

Inspection of Barlows Primary School

Barlows Lane, Fazakerley, Liverpool, Merseyside L9 9EH

Inspection dates: 25–26 September 2019

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Barlows Primary School is a friendly and welcoming school where pupils behave well and develop positive attitudes to learning. Pupils, staff, parents and carers told us that they are proud to be associated with the school community.

Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils. They regularly celebrate pupils' achievements. Pupils enjoy the recognition that they receive for working hard or making a positive contribution to school life. Pupils also spoke positively about the many clubs that are available after school. They value the opportunities that they are given to participate in competitive sports with other local schools.

The school supports pupils' personal development extremely well. Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe and healthy. They learn the importance of resilience and this helps them to become confident learners. Pupils also learn the importance of tolerance and respect. They develop a good understanding of the cultures that exist within and beyond their own community.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the different forms of bullying. However, they are adamant that bullying is not tolerated at Barlows Primary School. They said that any form of bullying would be sorted out very quickly by staff.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

The headteacher and senior leaders have improved the school's curriculum since the previous inspection. They have planned changes carefully so that they are introduced at an appropriate rate in most subjects. The changes have led to a good and improving quality of education at the school. Pupils benefit from a broad and well-planned curriculum.

School leaders give a high priority to the teaching of early reading. There are clear and effective routines for the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent). These are introduced soon after children start at the school. Staff have been well trained in the teaching of reading. They are skilled at supporting all children, including those who struggle. As a result, an increasing proportion of pupils now develop into successful readers.

Historically, pupils have not achieved well enough in mathematics. However, leaders have improved the mathematics curriculum. It is now well organised and structured so that teaching builds effectively on what pupils have learned previously. There has been a recent focus on helping pupils to develop their reasoning skills. This has led to improvements in the way that pupils use and apply their mathematical knowledge to investigate and solve problems. Current pupils are now learning well in this subject.

The school's curriculum is well planned, and subject leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibility. However, there are some weaknesses in the

teaching of science and computing. This is because leaders have not given enough thought to the way in which pupils learn in these subjects. They have not provided staff with enough guidance or training. As a result, teachers place too much emphasis on linking the subjects with other areas of the curriculum, rather than learning about the subject itself.

Pupils' good behaviour and their positive attitudes to learning have a positive impact on their learning.

Leaders ensure that effective provision is made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff support these pupils extremely well, particularly in English and mathematics. They monitor pupils' progress closely to ensure that the curriculum meets pupils' needs and that nobody gets left behind.

Across the early years, staff make excellent use of the highly stimulating indoor and outdoor learning areas. Staff ensure that a range of exciting resources are available each day. The curriculum helps children to develop knowledge and skills across all areas of learning, including early reading and mathematics.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to learn outside of the classroom. Pupils in Year 5 recently visited the Peak District as part of their geography topic to carry out fieldwork. Year 6 pupils enjoyed the week they spent at an outdoor pursuits centre. Members of the school council have visited Liverpool Town Hall and the Houses of Parliament to gain a greater understanding of democracy.

Pupils' attendance remains too low. Leaders have worked successfully to reduce the proportion of pupils who are regularly absent from school. However, attendance remains below the national average and too many pupils are missing out on aspects of their learning.

Staff morale is high at Barlows Primary School. All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said they enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported by school leaders who, they said, are mindful of their well-being. Almost every member of staff believes that the school has improved since the previous inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff receive regular training in matters relating to safeguarding and child protection. Staff understand how to respond if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare or safety. Leaders' detailed records show that all concerns are followed up rigorously. Where necessary, school leaders work effectively with outside agencies to support pupils and their families. School leaders ensure that appropriate checks are made on all adults who work with pupils at the school. Staff files are maintained well and a governor with responsibility for safeguarding makes regular checks on the school's safeguarding records and policies.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Develop the school's science and computing curriculums further. Currently, these subjects are not coherently planned and sequenced. However, it is clear from leaders' plans, and the actions that they have already taken in developing other subject areas, that they are in the process of bringing this about.
- Historically, pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics have not been good enough. The mathematics curriculum is now planned effectively and helps current pupils to know and remember more. Leaders need to ensure that the improvements to the mathematics curriculum enable Year 6 pupils to gain the knowledge and skills that they need to make a successful start to the next stage of their education.
- Although leaders have worked successfully to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent from school, further work is required in order to improve overall attendance so that it is closer to the national average. Leaders should ensure that they continue to improve pupils' attendance.

The transition arrangements were used in this inspection to conclude that pupils benefit from a good quality of education.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 104517 |
| Local authority | Liverpool |
| Inspection number | 10110879 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 471 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Fiona Chambers |
| Headteacher | David Robinson |
| Website | www.barlowsprimary.co.uk/ |
| Date of previous inspection | 13–14 June 2017 |

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. He took up his post in January 2018.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with the vice-chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority. We also met with several school leaders, including those with responsibility for the early years and the provision for pupils with SEND.
- We considered the following subjects in depth as part of the inspection: early reading and phonics; mathematics; science; and computing. Our inspection activity included: evaluation of curriculum planning; visits to lessons; scrutiny of pupils' work; listening to pupils read; discussion with subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants; and discussions with pupils about their learning in these subjects.
- We also looked at a range of policies and documentation related to school improvement planning, at the quality of provision in the early years and at the

planning for the wider curriculum across the whole school.

- We looked at safeguarding procedures and related policies. We checked pupils' attendance and teachers' training records. We discussed safeguarding and behaviour when meeting with pupils, teachers and other members of staff.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school, and spoke to them about school life and their views on personal development and behaviour.
- We took account of the 78 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. We also considered the responses to the inspection questionnaires which were completed by 32 members of staff.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Gary Bevin

Ofsted Inspector

Joan Grant

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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