

Inspection of a good school: Barnfields Primary School

Lansdowne Way, Wildwood, Stafford, Staffordshire ST17 4RD

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 June 2024

Outcome

Barnfields Primary School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Graham Ball. This school is part of South East Stafford Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Gemma Bettany, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Matthew Rowell.

What is it like to attend this school?

Barnfields Primary School is a very positive place in which to work and learn. Pupils are happy here and their attendance is high. Lessons and wider school life are full of exciting, worthwhile things to do. Consequently, pupils get many opportunities to try new things, broaden their interests and develop expertise.

This well-led, successful school has high expectations, both of staff and pupils. Pupils achieve well, particularly in English and mathematics. In addition to this, the school places a high priority on the arts and sport. This broad curriculum means that pupils are well prepared for future learning. Furthermore, the school's core values shine out in pupils' responsible attitudes and thoughtful behaviour.

Bullying is not accepted, and pupils learn what it means to be respectful. Staff take any instances of unkind behaviour seriously. They act quickly to solve any problems. This means everyone is kept safe at school.

Beyond lessons, there are lots of clubs and leadership roles for pupils. Pupil-led committees make decisions about the way things are done. Staff listen to their ideas and help pupils to grow in self-belief. Indeed, the school's motto of believe and achieve is being realised in practice.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school has continued to strengthen its work. Academic standards in English and mathematics are high. This shows in the quality of pupils' work

and End of Key Stage assessments. From early years through to Year 6, staff are attentive to children's interests, welfare and learning. Adults successfully support pupils to persevere, achieve and be prepared for what comes next.

A big factor in this success is the school's highly effective approach to teaching reading. Beginning in Reception, there is a systematic, informed approach to teaching phonics. This is supported by extra catch-up sessions so that everyone learns to read. The school has also made deliberate, ambitious choices about the texts they share with pupils and use in class. During their time here, pupils learn much about literature and are guided to develop a lasting interest in reading. Many older pupils model positive attitudes to reading by acting as librarians or sharing books with younger pupils. Mathematics is also well led and organised, and pupils achieve well. Looking to the future, the next step is to build further on the school's work to develop pupils' spoken language and oracy.

The school's efficient approach to early reading and number also helps with early identification of any pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school provides staff with appropriate training and support to ensure they can meet pupils' different needs and enable them to succeed.

Beyond the core subjects of English and mathematics, the school is equally ambitious in its intentions for the wider curriculum. As the school has developed its offer, staff have paid attention to research about effective learning. This has resulted in an informed curriculum and sequences of lessons that build logically on what has gone before. The impact of this is clear to see. Physical education (PE), for example, is a notable strength and is enriched by expert input. In some other subjects, the school is still refining curriculum design and assessment. This is to give pupils more opportunities to apply what they know so they do not forget what they have learned, or move on to more complex work before they are ready.

On top of lessons, there is a wealth of extra activities. Clubs, competitions, pupil committees and trips, for example, provide a range of experiences that support pupils' learning and personal development. The school's five core values of respect, resilience, responsibility, reflection and positivity are woven throughout its work. In class and on the playground, pupils are regularly reminded of what these mean in practice. From the very first day in Reception to the end of Year 6, the school does much to develop pupils' moral code and help them see the link between effort and reward. Staff take time to notice the things that matter to pupils. Adults take care to listen to their questions, comments or worries.

Parents appreciate the school. In their comments to Ofsted, many praised the quality of leadership, learning and care provided for their children.

Staff describe high levels of job satisfaction and have a keen sense of purpose. They feel valued at work and are proud to be part of a supportive and ambitious school.

Governance and leadership from the trust is informed, focused and effective. This, together with the strong leadership within the school, is steering the school on a continuing journey of successful improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Planned opportunities for pupils to recall and apply important subject-specific knowledge are better developed in some subjects than others. This means that pupils sometimes forget previous learning. The school should continue to refine curriculum design and assessment in some foundation subjects so that all pupils retain important content over the longer term.
- The school's attention to developing pupils' spoken language does not have the same high level of attention and deliberateness as reading and writing. This means that some pupils do not develop their oracy skills as well as they could. The school should press on with its plans for more deliberate and ambitious progression in spoken language.

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 predecessor school, Barnfields Primary, 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' 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	142981
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10344080
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	402
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Matthew Rowell
Headteacher	Graham Ball
Website	www.barnfields.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 April 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of South East Stafford Academy Trust.
- The school provides before- and after-school childcare on the school site.
- There is a privately run on-site Nursery. This is subject to a separate inspection at a different time.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. In these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at

pupils' work. The inspector also looked at the curriculum in some other subjects and observed some pupils reading.

- The inspector looked at published performance data about the school and a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, special educational needs, extra-curricular activities, staff training and school improvement planning. She checked the school's website.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record and incident records; 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 talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for staff and parents' views. The inspector had a telephone conversation with some parents and considered a letter from parents.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils, a governor, and two trustees including the chief executive officer.

Inspection team

Diane Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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