

Barming Primary School

Belmont Close, Barming, Maidstone, Kent ME16 9DY

Inspection dates

8–9 May 2019

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
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The head of school provides enthusiastic, strong and focused leadership. With the support of the executive headteacher, he has built an effective and ambitious senior leadership team. Their hard work and dedication have resulted in a primary school that develops happy pupils who are keen to learn.
- Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and work tirelessly to ensure sustained improvement in pupils' attainment and progress.
- Leaders gather, understand and use information from a variety of sources to drive improvement. However, actions are not always as sharply focused as they could be and the effects of change are not evaluated fully.
- All members of staff are supportive of pupils' welfare and development. The school is committed to the inclusion of all pupils and the inclusion team works hard to ensure that all pupils attend school regularly and their needs are met.
- All areas of the school's curriculum are generally well planned, and assessment is improving throughout the school. Senior staff have put timely and appropriate development plans in place to address the remaining inconsistencies in teaching.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy their time here. They behave well and are sensitive to others' needs. The vigilance of all staff ensures that they are safe and happy.
- The majority of parents and carers are positive about the school, and many recognise the challenges the new leaders have overcome. They are confident that their children are happy and safe, and that they learn well and make progress.
- Governance is good. At a local level, governors are ambitious for the school. They monitor leaders' actions successfully and provide effective challenge. However, strategic actions are not always clearly linked to the data available. The trust supports the school to a high standard.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Share best practice across the school to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good and appropriate learning opportunities are available for all groups of pupils, across the curriculum.
- Leaders to make wider use of their monitoring and evaluation to devise sharply focused actions that can be implemented by staff to improve the quality of experience for all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The head of school, appointed by the Orchard Trust, has brought stability to the school. He quickly formed strong and positive relationships with the school community and has worked hard to establish a cohesive staff team with a clear vision for the school. He has built an effective new leadership team with high expectations that has addressed poor behaviour and weak teaching, and has improved outcomes.
- Leaders have an accurate and comprehensive understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They carefully consider plans for development, and accurately identify aspects needing further improvement or consolidation. They have responded to staffing issues decisively and have overcome a period of turbulence and necessary staffing restructure to provide a good standard of education for the pupils in the school.
- Leaders and governors recognised where there were weaknesses in the school and made judicious use of external support. As a result, they have strengthened the quality of teaching in English and mathematics, and greater challenge and progress can be seen in pupils' books. Recent monitoring and evaluation by the new English and mathematics coordinators show that further improvements are now being driven by the school.
- The school uses pupil premium funding effectively. The careful monitoring of the progress of disadvantaged pupils shows that, overall, the funding is having a positive impact on pupils' rates of progress. Disadvantaged pupils are making progress the same as, or better than, other pupils nationally. The family liaison officer has an excellent understanding of the difficulties some pupils and families face and works tirelessly to provide appropriate support.
- Leaders check how well teachers' skills are developing and use this information effectively to refine the support given. Expectations are high and targets are shared successfully with staff. Comprehensive support has been put in place where there has not been rapid improvement. Leaders are aware that inconsistencies still remain and are continuing to ensure good teaching across the school.
- Pupils are supportive of each other; they work exceptionally well together and respect difference. They are reflective and have a good understanding of the consequences of their actions. The wider curriculum is planned to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively but pupils are not always able to articulate their experiences and learning. Leaders are strongly committed to preparing pupils well for life in modern Britain, and provide a range of experiences to support this.
- Additional funding is used effectively to support pupils with a range of special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This includes the employment of skilled teaching assistants who work with individual pupils to support their varying needs. The inclusion manager has a good understanding of the support that pupils need and ensures appropriate outside agency involvement.
- Parents are generally positive about the school and welcome the recent changes and improvements. There are mixed views concerning homework but inspectors found that

the new policy is not having a negative impact on progress or attainment. Parents believe the school is a safe and welcoming environment for their children, and staff are quick to action any concerns.

Governance of the school

- Governors on the local governing body are proud of the school and are hard-working. They are determined the school will succeed and can quickly identify many improvements since the appointment of the head of school. They have quickly formed a cohesive team and they are knowledgeable and able to challenge and support senior leaders.
- Governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and recognise the turbulence and period of change the school has been through. They have access to a wide range of information but are not always making the best use of this to develop sharply focused strategic plans.
- Governors bring a range of skills and experience to their roles. This helps the governing body to fulfil its obligations well. All governors are constantly developing their competence through appropriate training. They regularly visit the school to gain a greater understanding of the actions leaders have taken. They are supportive of staff and provide good support for senior leaders.
- Governors have ensured that the funding for disadvantaged pupils has been used well, for instance to develop effective support for pupils' well-being. They value the school's kind and caring ethos and its inclusivity.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders take their safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and as a result there is a strong safeguarding culture. The designated safeguarding leads are well trained and vigilant. They act rapidly, where appropriate, and work to raise awareness of child protection issues with all members of the school community. Effective systems are in place to ensure that children and families receive appropriate support from a network of external agencies.
- Regular training sessions for all staff ensure that they can identify signs and symptoms of abuse. All staff receive high-quality training on how to recognise any potential signs of risk. They know what to do should they have any concerns. Checks on staff and other adults working in the school are rigorous. There is a comprehensive induction process for new staff to ensure that they know what to do in the event a safeguarding issue should arise.
- Leaders ensure that pupils understand their role in ensuring that there is a culture of safeguarding. As a result, pupils know how to keep themselves safe. The designated safeguarding leads work closely with the family liaison officer and other agencies to ensure that pupils and their families are supported sensitively. Leaders keep careful records of this work.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching and learning is generally good across the school, and pupils attain well. Current staff are supported in further improving their skills, particularly in the teaching of English and mathematics, by school leaders and external consultants. Leaders are well aware of some inconsistencies between classes and subjects and are addressing these effectively.
- Numerous changes in teaching staff across the school and historically weaker teaching have interrupted and hampered pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the high quality of work seen in pupils' books indicates that there have been some marked improvements in the quality of pupils' learning during the past year, and progress is improving.
- Assessment is now accurate, particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants are developing a good understanding of the pupils' current abilities, and planning activities that motivate and inspire pupils.
- Leaders and teachers have high expectations and, in recent months, some groups of pupils in key stage 2 have made significantly better progress. This is due to improvements in teaching. High-quality English teaching ensures that pupils develop a deep appreciation of different texts, and their writing reflects their understanding and enthusiasm. Pupils self-edit and use feedback from the teacher and their peers to improve the quality of their writing.
- In mathematics lessons, pupils are keen to take part and they tackle a range of appropriate work using a variety of resources to support their learning. There is a clear and consistent focus on calculation and problem solving, and pupils are encouraged to attempt challenging reasoning questions.
- Pupils show a desire to learn, and listen well to their teachers and peers. They work collaboratively, share ideas and support each other. However, sometimes not enough attention is given to deepening and extending the abilities of the most able pupils. This leads to some pupils losing engagement and motivation.
- Staff provide pupils with a high-quality environment that encourages learning and supports activities. Classroom doors are beautifully decorated to reflect the current topic of the class, and displays inside the classroom ensure that vocabulary and other cues are available for pupils to use during lessons.
- Teaching assistants provide good support to pupils of all abilities, including pupils with SEND. They use questioning effectively to help pupils plan how they will tackle activities. They teach pupils how to use resources to support their learning, and encourage pupils when tasks are difficult.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident and have a developed understanding of 'right and wrong', both in school

and in the wider community.

- Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in school, in the community and online. They know who to talk to if they are worried or concerned. Digital leaders and anti-bullying ambassadors are elected from among Year 6 pupils. They support younger pupils in keeping safe online and in the playground.
- Pupils' attitudes to all aspects of learning are positive. In lessons, pupils are confident in sharing their opinions and show high levels of respect for the views of others. They settle to work quickly, and generally persevere with activities. They collaborate exceptionally well, sharing ideas and resources sensibly. However, occasionally pupils are not fully engaged in learning where they find the tasks too hard or too easy.
- The well-run breakfast club and after-school club provide good care for pupils outside school hours. The breakfast club provides a healthy breakfast and a calm and well-supervised start to the day. In both clubs, there are many activities to participate in and pupils play well together and have a good relationship with staff. Effective supervision ensures that pupils are safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous and show consideration for one another as they move around the school. Pupils play together sensibly during playtimes and while attending the breakfast club and after-school club. They are well supported by adults and follow routines well. Pupils say that behaviour is largely good, and this was demonstrated clearly during the inspection.
- Pupils like school and attend regularly. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. Senior leaders and the inclusion team continue to work at improving this by supporting individual families. Senior leaders are aware of a variation between groups and are proactive in tackling areas of concern.
- Pupils said that they enjoy school, feel safe and are encouraged to look after their own health and well-being. The majority of parents agree that their children are safe and happy in school and that behaviour is well managed.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Assessment in school is rigorous, carefully carried out and widely moderated. The statutory test results from the end of Year 6 show that overall pupils made lower rates of progress in 2018 than others nationally. However, assessment information and pupils' workbooks show that current pupils are making secure progress from the point at which they enter key stage 2.
- Leaders ensure that differences between the progress of specific groups of pupils are carefully monitored and addressed. However, they do not always use all the information available to them to fully evaluate the effect of their actions or changes in the school. As a result, dips in progress are not always recognised and addressed as quickly as they could be.
- Attainment across English and mathematics is in line with national averages in key stage 1 and key stage 2. Pupils develop a secure understanding and knowledge that

they can apply across the curriculum. As a result, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. However, some pupils are not attaining the high standards they are capable of.

- On leaving early years, girls outperform boys in all areas of the early years curriculum. Leaders throughout the school are mindful of this and are taking steps to ensure that the curriculum is designed to help boys to catch up.
- Pupils read widely and they enjoy reading. Structured and well-planned phonic sessions support pupils' basic reading skills and help them gain fluency. Standards at the end of Year 1 are good. Pupils report that they read frequently at home and at school.
- In most year groups, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils is in line with or better than that of other pupils nationally in mathematics and English. Their progress is tracked with growing rigour, and the inclusion leader and team are quick to intervene and offer appropriate support.
- Pupils with SEND are well supported. This helps most to make good progress from their various starting points although they do not always catch up with their peers. All pupils with SEND are carefully monitored, and precise intervention and additional support are put in place for them.
- Pupils' work across the school shows good progress in a range of subjects, including science, history and art. Pupils apply their English and mathematical skills successfully across the curriculum. The broad curriculum makes good use of the outdoor space, and the special themed events contribute well to pupils' achievements.

Early years provision

Good

- The early years leaders set high expectations across the classes and use performance management, information from books and lesson observations in a constructive manner to improve outcomes for the children. The early years team demonstrates expertise and enthusiasm and is keen to improve further.
- Assessment throughout early years is regular and captures the individual children's learning style and interests. This means that staff can successfully plan next steps that motivate and engage children. Parents' comments provide additional information and are valued by staff. Children's attainment on entry is typically below that expected for their age, and the provision ensures that the majority of pupils achieve a good level of development.
- Learning journals are a source of pride for children and they are keen to share them with inspectors. Children recall their learning and experiences with pleasure, and photos and activities prompt memories and reflection. They can identify where they have improved and can recognise the changes in themselves and their ability as they flick through their books.
- Staff make good use of the outdoor area and ensure that it contains activities to support children's learning. There are many opportunities for children to develop their ability to perfect both small and large actions. For example, they enjoy setting up guttering and a water activity, playing on scooters and bikes.

- The forest-style learning provides children with the opportunity to play and learn in a safe but exciting outdoor environment. They follow rules and are encouraged to use their imaginations. Inspectors saw children collecting water to cook their 'rock potato' and listened as they recounted how they may have seen bear cubs through the trees.
- Staff provide opportunities for writing and number work both inside the building and outside. However, inspectors observed that boys did not often choose writing or numbers activities and instead move from building activities to physical activities. Girls, in contrast, prefer to stay indoors and read, write and enjoy number work. This could explain why boys do not achieve as well in writing and number activities.
- Children get on well with each other and they are polite and confident. Staff encourage children to be independent and look after themselves and others. Children's social and emotional skills are developing well. Children respond well to teachers' instructions and follow simple routines effectively.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work as a cohesive team, and all staff interact positively with different groups of pupils. Safeguarding is effective and child-protection procedures are implemented consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	142924
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10088109

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	406
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Rev W North
Head of school	Mr Christopher Laker
Telephone number	01622 726 472
Website	www.barming.kent.sch.uk
Email address	office@barming.kent.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Barming Primary School converted to become an academy school on 1 July 2016 and is part of the Orchard Academy Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be inadequate overall.
- Barming Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. It is currently two-form entry.
- Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below average. The proportion with education, health and care plans is below the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is below the national average.

- A substantive headteacher was appointed from 1 September 2016 and the staffing structure was reorganised in September 2017.
- The senior leadership team of the school consists of the head of school, director of school improvement (employed by the trust) early years and key stage leaders and special educational needs coordinator. Leadership is supported by the executive headteacher of the Orchard Trust.
- The school runs a daily breakfast club and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons throughout the school, some jointly with members of the senior leadership team and the executive headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of books from across the school with teachers and leaders from the school.
- Meetings were held with the head of school, director of school improvement, the executive headteacher, early years leaders, middle leaders, subject leaders and the inclusion team.
- Inspectors attended breakfast clubs and the after-school club and talked to pupils on the playground at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with six members of the governing body.
- Several documents were scrutinised, including the school's own information about pupils' learning and progress, minutes of governing body meetings, the school improvement plan, plans relating to the support offered by external consultants, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and safeguarding information.
- Inspectors took account of the 112 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, including written comments. They also met informally with parents and spoke to parents on the phone.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and took account of their views.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and met with groups of pupils and took account of their views.

Inspection team

Tracy Good, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Teresa Davies	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Donovan	Ofsted Inspector

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