

Inspection of a good school: Barrow CofE Primary School

Barrow, School Lane, Great Barrow, Chester, Cheshire CH3 7HW

Inspection date: 27 April 2022

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 are proud to be a part of this friendly village school. New pupils and their families are made to feel welcome, and settle in quickly.

Teachers have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils work and play well together. They are confident that adults would deal with any bullying incidents quickly and effectively. Pupils trust adults to help them when they are worried or upset. This helps pupils to feel safe and well cared for in school.

Pupils enjoy the exciting trips, visitors and events that enrich their curriculum experiences. They are proud to represent the school in sports tournaments and art competitions. That said, while pupils are knowledgeable in some aspects of their personal development, they have gaps in other areas.

Pupils enjoy learning. Teaching staff have high expectations of what their pupils can achieve. Even so, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what pupils learn and when they should learn it in some subjects. In addition, teaching staff do not follow the school's agreed programme for early reading and phonics. This means that some children in the early years and pupils across school do not achieve as well as they could.

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

Overall, pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum at Barrow CofE Primary School. However, as the number of classes in the school has reduced, each class has had to include a wider age range of pupils. This has made it hard for leaders to reorganise the subject curriculums to fit with the smaller number of classes. Leaders have put interim arrangements in place so that pupils continue to build their subject knowledge across the curriculum this year. However, these arrangements do not enable pupils to achieve as well

as they could. Moreover, in some subjects, leaders have not thought carefully enough about how they check that pupils remember the important knowledge that they have been taught.

Across the school, pupils enjoy listening to the stories that adults read to them. Pupils read books in school and at home that match the sounds that they know. The teaching of phonics begins as soon as children start in the Reception class. These children and the pupils in key stages 1 and 2 who struggle to learn to read receive additional support. This helps them to catch up with their classmates. However, teaching staff do not follow the school's agreed phonics and early reading programme as intended. Consequently, pupils do not remember or apply their phonic knowledge consistently well in their reading and writing.

The school is calm and orderly throughout the day. Pupils can get on with their work without distractions. Children in the early years learn to share and to play well together.

Leaders ensure that any potential special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified and assessed. There is support for pupils with SEND who need additional help to join in with lessons.

Pupils enjoy taking part in national and local events. They have recently completed portraits of the Queen for a county competition. Pupils are encouraged to develop positive character traits. For example, older pupils take on leadership roles, such as becoming safety officers. That said, leaders have not planned the school's personal development programme carefully enough. This means that some aspects of this programme are not as well developed as others.

Staff feel appreciated and well supported by leaders. Staff welcome the changes that leaders have made to the school's approach to marking and feedback. These changes have reduced teachers' workload.

The governing body shares leaders' ambitious vision for the school. Governors have been supportive of staff during the recent organisational changes. They have worked with the new headteacher to agree the next steps for the school.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that phonics and early reading, mathematics, geography and history may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff undertake regular safeguarding training. Staff understand their roles and responsibilities. Staff are alert to identify any signs that pupils may be at risk from harm. They make sure that they record and report any safeguarding concerns in a timely manner. Leaders follow up on these concerns appropriately.

Leaders work with external agencies to ensure that pupils and their families get any help and support that they need.

Staff teach pupils how to stay safe and healthy. This includes how to stay safe online. Staff, pupils and parents agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teaching staff do not follow the school's agreed phonics and early reading programme as intended. This means that pupils do not remember or apply their phonic knowledge well enough. This hinders pupils from becoming proficient readers and writers as quickly as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff follow the school's phonics and early reading programme with fidelity, so that pupils develop their early reading and writing skills well.
- In some subjects, leaders have not identified what they want pupils to learn and when they should learn it in sufficient detail. This means that teachers do not routinely plan learning that builds on what pupils already know. As a result, pupils do not learn as well as they could in some subjects. Leaders should further develop the subject curriculums so that pupils across the different year groups know and remember more of the curriculum.
- Some aspects of the personal development curriculum are not as well developed as they should be. This means that some pupils do not have all of the knowledge that they need. Leaders should identify the important knowledge and skills that pupils should develop in each year group. Added to this, they should make sure that all elements of the personal development programme are given sufficient time and prominence. This will ensure that pupils will build the knowledge and skills that they need over time.

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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in December 2012.

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	111270
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10226086
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	38
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Armstrong
Headteacher	Paul Hudson
Website	www.barrowcofeschool.com
Date of previous inspection	16 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in September 2021.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection in March 2018.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also spoke to several parents and carers at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

- Inspectors met with those responsible for safeguarding at the school. They scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. Inspectors spoke with staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and art and design. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils reading.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Schelene Ferris

Ofsted Inspector

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