

Inspection of a good school: Barnston Primary School

Sandham Grove, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside CH60 1XW

Inspection dates:

30 June–1 July 2021

Outcome

Barnston Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Barnston Primary School is a happy place where all pupils feel valued. Each morning pupils skip onto the playground as soon as the gates open, excited to see their friends and the staff of the school. Staff greet all pupils warmly and show great care towards them. Pupils thrive on the positive relationships that leaders foster throughout the school. Parents and carers are appreciative of the many clubs and sporting activities available to their children.

Pupils, regardless of their age, are unfailingly polite and courteous, showing respect for all those around them. They behave well and learning is rarely disrupted. Pupils told inspectors that bullying is rare and that teachers always deal with any incidents swiftly. Staff and leaders have high expectations of pupils. They help pupils to understand that hard work is the key to success. Pupils respond to this with a positive attitude to all aspects of school life.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across a range of subjects. They told inspectors that they love learning 'because teachers make lessons interesting and fun'. Pupils are well prepared to take the next steps to high school and beyond.

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

Leaders, staff and governors are ambitious for all pupils to succeed. They have carefully considered the structure of the curriculum so that pupils can achieve well and develop as valued and caring members of the community.

Subject leaders have ensured that most curriculum plans carefully build on pupils' learning over time. Teachers are clear about the key knowledge to be taught. They allow pupils to revisit their previous learning so that they are able to consolidate what they already know. However, some subjects are not as far along in this journey. This means that pupils are

not as well equipped to know and remember more in some subjects, such as art and design and design technology. Most curriculum plans pay attention to what children will learn in the early years. However, some subject leaders do not have a clear enough understanding of what children need to know by the end of the Reception Year.

Leaders have ensured that the school is well resourced, and that staff are suitably trained to deliver the curriculum effectively. Teachers carefully adapt plans to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers.

The teaching of reading is a priority in the school. Leaders view reading as the gateway to learning in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils learn phonics as soon as they enter the Reception class. Well-trained staff understand their part in pupils' reading journey. They support pupils effectively to become fluent readers. Books are chosen carefully to allow pupils to practise the sounds that they know. There are increased reading opportunities for those pupils who need to catch up quickly. Older pupils told inspectors that they enjoy reading the range of texts available to them. They are proud of the rewards that they receive for the efforts that they make with their reading.

Pupils proudly match the high expectations that staff have of them for their behaviour around school. Pupils work in class with enthusiasm and diligence. They play and socialise at lunchtimes with respect for the thoughts and feelings of others. Pupils told inspectors that 'everybody is different, but we treat each other the same'.

Leaders do not place any ceilings on pupils' ambitions. Pupils can take part in a vast range of extra-curricular clubs. They also have opportunities to represent the school council and plan teaching sessions in the 'animal and human rights club'.

Staff are proud to be part of the school team. They appreciate the consideration that leaders take towards helping them achieve a work-life balance. Governors place the safety, education and enjoyment of pupils at the heart of all they do. They recognise and share the headteacher's commitment to the pupils of the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors ensure that the safety of pupils is at the forefront of their work. Staff are effectively trained to recognise signs of abuse or neglect and report this immediately. Leaders can access a range of external services for any pupil, should the need arise.

Teachers help pupils understand how to keep safe. Specialist visitors have also provided sessions that enable pupils to recognise the dangers of substance misuse or gang culture. Pupils displayed an in-depth understanding of online safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some subject plans do not give teachers the necessary guidance and information to ensure that pupils know more and remember more of the curriculum. Leaders should revisit the curriculum planning to ensure that pupils are gaining the key knowledge that will enable them to succeed in these subjects.
- Some subject leaders are not fully aware of the knowledge that children need to acquire by the end of the early years. This means that pupils are less well prepared for their learning in Year 1. Leaders should ensure that they gain a secure understanding of what children learn by the time they leave the Reception Year. This will enable them to ensure that knowledge is built on as children move into Year 1 and beyond.

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 outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that a good 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 19 April 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

Unique reference number	105030
Local authority	Wirral
Inspection number	10194076
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Frank Cogley
Headteacher	Mrs Jill Pearson
Website	www.barnston.wirral.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 April 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher has left the school and been replaced by two assistant headteachers.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. An inspector met with four members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and geography. Inspectors met with subject leaders, talked to pupils and teachers, visited lessons and reviewed the work in pupils' books. An inspector also observed children and pupils from the Reception Year to Year 3 reading to an adult. An inspector also spoke to the subject leaders for art and design and technology and reviewed the curriculum planning for these subjects.

- Inspectors looked at the policies and procedures used to keep pupils safe. They also reviewed the checks carried out by leaders on the suitability of adults who work in the school.
- An inspector spoke with 16 parents and carers at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 58 responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire. This included 58 responses to the free-text facility. Inspectors also reviewed the 78 responses to the pupils' questionnaire and the 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sheila Iwaskow

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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