

Inspection of a good school: Barlow Hall Primary School

Darley Avenue, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester, Lancashire M21 7JG

Inspection dates:

29–30 January 2020

Outcome

Barlow Hall Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Barlow Hall is a caring and nurturing school. Leaders have high expectations for all pupils and pupils do their best to reach these. Pupils feel safe and happy. They have excellent relationships with staff and each other. They say that their teachers are kind and always have time to listen to them. Pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan activities that are interesting and challenging.

Leaders have developed the school grounds well so that pupils have opportunities to learn outside. Pupils enjoy going into the 'quad' to plant, make bug hotels and observe wildlife. Pupils also use outdoor facilities nearby. Pupils that I spoke to told me that they 'enjoy being inspired by nature'.

Pupils enjoy the roles of responsibility that they are given, for example being a young leader, school councillor or part of the forest crew. Pupils represent the school in a wide range of activities in their local community, including sports, debating and times tables teams. They take on these roles with pride.

In and around school, pupils behave well. They smile, walk sensibly and hold doors open for other people. Pupils state that bullying does not happen. They know if it did, staff would sort it out straight away.

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

The headteacher and her staff are determined that all pupils in the school achieve to the best of their abilities. They have designed a curriculum that is ambitious and interesting. Pupils learn the right things, in the right order. They have many opportunities to develop their skills beyond the academic curriculum. As a result, pupils achieve well and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

The assessment of pupils' learning in English and mathematics is highly effective. Teachers use this information to match work to pupils' abilities. This ensures that pupils' needs are well met.

In history, a new curriculum has been introduced. It is organised so that pupils build up their understanding of history. Pupils enjoy discussing events from the past. For example, the problems that happened after taxes were introduced. Teachers are improving the way that they check what pupils already know and can do in history. As a result, pupils are making links between different historical events. However, assessment in some of the foundation subjects is still at an early stage of development.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers make sure that they have access to the full curriculum. Extra support from within and outside school is used effectively. Pupils with SEND enjoy their learning and make strong progress.

The headteacher has made sure that reading is given utmost priority. From starting school, pupils are read to. Staff enjoy reading stories to pupils and bringing them to life. Pupils are encouraged to be 'Barlow Hall reading superstars'. Pupils develop a love of reading. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They use this well to plan activities to meet pupils' individual needs. Teachers from other schools, come to watch how staff teach children to read at Barlow Hall.

The school's phonics programme is well structured and systematic. Teachers select books that are matched to pupils' abilities. This enables pupils to practise their reading skills well. Teachers make sure that any pupils who are struggling get the support they need to catch up. Older pupils read often. This is monitored by staff through the school's 'reading miles' system. At the end of Year 6, pupils' achievement in reading is strong.

Children get off to a strong start in their learning in the early years. In 'Barlow Bears', two-year-olds settle quickly. Supportive and caring relationships with staff enable children to become confident and excited learners. Staff plan interesting and relevant learning activities. Children love helping 'Monty the monster' with his maths. They make strong progress and are well prepared to join Year 1.

Staff are proud to work at Barlow Hall. They told me that it was 'a privilege' to work here. They have excellent relationships with pupils and each other. Staff feel well supported by senior leaders. They value the efforts that leaders make to reduce their workload and care for them.

Pupils are confident, resilient and want to achieve. They told me that the school inspires them to be the best that they can be. They said that they have 'lots of opportunities to flourish'. In classes and around school, pupils support and respect each other. Their behaviour is good and disruption to learning is rare.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have placed high importance on keeping children safe. They make sure that safeguarding records are detailed and accurate. Appropriate recruitment checks are made to make sure that all adults are safe to work with pupils. Staff receive regular training. They act quickly if they have any concerns about pupils' safety.

Children feel safe in school. They are taught how to stay safe both in the real world and online. Leaders know their pupils and families well. They work hard to make sure that they get the support that they need.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Assessment in the core subjects is highly effective. However, leaders are continuing to develop the use of assessment in some of the foundation subjects. As a result, assessment is not used as effectively as it could be to identify gaps in pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that assessment is consistently used to check pupils' learning so that they know and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Barlow Hall Primary School to be good on 20–21 November 2012.

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 are the school and you are 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

Unique reference number	144128
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10122049
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	307
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Joan Dean
Headteacher	Jayne Kennedy
Website	http://barlowhallprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 November 2012

Information about this school

- The school has a before- and after-school club.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school has resourced provision for autism and specific language impairment.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their learning and about school life. I spoke with three governors, including the chair of the governing body. I also met with the chair of the trust board and a trustee. I spoke to a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, other senior leaders and members of staff.
- I reviewed a range of documentation including documentation about attendance, safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I spoke with the person responsible for safeguarding to discuss how pupils are kept safe.
- I considered the 44 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the 25 responses from the online staff survey.

- I looked in depth at reading, mathematics and history. This entailed discussions with subject leaders; visits to lessons; looking at examples of children’s work; discussions with teachers; discussions with children and listening to children read.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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