

Inspection of a good school: Barnwell Academy

Whitefield Estate, Penshaw, Houghton-le-Spring, Tyne and Wear DH4 7RT

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 January 2022

Outcome

Barnwell Academy continues to be a good school. There is enough evidence of improved performance to suggest that the school could be judged outstanding if we were to carry out a section 5 inspection now. The school's next inspection will be a section 5 inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend school. Corridors and classrooms are full of smiles. Pupils are happy, kind and polite. They are supportive of each other and celebrate their peers' successes with genuine warmth.

Pupils say that they feel safe at school. They know that if they have a concern, there is always an adult to speak to. Pupils know what bullying is. They know that there can be different kinds. If bullying were to happen, pupils are confident that staff would quickly help. Pupils talk positively about the anti-bullying group that leaders have set up in school.

Staff have high expectations for pupil achievement. Pupils are self-motivated and want to achieve their very best. This combination of everyone wanting to do their best creates a strong, positive culture for learning throughout the school.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They show great independence and take responsibility for their own actions. They know what behaviours are acceptable and unacceptable. Pupils show respect for each other. In classrooms, they are engaged and enthusiastic and actively take part in their learning. Pupils move around school sensibly and calmly.

Pupils truly reflect the 'positive' aspect as part of the school's six core values. There is a feeling of collective happiness and teamwork between staff and pupils.

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

Leaders have created a curriculum to match the needs of the pupils. They know what works best for pupils at Barnwell Academy. Each subject area has been reviewed by subject leaders. As a result, precise curriculum content builds year on year to help pupils remember key knowledge. Staff training ensures that pupils receive a curriculum that is

delivered with familiar routines and expectations in every class. Pupils like this; it means they do not get confused and can apply the knowledge they have previously learned with confidence.

The design of the curriculum enables pupils to revisit aspects of their learning. Pupils say that this is helpful. One pupil said, 'I know if I'm getting better when we go back to something we have learned earlier and try it again; this shows me if I have made progress.' Pupils talk eloquently about what they have learned. They can do this because the curriculum prioritises core knowledge.

Teachers frequently check what pupils know and do not know. This means that all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged, receive a curriculum that is tailored to their needs. Leaders have high expectations for pupils with SEND. They are determined that support for pupils with SEND matches pupils' knowledge of the subject. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) liaises with staff to ensure that pupils can independently access learning where appropriate. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' approach. SEND plans are written with targets that are specific to each individual pupil.

Leaders have prioritised reading in the curriculum. Pupils read books that are matched to their phonic knowledge. From Nursery onwards, children learn letter sounds in a precise order. Children in early years receive daily, accurate teaching of letter sounds and reading strategies. They frequently have opportunities to practise sounds they have learned. They quickly become fluent readers and can apply phonic knowledge to unfamiliar words they come across. As pupils become more confident readers, leaders have made sure that high-quality texts and a broad range of genres are available for them to enjoy.

Leaders expect pupils to be responsible and independent. The curriculum explicitly teaches pupils the value of managing their own behaviours and making good choices. The personal, social and health education curriculum includes age-appropriate content that helps pupils to understand themselves, others and potential dangers beyond the school.

Leaders support staff with high-quality training and career development. As a result, subject leaders know how to lead, plan and assess their subjects to a high standard. Trustees understand the needs of the school. They work in close partnership with school leaders to hold them to account. They frequently review pupils' achievement. They check that the right resources are in place to support all pupils. Trustees share the vision of school leaders. They are determined that pupils and staff receive high-quality academic and well-being support. Throughout the pandemic, leaders, including trustees, have been considerate of the school community, staff and pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know the procedures to keep pupils safe. They know what actions to take if they have a concern about a pupil. There is a collective vigilance among staff, underpinned by a 'it could happen here' mentality. Once a concern is reported, leaders keep meticulous

notes and make sure that relevant external agencies are contacted if required. The designated safeguarding leads are tenacious in their pursuit of support for identified pupils.

Leaders make sure that pupils are taught aspects of personal safeguarding. This includes content such as how to stay safe online, stranger danger and positive relationships.

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 a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2017.

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	140700
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10211316
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	264
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Wharton
Headteacher	Ashley Emmerson
Website	www.barnwellacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- There have been no significant changes since the previous inspection.

Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and computing. Here, the inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum and met with teachers from the lessons visited. The inspector looked at pupils' work and spoke to pupils.
- The inspector listened to a range of pupils read from different year groups.
- The inspector met with the SENCo and members of the trust board, as well as speaking to a local authority school improvement officer who supports the school.

- The inspector looked at the single central record of recruitment and vetting checks and spoke to leaders, teachers, trustees and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered the 65 responses made by parents and carers to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, plus 33 free-text responses. The inspector also considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and 45 responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

David Milligan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2022