

Inspection of a good school: Barnes Farm Junior School

Henniker Gate, Chelmer Village, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6QH

Inspection dates:

13 and 14 September 2022

Outcome

Barnes Farm Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Barnes Farm Junior School enjoy learning. They are ambitious and live up to the school motto of 'aim high and fly higher'. Pupils are eager to learn. They work hard to achieve the high expectations leaders have of them. Pupils take pride in their learning and enjoy sharing their achievements.

Pupils behave well in lessons and during playtimes. They have positive attitudes towards their learning. This helps them to achieve well. Pupils show kindness and consideration towards each other. Bullying is very rare and, if it does happen, staff resolve it quickly. Pupils feel safe at school.

Pupils enjoy the wide range of opportunities leaders have carefully planned for them. They talk with enthusiasm about the many different clubs they can attend. Pupils enjoy curriculum days where they learn about topics such as local history. These help them to know and remember more. Older pupils relish the many opportunities available to take on positions of responsibility. Formal hustings for roles such as house captains help to teach all pupils about democracy. Pupils enjoy learning about people who are different from them. They talk openly and articulately about what they learn from this.

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

Leaders have designed and developed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils. In most subjects, they have carefully selected what pupils need to know and remember. As a result, in these subjects, pupils build on what they already know and can do. For example, in mathematics, pupils are confident at rounding numbers as they already have a secure understanding of place value. In a small number of subjects, it is less clear how learning builds on what pupils already know. In these subjects, pupils do not develop as deep an understanding of leaders' intended curriculum. Despite these few areas, overall, pupils achieve well.

Leaders have promoted reading through carefully selected books. These help pupils to develop their understanding of literature. Well-trained staff support pupils at the early stages of reading effectively. Leaders have ensured that reading books are closely matched to the sounds pupils know. This helps pupils to read accurately, fluently and with understanding. Pupils read a range of books for pleasure. Carefully chosen rewards motivate pupils to read at home.

Teachers routinely check on what pupils know and can do. Occasionally, teachers do not do this with precision. There are a few occasions where teachers do not pick up on errors pupils have made. This means some pupils do not always build on what they already know. It also means that a small number of pupils do not always have errors corrected.

Leaders have clear systems to identify pupils who need additional support. This includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Well-trained staff provide targeted support for these pupils. Leaders carefully monitor and review the impact of this support. Pupils with SEND make strong gains in their knowledge and understanding.

Pupils behave well consistently in lessons and during playtimes. They are kind, courteous and polite towards each other and adults. Leaders have prioritised pupils' wider development. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities provided to develop their talents and interests. They understand differences between people and learn tolerance and respect. Pupils develop a secure understanding of democracy and the rule of law through the curriculum and events run by the school, such as interviewing members of local and national government.

Leaders work to ensure that staff's workload is manageable. Staff feel well supported. They are proud to work at the school. Leaders have worked hard to engage the parental community. As a result, most parents are positive about the quality of education their children receive. Trustees and governors know the school well. They have a secure understanding of what the school does well and what could be even better. They provide effective support and challenge to school leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders train staff effectively to recognise the signs that a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff know how and when to report concerns. Leaders act swiftly and appropriately on concerns to keep pupils safe. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure pupils are kept safe and get any help they need.

Leaders ensure that required pre-employment checks are thorough and recorded accurately. Governors monitor and hold leaders to account for safeguarding procedures in the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, leaders have not identified the most important knowledge pupils need to remember. This means teachers do not always plan lessons which build on prior learning. Leaders must ensure that the curriculum in each subject clearly identifies the most important knowledge, and the order it needs to be taught in, so that pupils know and remember more.
- Teachers do not always use assessment consistently well to check what pupils already know and understand. There are also occasions where teachers do not identify pupils' misconceptions. This means pupils do not always have opportunities to build on prior learning or have their misconceptions addressed. Leaders must ensure that teachers use assessment accurately so that pupils build on prior learning and have misconceptions quickly identified and corrected.

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 an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Barnes Farm Junior School, to be good in July 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.

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	145998
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240374
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	348
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Blundell
Headteacher	Ross McTaggart
Website	www.barnesfarmjuniors.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Barnes Farm Junior School has been a part of the Chelmsford Learning Partnership (the trust) since it converted to become an academy in 2018. There is a local governing body that has some powers delegated to it.
- The school offers before- and after-school care run by an external provider.
- The school uses one registered and one unregistered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector scrutinised safeguarding policies, the school's record of background checks of adults at the school, and a sample of child protection files. The inspector also spoke with governors, leaders and staff about safeguarding practices at the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, special educational needs coordinator, subject leaders, staff, members of the trust, governors and pupils.

- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including behaviour logs, attendance records, minutes of governor body meetings, school improvement plans and school policies.
- There were 46 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, that were considered alongside 32 free-text responses.
- There were no responses to the pupil survey. The inspector spoke to pupils throughout the inspection to gather their views.
- There were 23 responses to the staff survey. The inspector also spoke to staff throughout the inspection to gather their views.

Inspection team

Michael Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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