

Inspection of a good school: Barnes Junior School

Mount Road, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear SR4 7QF

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 June 2023

Outcome

Barnes Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this welcoming school. Many pupils say that staff help them to focus and to learn a lot. Staff provide a caring learning environment where pupils flourish. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff are present at the school gates at the beginning and end of the school day. This is just one way by which staff get to know pupils and their families well. Pupils say that there is always a trusted member of staff to talk to. This helps pupils to feel safe.

Staff have high expectations of pupils. This includes their behaviour. Most pupils' attitudes to learning are positive. They appreciate that staff help them to achieve well.

Pupils enjoy the range of activities on offer at playtime. Activities include cricket, football and netball. Pupils behave well. They move around school showing respect for one another. Reports of bullying are rare because pupils appreciate the community values of 'ready, respectful, safe and kind'. Leaders deal effectively with all incidents of bullying.

Pupils enjoy the clubs available such as karate, art, football and dance. The wide range of clubs and experiences help to nurture pupils' talents and interests. For instance, pupils' musical talents are developed through acoustic guitar tuition.

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

This year, leaders have made changes to the school's curriculum. In most subjects, leaders have specified the knowledge that they want pupils to learn at each stage. This helps teachers to build pupils' learning over the year. However, in a few foundation subjects, such as art and design, leaders have not specified the knowledge that they want pupils to know step by step. This means that some pupils do not build knowledge systematically and achieve as well as they could.

Leaders prioritise reading. They have recently introduced a programme for teaching phonics. Leaders have ensured that staff follow the same scheme as the feeder infant

academy. This is helping pupils to catch up with their peers. A daily 'reading workshop' supports pupils' reading fluency and comprehension. Teachers read to pupils every day and encourage them to read books by a wide range of authors, such as 'Cosmic' by Frank Cottrell Boyce. However, some staff help pupils too much when they listen to pupils read. This means that some pupils do not learn to read as fluently as they could.

Leaders have recently introduced a new mathematics curriculum. They have rightly focused on pupils gaining fluency in the most important knowledge. The new curriculum makes clear the knowledge that pupils must learn as they move through school. This is ensuring that pupils catch up where they fell behind because of absence caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. Pupils enjoy mathematics lessons. Many are fluent in their knowledge of number. For example, they use multiplication tables when adding fractions. However, some younger pupils do not have sufficient opportunities to reason and problem solve. These skills are less secure. Opportunities for pupils to explain their thinking do not occur often enough.

The support for pupils with SEND is highly effective. Pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Pupils with SEND are fully included in school life. Support from specialist services and the school's family support worker helps some pupils with SEND to learn skills to work together in groups. Some pupils are taught effective strategies to help them to manage strong emotions. The school has its own alternative SEND provision called The Hive and The Nest. Pupils in The Hive and The Nest benefit from teaching that is adapted to their needs. Individual pupils receive precise targets which enable staff to support them. Pupils are helped to learn life skills such as first aid from St John's Ambulance Service. This is helping to prepare pupils for the future.

The support for pupils' well-being is exemplary. For example, pupils learn techniques to overcome anxiety. They sometimes use these techniques to help them to concentrate. Leaders have given careful thought to the wider opportunities that pupils have. Links with a local sixth form college art department encourage pupils to develop their artistic skills. There are many opportunities for pupils to develop as leaders. For instance, some pupils are religious education leaders, eco warriors and sports leaders. Pupils participate in decisions to improve their school. They enjoy planting the 'King's seeds' to grow flowers to attract pollinating insects. This is helping to improve the school grounds.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate that leaders are considerate of their well-being and professional development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding at the school. Staff know pupils well. Leaders ensure that staff access regular training. This helps staff to identify concerns in pupils' behaviour. Leaders take prompt action to follow up any concerns.

Leaders take effective action to improve pupils' attendance. They know that this is an essential part of keeping children safe. Leaders keep thorough records. This helps them to

work effectively with external agencies. Recruitment checks are thorough. Leaders ensure that everyone who works in the school is safe to do so. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few foundation subjects, the precise knowledge and skills that pupils need to learn as they move through the school are not clear enough. This means that pupils do not build on their prior knowledge as well as they do in other subjects. Leaders should continue to develop the curriculum and support teachers to understand what they need to teach to help all pupils to develop subject knowledge well.
- Some of the methods for listening to pupils read do not help pupils to practise decoding independently. This means that some pupils are not achieving reading fluency as quickly as they could. Leaders need to continue to develop staff as early reading experts.
- Younger pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills in a range of contexts. This means that their understanding of mathematics is not as well developed as it could be. Leaders need to ensure that they implement this aspect of the mathematics curriculum in all year groups so that all pupils deepen their knowledge and skills.

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 May 2014.

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	108755
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10255859
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	347
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Pauline Forster
Headteacher	Simon Ward
Website	www.barnesjunior.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school have appointed a new deputy headteacher and a special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) since the previous inspection.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school has its own provision for pupils with SEND called 'The Hive' and 'The Nest'.
- Leaders do not currently make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and SENCo. She also spoke with members of the local governing body as well as a representative of the local authority.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art and design. 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.
- The inspector spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The inspector listened to some pupils read with a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke to pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding, including the school's single central record of employment checks. She met with leaders, staff and pupils to understand how pupils are kept safe.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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