

Inspection of a good school: William Barnes Primary School

Bridge Street, Sturminster Newton, Dorset DT10 1BZ

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 February 2023

Outcome

William Barnes Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto of 'every child counts' is believed by all. Pupils are treated as individuals in a happy and inclusive culture. They enjoy attending school and feel safe and well cared for. Families are full of praise for the school, and one parent summed up the views of many when they said, 'William Barnes treats each child as a unique individual and seeks to create an environment that is safe and stimulating for my child.'

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils understand the school's code of conduct and behave well. They work hard in their lessons and are motivated to earn house points. Pupils build strong relationships, based on mutual respect. They get on well with each other. For example, Year 6 'playtime buddies' help younger children with their lunch and with playing games on the playground. Pupils know that bullying is not tolerated and that adults would sort out any issues straight away.

Pupils enjoy their many leadership roles across the school. These include eco-warriors, sports ambassadors and house captains. Pupils appreciate the voice they have across the school. Members of the school council are particularly proud of their plans for fundraising, with the introduction of a healthy snack trolley.

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

Leaders have designed a rich curriculum to prepare pupils to be 'global-ready' citizens. This curriculum provides pupils with opportunities to learn about the world beyond the school gates. It also reflects the school's locality. Pupils gain an awareness of different cultures through the wider curriculum. This is particularly strong in art and music. As a result, they are exceptionally well informed about diversity and difference. Pupils are accepting in their outlook and willing to challenge prejudice and discrimination.

Leaders prioritise reading. Pupils enjoy their class stories and visits to the local library. They appreciate the varied books available in their class reading areas. These include books which provide them with knowledge about different lives and cultures. From the

start of Reception, children learn how to read using a phonics-based approach. They know their reading routines well and enjoy learning their new phonics sounds. Teaching staff are quick to spot any pupils who need extra help with their reading. Pupils, including those pupils who speak English as an additional language, get the support they need. As pupils progress through the school, they mostly read with increasing fluency. However, there is sometimes inconsistency in how well staff support pupils when they listen to them read.

Subject leaders provide many opportunities for teachers' professional development. Teachers feel well supported and have strong subject knowledge. There is a clear emphasis on the use of subject-specific vocabulary. Teachers model this vocabulary and help pupils to remember it with 'working walls'. For example, in art, younger pupils understand the principles of colour mixing and refer to primary and secondary colours. Older pupils are knowledgeable about the importance of scale and proportion when sketching. Teachers encourage all pupils to think like artists and to practise and refine their skills.

Teachers are highly effective at checking pupils' understanding. For example, in mathematics, teachers skilfully question pupils and expect them to justify and explain their reasoning. Pupils know this is the expectation and respond in full. Teaching staff swiftly address any misconceptions. They routinely help pupils to remember their previous learning through regular recaps before moving on to new learning. This means that pupils make strong links within and across all subjects.

There is strong, school-wide provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders ensure that teaching staff know how to accurately identify any pupils who need additional help. Parents and carers are involved at an early stage through the recently introduced 'parent pledge' system. Teachers are skilled at appropriately adapting the curriculum and providing high-quality support for all pupils.

Pupils benefit from many wider opportunities. They enjoy trips to London art galleries and to hear the Bournemouth symphony orchestra. Visitors to the school broaden pupils' knowledge about the local community. These visitors also act as aspirational role models. Pupils understand the importance of mental well-being. In assemblies, for example, pupils consider themes, such as connectedness. Pupils know why this is important to building healthy relationships.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They work alongside school leaders to strengthen the educational outcomes for all pupils. Staff feel their workload is well considered. They are proud to work within this school's supportive environment.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive the training they need to be able to appropriately identify and report any safeguarding concerns. Leaders follow up these concerns and secure support for families.

Pupils know who they can talk to if they have any worries. They understand the measures they can take to keep safe online.

Leaders conduct appropriate safeguarding checks when recruiting new staff. However, record-keeping for safeguarding is not always well maintained. Consequently, it does not allow leaders and governors sufficient oversight of safeguarding themes. This includes minor administrative gaps in the school's single central record.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Safeguarding records do not always reflect staff's diligent approach to applying the school's procedures. This means that leaders do not always have clear enough oversight of safeguarding actions and records. Leaders need to check the effectiveness of the school's safeguarding procedures by ensuring record-keeping is well maintained and up to date.
- Teaching staff are not consistent in the way that they support pupils with their reading. This means that some pupils do not make progress with their reading as quickly as they could. Leaders should ensure that all staff are well trained in delivering the agreed phonics programme in order to support all pupils to read fluently.

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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2013.

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	113676
Local authority	Dorset
Inspection number	10227171
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Number of pupils on the school roll	178
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christopher Jones
Headteacher	Karen Wrixon
Website	www.williambarnes.dorset.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	14 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school offers wraparound care for pupils at the school. This is managed by school leaders.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Pupils across the school were observed reading to a familiar adult by the inspector.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to Ofsted Parent View and parents' written comments. She also talked with groups of parents on the morning of the second day of inspection.

- The inspector met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff questionnaire.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to them informally during social times.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector checked the single central record of recruitment checks and talked to leaders responsible for safeguarding. She also talked to a range of staff and pupils informally.
- The inspector met with members of the local governing body and a representative from the local authority. She also had a call with the school's external challenge partner.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documentation which included the school development plans and governing body minutes.

Inspection team

Kate Fripp, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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