

Inspection of a good school: Barley Mow Primary School

Pembroke Avenue, Barley Mow, Birtley, Chester le Street, County Durham DH3 2DJ

Inspection dates:

6 and 7 February 2024

Outcome

Barley Mow Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Barley Mow Primary School is warm and welcoming. There are positive relationships between staff and pupils. Adults know pupils well and care for them. The majority of pupils feel safe in school. They know that staff would help them with any worries or concerns.

Pupils behave well in school. They have been taught to be respectful of everyone. They know that everybody can feel hurt by unkind comments or behaviour. In classrooms pupils learn without distraction. They enthusiastically engage in their learning. Pupils enjoy algebra, using sources in history and reading. This is a testament to staff who ensure that lessons are interesting and challenging.

The school has ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included fully in the life of the school. Leaders have high expectations of all pupils and ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Staff, including teaching assistants, provide appropriate support and understand the needs of pupils with SEND well.

The school has 'Our School Pledge', this is an initiative to ensure that pupils have enjoyable experiences. These enhance the curriculum and pupils' wider experiences. Pupils eagerly recall these, such as the popular residential educational visit and performing on stage. Pupils are proud to hold leadership roles including school councillors, librarians and mini-police.

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

The school has set about reviewing and evaluating curriculum areas in a systematic way. This is well-paced and has taken into consideration teacher workload. Subject leadership has been prioritised. Staff work closely with the local authority, other schools and professional associations to ensure that they are knowledgeable about the subjects that

they lead. This means that curriculums have clearly identified vocabulary, skills and knowledge that pupils need to know from the early years to Year 6 in all subjects. There has been a significant focus on the mathematics curriculum. Outcomes in mathematics have improved over time. Teachers ensure that pupils are helped to remember what they are learning and give them opportunities to practise their mathematical knowledge. Staff check what pupils know through formal tests, questioning and quizzes. Teachers use information gained through this assessment to adapt their teaching if necessary. The school has identified writing as a key area in need of improvement. Some pupils do not achieve as well in writing as expected. Improvements have been made to address this, but this needs to continue to ensure that outcomes in writing improve to match those in reading, mathematics and science.

Staff are quick to identify pupils with SEND. This begins in the early years where children with speech and language difficulties are given additional support. The school works to ensure that pupils with SEND and those that need extra help are fully supported to participate fully in lessons.

Staff deliver the phonics programme well and with consistency. Children in early years have a well-considered introduction to learning sounds and letters. In Reception, children confidently identify parts of words where two letters make one sound. They use the correct terminology to describe this. Pupils who need help with their reading have intervention. This ranges from one-to-one work, small group work and 'keep up' sessions. These help many pupils to become successful readers. Older pupils love changing their books in the library. Older pupils are ambitious to progress through the reading books and have the choice to select a range of books to read once they become 'free readers'.

The school ensures that pupils behave well. Pupils follow the school rules and they feel that staff reinforce these if needed. In lessons, pupils are focused and many raise their hands to answer questions. They conduct themselves well and are polite. Most pupils attend school regularly. Leaders work with families to improve the attendance of the small proportion of pupils who are frequently absent.

There is a sharp focus on pupils' wider development. Pupils understand the fundamental British values and speak about how important these are. They link the school values to being a responsible person. There are many enrichment opportunities in the curriculum. Pupils talk fondly of visits to the Centre for Life and Beamish Museum which support their learning in science and history. Pupils participate in charity events such as coffee mornings.

Staff work well as a team. They are proud to work at the school and feel well supported by leaders. Governors are committed to their roles and areas of interest. They have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas of focus. School leaders help staff to manage their workload. Parents are positive about the school. They know that staff are available should they need help, advice or support.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for writing is not as well established as other curriculum areas. This has contributed to outcomes in writing not being as high as they are in reading, mathematics and science. Some pupils do not achieve as well in writing as expected. Leaders should make sure that the planned curriculum for writing is implemented as intended and that this continues to be reviewed to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential in writing.

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 November 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the definition of children in need of help and protection; pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's pupil premium funding (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	108373
Local authority	Gateshead
Inspection number	10297249
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	170
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Linda Watkin
Headteacher	Nicola Watson
Website	www.barleymowprimary.org/
Date(s) of previous inspection	20 September 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides a breakfast club for pupils.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provider.

Information about this inspection

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector held discussions with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- The inspector also met with members of the governing body and the local authority school improvement partner.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The writing curriculum was also discussed as part of this inspection and pupils' written work was reviewed.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including records of governing body meetings, leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and documents relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The inspector made a telephone call to the registered alternative provider that the school uses.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. The inspector considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school and observed their behaviour. The inspector considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Jessica McKay, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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