

Inspection of an outstanding school: Barrow 1618 CofE Free School

Barrow, Broseley, Shropshire TF12 5BW

Inspection date: 14 June 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding 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 very happy at Barrow 1618 school. They are well cared for by staff and learn in a high-quality, safe environment. The whole school community has invested much time ensuring classrooms, the extensive grounds, woods and gardens are well maintained and appealing. Pupils describe their school as inclusive, and it is. Pupils raised no concerns about bullying and they behave well around the school and grounds. Parents and carers typically describe the school as 'like a family' and say that leaders have managed the challenges of the last two years well. Leaders have high expectations, and staff and pupils work hard to live up to them.

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and have identified, accurately, key areas to prioritise for further development. Some changes to the teaching of reading and learning in the wider curriculum are relatively new and are not yet fully embedded.

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

Reading is the main priority of the school development plan. The teaching of reading has had a refresh over the last year. The importance of ensuring pupils quickly become fluent readers is shared by all. Pupils' reading development is carefully tracked. Any pupils that fall behind are identified and receive extra support. Additional training is enhancing the skills and expertise of staff. However, opportunities to share practice and receive support from the school's reading expert are not routine. As a result, staff are at different stages with their teaching and their impact can therefore vary.

Leaders have reviewed all aspects of the curriculum to make sure that the content they want pupils to learn is clear. This has included careful thinking about what it means for pupils to get better in subjects such as art, history or physical education. Leaders have devised plans that set out the knowledge they want pupils to learn from early years

through to Year 6. Leaders are beginning to see the impact of their revised plans. However, checks on implementation and impact of these changes are at an earlier stage in some subjects. More time is needed to ensure that the curriculum covers the knowledge pupils most need to make progress.

Pupils achieve well in mathematics. Curriculum thinking and planning in mathematics is well established. Leaders are working productively with the local maths hub to make sure the right content is taught and is logically sequenced. Staff training and focused leadership have had a positive impact on teaching. Leaders recognise that there is further work to do in selecting the teaching approaches that will work best in their context.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Staff receive training to help identify pupils' needs. Training has also helped staff design and deliver extra support for pupils. Parents speak highly of the support their children receive.

Leadership and teaching in the early years are strong. Children are progressing well with their phonics and have a growing knowledge of number. The learning environment is carefully designed to help children apply and practise what they know. All children have 'classroom jobs' and they know what it means to do things well. Staff have a very strong awareness of children's needs and use this knowledge to plan what they need to learn next.

Pupils and staff have positive views about behaviour. On the whole, pupils behave very well. On occasion, some pupils can be a little chatty in class and are not as quick as others to settle to learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the school values. These values each have a bear mascot. The 'Barrow Bears' encourage pupils to be resilient, work as a team, and have ambition, care and respect. The school's values and Christian ethos are evident as you walk around the school and speak to staff and pupils.

Pupils have the opportunity to attend a wide range of extra-curricular clubs. Clubs include board games, sports mix, dance and 'homework and chill'. Key stage 2 pupils have recently returned from a residential trip. The whole school community has also gathered in the grounds to celebrate events such as the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. Wider opportunities like this help develop pupils' talents and interest; they also help build character.

The school's leaders and governors are very capable people. They have sensible and accurate plans in place to further improve teaching. They are very committed to the pupils and the community. Leaders want the best and do all that they can to avoid placing unnecessary burdens on staff. For example, leaders' approach to assessment is proportionate, and staff raised no concerns about the impact this has on workload.

Governors know their school well and share the high aspirations of other leaders. They have particularly monitored and championed the links that have been forged with local schools. These links have supported the positive developments in the curriculum.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the teaching of reading and embedding the changes to the wider curriculum may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff have received necessary safeguarding training through an annual update. The latest government guidance is followed and made available for staff. Leaders work with local partners and agencies to secure any additional support for pupils. Staff identify any pupils at risk of harm and take appropriate action.

The school has worked with parents to review their relationships and sex education (RSE) policy. The RSE curriculum is comprehensive and has been carefully thought through. Pupils told inspectors that they find it easy to make friends and that teachers are always there to talk to help them.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Though the teaching of phonics continues to develop, there are limited opportunities for staff to share their expertise with each other. Staff are therefore at slightly different stages in their teaching and their impact on pupils' learning can vary. Leaders should ensure the phonics lead shares her practice more widely and keeps an even closer eye on the impact of teaching.
- The wider curriculum has been developed over the last two years. However, some subjects are at an earlier stage of development and implementation than others. Leaders should make sure that the most important knowledge is adequately covered and remembered by pupils. Leaders should continue to monitor the implementation of the curriculum carefully and keep checks on the extent to which key knowledge is remembered by pupils in the long term.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in June 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

Unique reference number	138268
Local authority	Shropshire
Inspection number	10229068
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy free school
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	98
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Carolyn Jones
Headteacher	Sian Stephenson
Website	barrow1618school.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Barrow 1618 CofE Free School opened in 2012.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. In Years 1 to 6 pupils are taught in mixed-aged classes.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school has a Christian religious character. The last section 48 inspection was conducted on 11 October 2016. The school's next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the last.
- The school offers wraparound childcare before and after school. This care is managed by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the following senior leaders and stakeholders during the inspection: governors, including a representative from the diocese, the school

improvement adviser, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the business manager.

- Deep dives were conducted in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and physical education. To explore the effectiveness of these curriculum areas, inspectors: spoke to senior leaders to understand their aims and rationale for overall curriculum design; met with subject leaders to explore long- and medium-term thinking; visited lessons to see the curriculum in action and consider the activities chosen by teachers; considered work in pupils' books; and talked to teachers and pupils about their experience and understanding of the curriculum.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors also took account of responses, including written free-text submissions, to Ofsted's questionnaire Ofsted Parent View.
- To determine the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss record-keeping and training; talked to staff about safeguarding training; and reviewed exclusion and attendance records.

Inspection team

Jonathan Keay, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Heather Fearn

Her Majesty's Inspector

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