

# Inspection of a good school: Dorothy Barley Infants' School

Davington Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2LL

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Inspection dates:

26–27 February 2020

## **Outcome**

Dorothy Barley Infants' School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

This is a happy school. There is a strong sense of belonging underpinned by nurturing relationships. Parents and carers and staff said that the school community feels like a family. Staff and pupils treat each other with kindness. From a young age, pupils learn about their rights and responsibilities. Respect is a value that the whole school takes very seriously.

Pupils feel safe and achieve well in this friendly community. They behave sensibly, listen to the adults, follow routines and engage well in learning. Pupils told me that the adults at school look after them. If any bullying occurs, the adults help to sort it out quickly.

The staff team has high expectations and works hard to make pupils' learning memorable. Staff have developed a curriculum that encourages pupils to become inquisitive learners. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities. The school encourages caring attitudes. Every day, pupils in Year 2 set the lunch tables for the others, including with tablecloths and flowers. Recently, pupils raised money for communities affected by fires in Australia. They baked koala cakes, sold raffle tickets to win a toy kangaroo and organised an 'upside-down-pyjama day'.

Parents appreciate the level of care given to their children. Many told me that their children cannot wait to come to school each day. There are some pupils who do not attend school regularly. Leaders are working closely with families to improve pupils' attendance.

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

Leaders, governors and staff are ambitious for all pupils. They work together to ensure that pupils are well prepared for junior school. Leaders make sure that teachers focus on expanding pupils' vocabulary in every subject. Some pupils find it

difficult to explain their thinking. In response to this, leaders are introducing a greater focus on teaching reasoning skills.

Teachers plan lessons that interest pupils and help them to do well. Bullying is rare, pupils behave well in lessons and there is little low-level disruption. Teachers are clear about what pupils need to know in each year group and how to build on prior learning. For example, in history, pupils develop knowledge about homes and toys through the ages.

Leaders provide pupils with opportunities to explore the world beyond their local community. Pupils enjoy trips to local places of interest and cultural landmarks in London. When learning about the Great Fire of London, pupils in Year 2 visit The Monument, which commemorates the fire, and Pudding Lane, the site where the fire began. Pupils told me enthusiastically about the visits and how these had helped them to understand the causes of the fire.

The curriculum is well structured. For example, in mathematics, pupils come back to, and use their knowledge frequently. This helps them to build up their knowledge and skills. During my visit, I saw how in Nursery Year, children learn to count and compare numbers through playing games. I watched children making a magic potion by counting magical ingredients into a pot.

The teaching of reading is treated as a priority. In recent years, pupils have not achieved as well as they could in phonics. Leaders identified the reasons for this and took action to improve the situation. Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check improved in 2019.

The teaching of phonics is now carefully planned. Children begin to learn about phonics in Nursery Year. Those children who join the school in Reception Year start the phonics programme as soon as they start school. They learn the sound each letter represents and use this knowledge to help them to read. Teachers identify any children falling behind and provide extra phonics teaching to help them to catch up quickly.

Typically, teachers choose books for pupils to read that match their reading stage. Sometimes, pupils in Years 1 and 2 read books that are too difficult because they contain words with sounds that they do not yet know. Occasionally, adults encourage pupils to guess unfamiliar words rather than using their phonics skills. This does not help pupils to build their reading confidence and fluency.

Storytime sessions take place every day. Pupils listen intently and are keen to join in. Staff use this time to introduce pupils to new words and ideas. Teachers choose the books they read to pupils for a variety of reasons. However, leaders have not provided sufficient guidance to ensure that the selection of stories, poems, rhymes and non-fiction develops pupils' vocabulary, language comprehension and love of reading.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are fully included in school life. Teachers ensure that all pupils can access the curriculum.

The governing body has an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Governors make use of external reports, school visits and meetings with staff to find out about the school. They are supportive of the work leaders are doing to improve early reading and mathematics.

Staff morale is high. They told me that senior leaders are approachable and supportive. Leaders have reduced the number of times teachers collect assessment information during the year. Staff are appreciative that leaders look after their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders and teachers work with families and external professionals to keep pupils safe. Pupils know that they can talk to adults at school if they feel worried about anything.

Leaders have developed clear systems for reporting concerns about pupils' welfare. They keep detailed records of any concerns that arise and act quickly to safeguard pupils' well-being.

All members of staff receive regular training and respond to any concerns they may have. They know pupils and families well and are proactive in providing support.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Some pupils have reading books that do not enable them to practise the letters and sounds that they have learned. Occasionally, there is variability in the way that adults encourage pupils to read unfamiliar words. Leaders should ensure that all pupils have reading books that are matched to the sounds they know and that all staff follow the school's approach to teaching reading.
- Leaders are introducing a new approach to the teaching of reasoning skills. They must ensure that pupils develop the language needed to explain their thinking.
- Leaders are working hard to raise pupils' attendance rates and make sure that pupils attend school every day. However, absence and persistent absence rates are still too high, and pupils miss valuable learning. Leaders must continue their work in this area so that all pupils attend school regularly.

## 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 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/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 the school to be good in July 2016.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	101188
<b>Local authority</b>	Barking and Dagenham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10121615
<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	335
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sue Matthews
<b>Headteacher</b>	Chris James
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.dorothybarleyinfant.co.uk">www.dorothybarleyinfant.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6–7 July 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll at the school has reduced. The school now has three classes in each year group instead of four.
- The headteacher has been with the school since 2016 and was not in post at the time of the previous inspection.
- The school provides full-time and part-time Nursery education. This is available for children from the beginning of the term after their third birthday.

## Information about this inspection

- I met with the headteacher, school leaders and members of staff. I also met with members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- I did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each of the subjects, I held discussions with subject leaders, visited lessons and spoke with staff and pupils. I looked at pupils' work.
- I spoke with parents and considered the 69 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, including the free-text responses from parents.

- I spoke with pupils and staff about the school's work to keep pupils safe. I also considered safeguarding records and other documentation, including the school's record of pre-employment checks on the suitability of staff.

### **Inspection team**

Jo Franklin, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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