

# Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Barnsley Academy

Farm Road, Kendray, Barnsley, South Yorkshire S70 3DL

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Inspection dates:

14 and 15 January 2025

## Outcome

Barnsley Academy has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The principal of this school is Stephen Pitcher. This school is part of United Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Sir Jon Coles, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Reena Keeble. There is also a regional director, Laura Moore, who is responsible for this school and five others.

## What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a welcoming and vibrant place. Most pupils enjoy the education and wider opportunities that the school provides. They learn to become mature and responsible members of its community. Pupils increasingly meet the school's high expectations for their conduct. They form positive relationships with staff and peers. Pupils behave better and attend more regularly than has previously been the case.

The school is aspirational for what pupils can achieve. Most pupils produce work of a high quality and achieve well. The school recognises that there remains further work to do to ensure that some improvements to the curriculum, and how it is taught, are sustained so that this is the case for all pupils and in all subjects.

Pupils at the school access a wide variety of activities that enhance their education. The school's 'student charter' maps a range of rich opportunities that pupils are entitled to. A growing number of pupils benefit from these. For example, Year 7 pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Other experiences, such as visits to places of worship or to the Houses of Parliament, reinforce pupils' learning. Many pupils take an active role in the school, including those who hold student ambassador responsibilities.

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

The school has strengthened the quality of the curriculum and how effectively it is taught. It provides staff with high-quality training. Teachers apply this in lessons with increasing consistency and skill. For example, they support pupils to revisit important knowledge regularly, helping them to remember it. Teachers regularly check what pupils know and can do. They adapt their teaching to ensure that new content builds on what pupils have learned securely. Occasionally, staff's explanations are overly complex or lack clarity. When this happens, pupils struggle to use this information effectively in their own work. Most pupils achieve well. However, there remains variation in how well groups of pupils achieve, including between subjects.

The school has strong systems for identifying pupils who require additional support, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It works with external agencies, including educational psychologists, to understand what additional help these pupils require. Staff adjust their teaching effectively so that all pupils can access the curriculum. The school quickly identifies pupils who need further help to read fluently. It ensures that these pupils receive the support that they need to read confidently.

Over time, the number of pupils who are absent from school has been too high. These pupils miss important learning and achieve less well than they should. The school has strengthened its systems to secure regular attendance. It now implements these more effectively. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are absent from school is declining. However, these improvements in attendance need to be sustained so that pupils consistently benefit from the improved education that the school provides.

The school has high expectations for pupils' behaviour. It reinforces these through its character curriculum. Most pupils reach these expectations consistently. Pupils and staff recognise that behaviour in school has significantly improved. Lessons are calm and enable pupils to focus on their learning. Those who struggle to reach the school's expectations receive additional support. As a result, the number of pupils who receive consequences for poor behaviour, including suspensions, is reducing.

Pupils speak confidently about topics that they have learned in the school's personal, social and health education lessons. They are knowledgeable about the fundamental British values and other faiths and cultures. The school's careers advice and guidance programme aids pupils in making informed choices about their next steps in education, employment and training.

Leaders know the school well. They have acted to make improvements to the school, and they ensure that staff have the support and training that they need to implement these well. Staff feel supported by the school. Leaders recognise that there continues to be further work to do, for example in strengthening communication and partnerships with some parents and carers. Currently, some parents do not feel that the school listens to and addresses concerns that they raise consistently well. The trust provides the school with additional support, such as training, that is leading to improvements. Those with responsibility for governance scrutinise the effectiveness of the school's work effectively.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

### What does the school need to do to improve?

#### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Over time, rates of absence have been too high. Some pupils have missed important learning and have not achieved as well as they should. The school should embed recent improvements to its attendance systems to ensure that increases in attendance are sustained.
- Some parents do not feel that their concerns are understood or addressed fully by the school. Sometimes, this reduces the school's ability to work in partnership with parents in the interest of pupils. The school should continue its work to develop stronger communication with parents to ensure that all parties work collaboratively to secure the best outcomes for pupils.
- Some improvements in the way the curriculum is taught are still becoming fully embedded. There is variation in achievement between groups of pupils and across subjects. The school should embed the improvements that it has made to ensure that all pupils achieve consistently highly.

## Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in January 2020.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	131749
<b>Local authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	10346388
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 16
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	920
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Reena Keeble
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Sir Jon Coles
<b>Principal</b>	Stephen Pitcher
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.barnsley-academy.org">www.barnsley-academy.org</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 January 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of United Learning Trust.
- The principal is new to his role since the previous inspection. He began in this role in September 2024. Prior to this, he was employed as a vice-principal in the school.
- The school uses two registered and three unregistered alternative provisions.
- The school meets the requirements of the provider access legislation, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information and engagement about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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 lead inspector met with members of the trust board, the local governing board and a delegate of the trust's CEO.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the principal. They also met with other senior and middle leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding, behaviour, attendance and personal development.
- Inspectors visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation regarding the support pupils with SEND receive. They looked at the quality of the provision for pupils with SEND in lessons.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation, including minutes from governing board meetings as well as the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors looked at a range of information regarding behaviour. They observed the behaviour of pupils in classrooms and at social times.
- The views of pupils and staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys were considered.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents through the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents, Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Thomas Wraith, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Tudor Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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