writing skills are developed well in English but opportunities for practising writing, including writing for different purposes and audiences, are limited in other subjects.
- Staff successfully teach the basic skills of mathematics and are focusing well on developing pupils' ability to explain or reason out their thinking.
- Teaching assistants are briefed well by class teachers and work very successfully to support pupils in lessons and when they are working with individuals or small groups. They have a good understanding of the special educational needs and/or disabilities of the pupils they work with, and provide very focused and skilful support to these pupils as a result.
- Teachers mark work and provide feedback in line with the school policy very consistently. As a result, pupils learn from their mistakes and improve their work.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Consequently, pupils develop into mature and responsible youngsters ready for secondary school by the time they leave.
- Staff are systematically embedding the school's core values and attributes for learning, such as 'possibilities' where pupils are encouraged to 'embrace enquiry' and 'appreciate a deeper understanding of the world around them'. As a result, pupils are steadily developing the personal skills and qualities to help them to become even better learners.
- Pupils also develop a good understanding of British values, many of which are also part of the school's core values, such as respect for others especially those from different backgrounds to their own.
- Pupils are very positive about school and enjoy learning. They want to do well and are willing to work hard in lessons. In lessons, pupils get down to tasks quickly and efficiently ensuring that no time is wasted.
- When asked to do so, pupils work effectively in pairs or groups. They share ideas openly with one another, and readily support and help those working with them or at

the same table. This good collaboration among pupils reflects their well-developed social skills.

- Pupils are supervised effectively during play and lunchtimes and in the dining hall. They are well looked after and cared for by staff including when attending the breakfast club.
- Older pupils take on a range of responsibilities across the school. They help to support younger pupils, for example, and run the school's radio station.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. The school is calm and orderly especially during lesson times. Lessons proceed in a brisk manner as a result of pupils' good behaviour. Very occasionally, some of the boys can lose concentration or focus but, overall, pupils cooperate well with teachers and other adults.
- The school's records indicate that bullying is rare and this is confirmed by pupils. Most say that the school addresses any issue of bullying quickly and effectively. Bullying based on discrimination such as racist, homophobic or racist is equally rare, and dealt with by the school if it occurs.
- Pupils who have social and emotional needs, or who display challenging behaviour, are well supported by the school.
- Pupils' behaviour outside lessons is also good. They play happily and energetically together during play and lunchtimes. Lunch in the dining hall is a harmonious occasion where pupils are polite and friendly to one another and adults.
- The school has robust systems in place to manage behaviour and deal swiftly with any incidents. Consequently, pupils are safe in school. Most parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school and are well looked after.
- Pupils attend regularly and the attendance is significantly above the national average. Persistent absence is low. The school's systems to follow up any absence, including of the very small number of pupils who are persistently absent, are rigorous.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils across the school are now making good progress due to the better teaching now than at the time of the previous inspection.
- Results in the tests at the end of key stage 2 have been improving over the last three years. The 2016 results were above average overall and particularly good in reading.
- The school's most recent information is even better. Early outcomes suggest that in reading and mathematics a high proportion of pupils will attain the expected or better standard. Writing outcomes are not quite as high, although a little better than those of 2016.
- Leaders' monitoring information indicates that most pupils have made good progress from their starting points when they joined the school in Year 3, especially in reading where pupils have made the most progress.

- Work in pupils' books and the school's data indicate that pupils across the school are building and developing skills in English and mathematics at a good rate. Writing is improving although the standards of boys' writing are not as good as those of girls. Boys do not extend their writing as well as girls and some use less varied vocabulary and grammatical structures. Handwriting and presentation are consistently good and pupils have a good grasp of grammar and punctuation.
- Pupils' reading skills are strong and they enjoy reading a wide variety of books. They are developing good skills in tackling routine mathematical problems and most are good at explaining their thinking and working out. The school is developing more work on investigation and solving extended problems in mathematics.
- The most able pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics. They produce high-quality writing and show in-depth understanding of the books they are reading. The most able pupils show good skill in manipulating numbers and tackling sums. Sometimes, they could be challenged to achieve even better.
- Historically, disadvantaged pupils make reasonably good progress and differences between these pupils and others nationally are diminishing. In 2016, they attained as well as other pupils nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school are achieving well and making good and often accelerated progress to catch up with others. The most able disadvantaged pupils also make good progress to achieve in line with other most able pupils.
- The very effective support given to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities means that they make very creditable gains in their learning. Books show that many make significant progress in their writing.
- Pupils achieve well in other areas of the curriculum. They are, for example, making good progress in developing their computing skills. In science, pupils are learning how to carry out practical experiments and to develop workable hypotheses of what will happen. Pupils have the opportunity to learn Mandarin and are making good progress in learning to write as well as speak the language.
- Topic books show that pupils are developing their knowledge in a wide range of subjects including history, geography and religious education. However, standards of writing across subjects of the curriculum are not as well developed as in English. This constrains the opportunities for pupils to apply what they learn in English to their writing in other subjects, or to write for different purposes and audiences.
- Work on display shows that pupils are developing good skills in practical subjects such as art and design and technology.
- The small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language make rapid progress in learning English and achieve well across the curriculum.

School details

Unique reference number	115019
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10031386

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Andrews
Headteacher	Ross McTaggart
Telephone number	01245 467 973
Website	www.barnesfarmjuniors.co.uk
Email address	admin@barnesfarm-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger in size than other primary schools nationally. There are more boys than girls on roll.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- Nearly all pupils are White British and very few speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. A well above-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan.
- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed learning in all classes. Most of these observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, governors, the special needs coordinator, subject leaders, a group of teaching assistants and a representative from the local authority.
- Members of the team spoke informally to pupils in lessons and around the school, as well as holding discussions with a group of representative pupils from across the school. They also listened to some pupils reading to check how well they were developing their reading skills.
- In carrying out the inspection, inspectors took account of 145 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and the written comments submitted by many of these parents. They spoke with parents as they picked up or dropped off their children at school.
- The team took account of the responses to Ofsted questionnaires completed by 38 staff and 71 pupils.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school. They looked at the school's improvement plan, a range of policies and procedures, documents relating to the work of the governing body and the arrangements for ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Documentation reviewed included records of assessment information relating to pupils' attainment and progress, behaviour and attendance. The school's website was also checked.

Inspection team

Gulshan Kayembe, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Sharon Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Cox	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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