

Inspection of Barnsole Primary School

Barnsole Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2JG

Inspection dates: 16 to 18 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Ofsted has not previously inspected Barnsole Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Barnsole Primary School to be outstanding, before it opened as an academy. From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections.

Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened in Barnsole Primary School's effectiveness before and after it converted to academy status.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and safe at Barnsole. Pupils are kind, thoughtful and quick to help each other out. Pupils are well looked after. They develop respect and a sense of belonging to their community. They enjoy brightening the high street through planting flowers, and collecting harvest donations for the Gillingham Street Angels.

In lessons, pupils are attentive and behave well. Teachers expect them to listen, work hard and do their best. However, some pupils, particularly older pupils, find it hard to manage their own behaviour and need lots of reminders about acceptable behaviour. Pupils are friendly and mostly play well together. They know that if any bullying happens, teachers will deal with it.

Leaders have been working hard to design a better curriculum. They want the curriculum to make clear what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. However, this curriculum is not yet fully in place and the quality of education is inconsistent. This means pupils do not learn and remember the essential knowledge they need as well as they should in all subjects.

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

The executive headteacher and trust leaders swiftly identified that the quality of education had declined. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Members of the trust and governors are working purposefully alongside senior leaders, with a sharp focus on school improvement. Leadership capacity has increased with the appointment of assistant headteachers and year group leaders.

The curriculum is not yet consistently in place in all subjects. Leaders are clear about what they are aspiring to but they are not there yet and there is more to do. There are many initiatives and approaches that have only recently begun. Some of these are already having a notable impact, for example on the quality of pupils' writing.

There are inconsistencies within and across year groups in the way the curriculum is taught. Staff do not always have secure enough knowledge across all subjects. The newness of the curriculum means that what leaders expect to see in the classroom is not always happening. Pupils are not always taught or helped to remember key knowledge over time. In mathematics, for example, pupils in Year 6 were unable to draw on previous knowledge of bar models to help them solve problems involving subtracting fractions. In Reception Year, there is a lack of planned activities to develop children's mathematical thinking. This means that children and pupils do not always learn as much as they should.

Although leaders have decided to teach phonics through a new scheme, the current phonics programme is not appropriate. Phonics teaching starts too late in the early years. The books pupils read are not consistently well matched to the sounds they

are learning. While many pupils use their phonics knowledge to help them read and write, others struggle with reading. This hinders their learning in all subjects.

However, as pupils move through the school, teachers foster pupils' enjoyment of reading and of stories. In the Nursery and Reception classes, there is a strong emphasis on children's communication skills. They have lots of opportunities to learn nursery rhymes and sing songs to develop their language. Staff choose books carefully to interest and challenge pupils. For example, pupils were very enthusiastic about the class novel they are reading, which they said, 'kept us in suspense'.

A team of staff quickly identify whether pupils have any special educational needs and/or disabilities. Close liaison with families and external agencies ensures that these pupils receive help in a timely way. This enables them to learn the same things as others and experience success.

Pupils have a range of opportunities to broaden their experiences beyond the academic curriculum. They learn about democracy, diversity, the needs of others and inclusion. As one pupil said, 'we are all equal here and we don't laugh at anyone who gets things wrong, we include everyone.' Pupils are supported well to be confident, independent and resilient.

Several staff are new to their leadership roles and are developing their expertise and skills. Senior leaders place high priority on training for all staff, including that for teachers new to their careers. Some staff do not feel that senior leaders give them enough support with managing pupils' behaviour.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive comprehensive safeguarding training. This means they are able to be alert to any signs that might indicate that a pupil needs help. Leaders ensure that staff know exactly what to do and the procedures to follow if they have any concerns. Leaders then make sure that pupils receive the appropriate help and support, including that from external agencies if necessary.

The school's procedures for safeguarding pupils are regularly checked by the trust. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. They know who to talk to if they feel worried in any way.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not yet fully planned to show what should be taught in each year group and when, in each subject. As a result, pupils do not always learn the right things in the right order and there are sometimes gaps in their knowledge. Senior leaders know the further improvements that are needed. They should

ensure these are secured as soon as possible, including the new reading programme.

- There are inconsistencies in how the curriculum is delivered across the school. As a result, pupils do not consistently learn and remember the essential knowledge they need in all subjects as well as they should. Senior leaders should ensure that leaders are skilled in supporting teachers to enhance their subject knowledge and to deliver the curriculum to a high quality.
- Some pupils are not as well behaved outside of class as they are in their lessons. They are not always able to manage their own behaviour well. Senior leaders should ensure that staff are supported to manage challenging behaviour and that behaviour management approaches are consistently applied.

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

Unique reference number	144423
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10201094
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	675
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tiffany Beck
Headteacher	David Marsh (executive headteacher)
Website	www.barnsoleprimary.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Barnsole Primary School converted to become an academy school in May 2017. When its predecessor school, Barnsole Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school joined the Maritime Academy Trust in 2020. The school has an executive headteacher and an interim head of school.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspectors deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- 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.

- The inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, and curriculum leaders.
- Meetings were held with the chief executive and deputy chief executive of the trust, and the chair of the trustees. Inspectors also spoke with two members of the local transition board, including the chair.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history, music and English. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also looked at other subject plans and observed some pupils reading to their teaching assistants. Pupils were observed at lunch and in the playground, and inspectors spoke informally to different groups of pupils.
- To inspect safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead and a deputy safeguarding lead as well as the governor responsible for safeguarding and the trust deputy CEO, who has trust wide overview of safeguarding. Inspectors looked at the single central record of recruitment checks and safeguarding records, and talked informally to pupils and staff.
- Inspectors considered 76 responses to Ofsted's confidential questionnaire, Parent View, including 57 free-text comments. They also spoke to some parents at the end of the day at the key stage 1 site and at the beginning of the day at the key stage 2 site. Inspectors also took account of 61 responses to the confidential staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Margaret Coussins, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Charlotte Wilson	Ofsted Inspector
Clive Dunn	Her Majesty's Inspector

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