

# Inspection of a good school: Barcroft Primary School

Barcroft, Willenhall, West Midlands WV13 1NA

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Inspection dates:

16 and 17 November 2021

## Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to Barcroft. The school's learning environment is inviting and well-presented. The school's library, which is housed in a replica barge, is well used by pupils. Pupils enjoy learning in rooms such as the Gingerbread House.

Staff are proud to work at the school. There is a palpable buzz around the building. They say they feel empowered and are excited to be on the 'journey of improvement'. Staff describe leaders as 'a breath of fresh air'. This is echoed by parents. The acting headteacher has worked hard to re-engage parents. Parents speak positively about the school.

Pupils are happy and polite. Pupils normally behave well and say bullying does not happen very often. When bullying does occur, it is dealt with effectively by staff. Pupils know that adults take time to listen and will help them if they have any worries.

Despite the recent positive changes to reading and mathematics, pupils do not learn as well as they should in some subjects. This is because leaders have not ensured that new learning builds on what pupils already know. Senior leaders have identified this and recognise there is more work to do.

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

The acting headteacher and senior leaders have successfully steered the school through a period of significant challenge. They are ambitious for the school. Staff talk positively about their workload and say, 'They want to work hard to make the school better.'

Reading is prioritised by leaders. The new leaders have developed reading areas in the classrooms that are bright and inviting. Pupils enjoy reading, but do not read regularly enough at home. This means that those pupils at an early stage of reading are not practising the sounds they are learning in school. Additionally, the books that the pupils

take home do not always support the sounds that they have been learning. This means that some of the books contain words that pupils cannot read. As a result, some pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should.

In some subjects, leaders have identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember. For example, in mathematics the knowledge and concepts that pupils need to know are carefully sequenced to make sure that new learning builds on prior knowledge. Pupils remember this knowledge and apply it to a variety of problems. However, in some subjects, leaders have not mapped out the key knowledge pupils need. This means that teachers do not always know what they should be teaching and in what order. As a result, pupils do not remember the important knowledge that they ought to.

Leaders have begun to monitor the impact of their work. However, they have not checked that the recent changes to the curriculum are being implemented consistently. This means that in some classes pupils are not learning as well as their peers. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge as a result.

The provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is strong. Parents agree. The school's interim special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) has worked quickly to ensure that all learning plans are up to date and reflect the most appropriate support for pupils. Staff plan appropriate adaptations to the curriculum and support these pupils to learn well. For example, in the early years, staff use Makaton effectively to help all children to communicate.

The early years is a hive of activity. Children in Nursery settle into routines quickly. This is supported by clear timetables, so children can see what is happening next. When returning from learning outside, one Nursery child looked at the timetable and said, 'It's story now everyone.'

Governors are reflective. They recognise that they have not challenged leaders enough in the past. They are beginning to develop their skills so they can hold leaders to account more effectively.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about the important issues within their local community, such as child criminal exploitation, building healthy relationships, and how to keep themselves safe. Leaders have developed a programme of character development for the school. Pupils and staff receive awards for exhibiting values such as 'having courage' and 'helping others'. These awards help pupils to develop their understanding of social and moral responsibility. Plans are in place for pupils to take part in trips and a range of extra-curricular activities. However, these have been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils are looking forward to these starting up again soon.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum planning and sequencing may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders know their local community well. They understand the challenges that their pupils face. As a result, leaders make sure staff receive appropriate training to identify pupils who are at risk of harm. Staff are vigilant and responsive to any concerns they have about pupils. Leaders act swiftly on these concerns. They work effectively with a range of external agencies to ensure that these pupils are kept as safe as possible.

The school carries out all the required checks for adults employed at the school. Records are well organised and up to date.

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

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

- Some pupils do not get the opportunity to practise the sounds they have learned regularly enough with books that precisely match their phonics ability. This prevents these pupils from becoming better readers. Leaders should make sure that pupils practise reading regularly from books that are matched to their reading ability.
- Curriculum plans in some subjects do not set out the essential knowledge that leaders expect pupils to know and remember. This is a barrier to pupils knowing more and remembering more. Leaders should develop curriculum plans that clearly set out the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils are expected to learn in each subject from early years to Year 6.
- Some subject leaders do not have the knowledge and skills to be effective in their roles. This means that they are not making sure that the curriculum is delivered consistently well across the subject. Senior leaders should support subject leaders to ensure that the quality of the curriculum is monitored effectively.
- Governors have not sufficiently held leaders to account. Historically, they have taken what leaders have told them too readily. This meant that governors did not have an accurate understanding of the school. Governors should challenge and explore what leaders tell them to be fully reassured about the quality of education at the school.

## **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, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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>	135081
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10200236
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	457
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Phil Cross
<b>Acting Headteacher</b>	Paul Drew
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.barcroft.walsall.sch.uk">www.barcroft.walsall.sch.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school currently has an acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, interim SENCo and acting designated safeguarding lead. These staff have come from a local school.
- A proposal is in place to federate with a local school, where the acting headteacher is the substantive head. The school is currently going through a period of consultation about this arrangement.
- The school has a nursery on site for three-year-olds.
- The school is not using alternative provision.
- The school has a breakfast and after-school club that pupils can pay to attend.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the acting headteacher, acting deputy headteacher, the interim SENCo and other leaders.
- Inspectors also met with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Meetings were held with curriculum leaders and class teachers.
- Inspectors met with the acting designated safeguarding lead and examined school records and discussed safeguarding cases.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff in Ofsted's online survey. Inspectors spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils informally during breaktimes and observed pupils playing.
- Inspectors met with staff informally throughout the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Eve Morris, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alexander Laney

Her Majesty's Inspector

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