

Ofsted  
Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234  
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Mr Mark Snow  
Headteacher  
Barton Primary School  
Furlongs  
Newport  
Isle of Wight  
PO30 2AX

Dear Mr Snow

### **Short inspection of Barton Primary School**

Following my visit to the school on 22 May 2019, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in May 2015.

#### **This school continues to be good.**

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school, relocated the school to a new site and introduced several improvements since the last inspection.

Barton Primary School is rightly proud of its strong partnership work with the local community and offers a particularly nurturing and inclusive atmosphere. Your determination to support and challenge all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, to aim high and achieve is admirable and shared by governors and all staff. Together, you and your leadership team are ambitious for the pupils in your care and passionate about improving the quality of provision in school and pupils' wider learning experiences. You provide energy, vision and clear leadership which is recognised and highly valued by pupils, staff, parents, carers and the local authority. As one parent commented:

'I feel that Barton has improved immensely over the past five years or so... my child is doing very well in all areas of their education... I would recommend the school to any of my friends and family.'

In the past, pupils have typically made rates of progress in writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 that were broadly in line with the national averages. However, in 2018 outcomes in reading in key stage 2 dipped. Consequently, the proportions of pupils who achieved standards expected for their age in reading were below national figures. Similarly, last year outcomes in key stage 1 dipped. Recognising the need for improvements, you have sourced and delivered training

for staff and reinvigorated teaching and learning across the school with a strong focus on developing pupils' speech and language skills. Senior leaders are very aware that these improvements are ongoing, but this year the school has implemented enhancements to the teaching of phonics and a school-wide focus on promoting communication and reading skills. As a result, all pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are making better progress from their starting points than in the past. Leaders are rightly focused on raising the level of challenge in teaching so that a greater proportion of pupils than previously achieve age-related expectations in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.

In lessons, pupils have very positive attitudes, engage well with staff, and work hard. Strong relationships, underpinned by clear rules and procedures, engender a sense of teamwork and trust. This enables staff to support pupils with SEND, or those who have behavioural needs, well so that they are able to engage in classroom-based learning activities. Pupils respect each other's ideas and they work and play very well together. Any incidents of poor behaviour are managed effectively.

Senior leaders and governors are committed to ensuring that a range of bespoke support is offered to disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. Leaders are rightly proud that the school goes the extra mile to engage with the local community and offers much-needed support to vulnerable pupils and their families. Financially, this aspect of provision has become increasingly challenging to maintain. Consequently, leaders and governors are currently having to make some difficult future staffing decisions. However, even at this challenging time, the respect and teamwork shown by staff is a sign of their professionalism and your strong leadership.

Your detailed self-evaluation and improvement plans are carefully considered. As a result, staff share a pride in the school's strengths and are sharply focused on the areas that the school can improve further. Regular monitoring ensures that leaders are taking the right actions to make these improvements. The governing body is a dedicated team, well led by an experienced and skilled chair of governors. Governors have clear areas of responsibility, pay regular visits to the school and are kept up to date via leaders' detailed tracking and reports. They are actively involved in monitoring activities, setting targets for yourself and senior leaders, and supporting school improvements. Leaders and governors are aware that more needs to be done to improve and monitor the quality of the wider curriculum. They are currently working to achieve this.

### **Safeguarding is effective.**

You ensure that the school has appropriate procedures and well-understood systems to manage safeguarding requirements. Your family support officer is highly organised and efficient and respected by the community. Leaders maintain detailed records and ensure a culture of vigilance at the school. All staff have appropriate and up-to-date training so that they can spot and deal with any problems quickly. You are proactive, liaising with external agencies, and challenging where necessary,

to ensure that timely and appropriate support is sourced to support vulnerable pupils.

In the past, overall pupils' attendance has been slightly above that of schools in similar circumstances. Recent attendance figures dipped, but this has been linked to a bout of illness last term. Leaders promote the value of good attendance effectively. They have worked closely with parents and outside agencies to support improvements. Most parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, confirmed that their children are happy and feel safe here.

Pupils report that they know how to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet. Pupils told me that they know who to go to should they have any concerns, and that they trust staff to resolve their concerns or find someone who can. Currently, in the middle of a major building programme, you have taken suitable steps, and conduct risk analyses, to ensure the safe and orderly running of the school. Pastoral and teaching staff work closely together to ensure that break and lunchtimes are orderly and that children socialise and play well together.

### **Inspection findings**

During this inspection, as well as evaluating safeguarding arrangements, I focused on specific aspects of the school's provision, including:

- how well leaders have responded to address previously weak outcomes in reading
  - the quality of learning in the wider curriculum
  - the progress of disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND
  - the progress that pupils make in early years and key stage 1.
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- In 2018, progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 was broadly in line with national figures. However, due to low starting points and some historical weaknesses in key stage 1, the proportion of pupils who achieved standards expected for their age in reading was below the national figure. Leaders have taken decisive steps to address this, and pupils currently are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics from their starting points.
  - Leaders and governors are rightly prioritising a continued focus on improving the reading skills of lower-attaining pupils. Visits to lessons, and pupils' work over time, demonstrate how teachers' determined drive to support the speech and language skills of lower-attaining pupils has improved their reading, vocabulary and sentence structure over time. Staff are making every effort to ensure a strong focus on the teaching of phonics, regular engagement with parents, and the promotion of the school library to raise the standard of reading. This is having an impact; for example, the Year 4 pupils who I heard read did so with confidence, fluency and expression. They demonstrated a firm grasp and genuine interest in the characters and plot lines in their books, and a pride in their

achievement.

- In mathematics, strong leadership has supported teachers to be more consistent in promoting fluency and providing opportunities for reasoning than had been the case in the past. Leaders are aware of areas where problem-solving can be improved. In most classes, pupils respond well to teachers' feedback to refine, edit and improve their work in English and mathematics. Although standards have improved, leaders are aware that more needs to be done to embed improved phonics and reading skills with younger pupils.
- Senior leaders worked with other schools and the local authority to source training, share ideas and moderate pupils' work. Leaders of English and mathematics have developed and shared these resources with teachers, and have ensured a consistency of approach across the school. Senior leaders make good use of regular assessment and monitoring to track the progress of individual pupils and to challenge staff. Leaders and governors are rightly focused on ensuring that an increasing proportion of pupils attain the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2.
- The school offers pupils a suitably rich curriculum and is keen to raise their aspirations through offering engaging and relevant contexts. In addition, the range of sporting clubs, trips and visits is highly valued by pupils and parents. On the day of this inspection, children were highly motivated by the annual safety day, learning from the visiting police and fire brigade. Planning in subjects other than English and mathematics is currently being reviewed. Leaders are aware that teachers do not routinely offer appropriately challenging tasks in science and humanities for different groups of pupils. Consequently, while coverage and motivation are good, the quality of education is not yet as consistently strong across the wider curriculum as it is in English and mathematics.
- Effective leadership, monitoring and good liaison with parents ensures that provision for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND is good. Leaders are passionate about wanting the best for every pupil, and relationships between staff and pupils are strong. Consequently, these pupils are given bespoke support and make strong progress from their starting points. Parents who I met at the beginning of the day were keen to share how appreciative they are of the extra support many staff willingly give their children and their families.
- Staff in Nursery and Reception work hard to provide a rich array of highly stimulating and engaging learning environments and opportunities. Children gain confidence from their good relationships with staff and collaborative play with each other. Appropriate tracking systems are used to inform teaching approaches and to monitor the progress that children make from their starting points. Parents report that communication between school and home is strong and they value the support that staff give them to support their children's reading and number skills. All of this combines to ensure that children make strong progress from their starting points, develop independence, and are supported well during the transfer to key stage 1.

## **Next steps for the school**

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- standards across the school continue to improve, enabling more pupils to achieve and exceed age-related expectations by the end of Year 6, especially in reading
- improved planning enables pupils to experience more appropriately challenging tasks in science and the wider curriculum so that their subject-specific knowledge and depth of thinking improve.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for the Isle of Wight. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Matthew Newberry  
**Her Majesty's Inspector**

### **Information about the inspection**

I met with you, other school leaders and four members of the governing body. I held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority. Jointly with the acting headteacher, I visited all year groups to look at teaching and learning. Together with senior and subject leaders, I reviewed a range of pupils' work in their exercise books.

I observed pupils' behaviour at breaktime and around the school, and had a meeting with a small group of pupils. I took into account 15 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. In addition, I spoke to a number of parents at the beginning of the day. I considered the views expressed in the staff survey and the responses to the pupil survey.

I reviewed a range of documents, including reports from the local authority, minutes of meetings, pupils' progress information, and safeguarding policies, procedures and checks.