

Inspection of a good school: Barton Junior School

Barton Road, Dover, Kent CT16 2ND

Inspection dates:

9 and 10 July 2024

The headteacher of this school is Melanie O'Dell. This school is part of Samphire Star Education Trust which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, David Meades, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ryan Davies.

Outcome

Barton Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils feel they belong in this warm and friendly school. They particularly value the positive relationships that they develop with staff and their peers. Pupils live out the school values of 'aspire, believe, create' through their exemplary conduct and attitudes. They recognise the importance of their learning, so lessons are calm and focused.

Across the school, pupils behave sensibly and are considerate of others. Adults apply their high expectations of behaviour and routines consistently. Pupils are given the support they need to manage and regulate their behaviour, whether adults are present or not.

The school has an exciting and ambitious curriculum for pupils to study. Their curiosity is sparked by a range of trips and visits which help to bring the curriculum to life. Pupils say that teachers make learning interesting and memorable. This motivates pupils to be resilient when learning something new. Pupils continually strive to do their best.

The school provides rich and varied extra-curricular opportunities to develop pupils' wider enrichment. Pupils have been involved in developing the school garden, managing the 'reading shed', or acting on the 'Barton stage'. There are several leadership roles like head girl and boy, house captain and prefects to help pupils understand their role as responsible individuals.

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

The school has established an ambitious vision for the quality education that it provides. Leaders have focused on developing the curriculum in all subjects to ensure it is broad

and engaging for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school supports pupils with SEND well with their learning. Pupils who require any additional support are identified quickly and staff work expertly to remove obstacles. As a result of the school's skilful work, pupils with SEND progress well through the curriculum.

One of the most important changes to the curriculum has been the prioritisation of reading. Reading is now at the heart of the curriculum. The school helps pupils to develop a love for reading through a range of texts and authors they read and explore. Pupils learn through daily reading lessons, which support them in developing their reading skills and fluency. Those who are at risk of falling behind their peers have started to benefit from a new phonics programme. This programme is still in the earlier stages of development. Leaders are continuing to help staff to develop their expertise through professional development. Consequently, a small number of pupils are not always supported effectively to read with confidence and fluency.

The school thinks carefully about the knowledge that pupils should learn and when subject content will be taught. Pupils can recall their learning connected to some of the subjects they study, including mathematics. Teachers deliver the curriculum well. Professional development through the trust supports staff to develop secure subject knowledge. In most subjects, teachers carefully check that pupils have learned all that they should. However, some aspects of the curriculum are still new and are in the early stages of being taught. In these subject areas, staff do not always check what pupils know and remember over time as effectively. This prevents pupils from successfully building on their long-term knowledge.

The school has high expectations of pupils' attendance and punctuality. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to overcome barriers preventing pupils from attending school as often as they should. Pupils maintain high standards of behaviour and conduct. They are friendly and polite, eager to offer a cheery welcome to visitors. The school makes sure that pupils understand and follow well-established routines.

The provision to support pupils' personal development is very well considered. Pupils take part in an array of wider opportunities, such as educational visits, which help to enhance their learning. These include residential visits and trips to historical sites. The school gives pupils opportunities to learn about each other's differences and cultural beliefs. This gives the pupils a deeper understanding of those around them.

There are clear systems in place for the trust to assure themselves of the quality of pupils' experiences. Teachers appreciate how the school engages with them to provide the support needed to help pupils learn and achieve.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of pupils at an earlier stage of learning to read are not always supported effectively. This hinders how well some of these pupils develop their reading fluency. The school should continue to ensure that staff receive ongoing training to better support these pupils to catch up with their peers as quickly as possible.
- In some subjects, the curriculum is new and still being embedded. In these subjects, teachers do not consistently use appropriate checks to see if pupils are secure in their knowledge before moving on to new learning. As a result, some lesson activities are not always adapted carefully enough to help pupils achieve as highly as they can. The school should continue to ensure that pupils' understanding is checked so that any gaps can be quickly identified and addressed.

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 school to be good in December 2018.

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	138169
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10321954
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ryan Davies
CEO of trust	David Meades
Headteacher	Melanie O'Dell
Website	www.bartonjuniorschool.org
Date of previous inspection	5 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Barton Junior School is part of the Samphire Star Education Trust.
- The school manages breakfast and after-school clubs for pupils.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held a range of meetings with the headteacher, the CEO, school leaders, and teaching and support staff.
- The inspector met with a member of the local governing board and trustees.

- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector heard pupils read aloud to a known adult and also looked at work from other subject areas.
- 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 took account of a range of other information, including the school's development plans, school policies and trust board minutes.
- The inspector considered the responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and the free-text comments that were submitted. They also took account of the responses to the confidential staff survey and gathered the views of both staff and pupils throughout the inspection.

Inspection team

Numera Anwar, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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