

Inspection of Barrow CofE Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 27 and 28 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

This small village school is at the heart of the community. The parents and carers who spoke with the inspectors were unanimous in their praise for the staff and the nurturing atmosphere that leaders and teachers have created for the pupils in their care.

Pupils are happy and safe. They arrive each day with big smiles on their faces, as they skip into school. Leaders take swift and decisive action to resolve any of the rare instances of bullying that occur. Pupils have confidence that all staff will help them if they have a worry or concern. Staff keep the school's values of 'ready, respect and try your best' at the heart of their work. They have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils respond to this positively. For example, pupils move quietly and sensibly around the school and respond respectfully when others are speaking.

Leaders expect pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to achieve well. However, pupils, including children in the early years, do not achieve as well as they should. This is because, over time, pupils have not benefited from an ambitious curriculum that builds their knowledge securely.

Pupils are respectful of one another. Older pupils enjoy the responsibility of serving lunch to children in the early years and helping these children to develop good table manners. This makes lunchtimes very calm. Pupils also relish the opportunity to be members of the school council, making important decisions such as adding a new mud kitchen to the school grounds.

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

Leaders have worked closely with staff and governors to create a new and ambitious curriculum for all pupils. They have also carefully considered the mixed-age classes across the school when making these changes. However, this new curriculum is still in the very early stages of implementation. This means that teachers have not received sufficient training to deliver the new curriculum well across each of the year groups. As a result, pupils do not learn new content as well as they should.

In the early years, the curriculum is also at an early stage of development. Currently, it does not enable children to build on their prior learning and vocabulary well enough. This means that children in the Reception Year are not as well prepared as they should be for Year 1.

Staff use assessment strategies to check how well pupils are learning across the curriculum areas. However, these checks do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. This means that some pupils move through the curriculum with ongoing gaps and misconceptions in their learning.

Leaders have ensured that there are effective systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND. Staff receive appropriate training so that they can adapt how

they deliver the curriculum and support pupils with SEND. For example, leaders seek advice from external agencies to ensure that this group of pupils receive suitable support from staff when needed.

Since the last inspection, leaders have made the teaching of reading a high priority. They have ensured that staff are equipped to deliver the phonics and early reading curriculum well. Those pupils who struggle to keep up with the reading programme receive appropriate support from staff. This helps these pupils to catch up quickly with their peers. Staff ensure that pupils read books that match the letter sounds that they know. This supports pupils to read with confidence and fluency. Pupils are exposed to a range of books and reading experiences from when they start in the Reception Year. Pupils enjoy hearing adults, including members of the community, read to them. Leaders work effectively with parents so that they can be involved in sharing their children's reading experiences. Older pupils are keen to read books from the school library.

Pupils develop their talents in different ways. For example, they regularly attend a range of after-school clubs such as rounders, football and gardening club. Pupils also enjoy trips and attending local events. They particularly enjoyed their visit to the zoo and taking part in Young Voices. Pupils understand the importance of eating healthily and looking after their mental health. The school grounds and outdoor spaces support pupils' mental well-being. Pupils are also taught strategies to calm themselves down if they feel angry or frustrated. That said, in some aspects of the curriculum that supports pupils' personal development, pupils' understanding is not fully secure. However, leaders are in the process of improving this area to help pupils to be better equipped for life in modern Britain.

There is a calm and orderly environment in lessons, in corridors and during playtime. Pupils enjoy positive relationships with each other and with staff. Leaders provide effective support for any pupils who need help to improve their behaviour. Therefore, low-level disruption is rare.

Governors use their range of skills and expertise to fulfil their roles effectively. Although leaders have not fully realised their ambitions for the quality of education, they are very clear about what needs to be done. As a result, plans to further improve the quality of education are focused and realistic. Leaders understand the extra workload that can be placed on staff in a small school. However, staff are well supported, and they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have secure procedures in place to safeguard pupils. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. Leaders ensure that all staff record and report any incidents promptly. They work well with external agencies. This helps leaders to secure the support that some pupils and their families may need. Governors and

leaders ensure that they make effective checks to ensure that adults are suitable to work with pupils.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe, including when they are using the internet. They learn about what to do if they are faced with potential risks

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In most subjects, the curriculum is at the early stages of being implemented. Teachers have not received sufficient training to enable them to deliver these curriculums well across each of the year groups. This hinders how well pupils learn new information. Leaders should make sure that they provide teachers with the training that they require to enable them to deliver the new curriculums consistently so that pupils achieve as well as they should.
- The checks that teachers make on pupils' learning do not identify gaps in pupils' knowledge sufficiently well. This means that some pupils move through the curriculum with ongoing misconceptions in their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers are equipped to use assessment strategies well so that pupils' learning is secure before they meet new concepts.
- The early years curriculum is not structured coherently. This means that staff are unclear about what children need to learn and when this should be taught. This impacts how well children build their learning over time. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum in the early years sets out the important knowledge and vocabulary that children need to know and remember in readiness for their future learning.

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	111270
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	10268064
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	52
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Christine Merrick
Headteacher	Paul Hudson
Website	www.barrowcofeschool.com
Date of previous inspection	27 April 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- An interim headteacher was appointed in September 2021 and will take up the substantive post from September 2023.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- 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 this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, they met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.

- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and class teachers.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors talked with staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors also met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the diocese.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. They also spoke to several parents 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 reviewed leaders’ policies and procedures to keep pupils safe. They discussed safeguarding arrangements with leaders and staff. They also checked the single central record.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour during lessons and at playtimes. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders’ expectations of pupils’ behaviour.

Inspection team

Kelly Butler, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Alison Lawson

Ofsted Inspector

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