

Inspection of an outstanding school: Barnehurst Junior School

Barnehurst Close, Northumberland Heath, Erith, Kent DA8 3NL

Inspection dates:

21 and 22 September 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this ungraded (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a graded (section 5) inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders place the highest priority on the well-being and safety of everyone in the school community. Staff know pupils well and use this knowledge to support pupils' welfare. One pupil said: 'All staff really care for us here. That's what makes this school special.' This was typical of pupils' comments about the school.

Pupils are proud of their school and keen to talk to visitors. Pupils behave well and are courteous in lessons and around the school. Pupils know the school routines and are quick to follow instructions from staff. Bullying is rare. If it does happen, pupils know who to talk to.

Leaders have high ambitions for what pupils can achieve and teachers expect pupils to work hard. The curriculum is enhanced through various after-school clubs, educational visits and regular outdoor learning experiences. For example, pupils said that they enjoyed musical theatre, basketball and football. Leaders encourage pupils to understand their place in the world and how to be good citizens. For example, pupils did a sponsored walk which was the same distance as some people in other countries have to walk to get water.

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

School leaders have reviewed and improved the curriculum over the last three years. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that is based on the national curriculum. They have thought carefully about making learning relevant for their pupils. For example, leaders aim for pupils to understand how their life in the local area is similar to or different from that of other people nationally and globally. In each subject, leaders have identified the important knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. They have sequenced pupils' learning to help build up knowledge over time.

The implementation of the curriculum is better in some subjects than in others. Where it is most effective, staff have fully embedded the new curriculum. Teachers check pupils' understanding regularly and use assessment information purposefully. Their strong subject knowledge helps pupils to learn well. In mathematics, for example, staff provide pupils with opportunities to revisit and practise their knowledge and skills. Pupils use their previous learning to help them understand new subject content. As a result, pupils are secure in their mathematical knowledge and many spoke about how they enjoy their learning.

In other subjects, notably those that have recently been reviewed, staff are still getting used to the curriculum changes. Checks on what pupils know and remember are not used as well to identify and address any gaps in pupils' knowledge. Staff do not ensure that pupils know securely some important subject content.

Reading is a priority for leaders. Pupils have opportunities to read regularly. Teachers read a variety of books to pupils which are chosen carefully to inspire and motivate. Pupils enjoy reading and read a wide range of books by different authors. However, some pupils do not read as fluently as they should. Although they read regularly, not all pupils are drawing on their phonics knowledge and practising doing so to help them read more fluently. Leaders have plans in place to address this.

Pupils behave well. They listen carefully in class and disruption to learning is rare. Staff are quick to refocus pupils if there are any distractions. The curriculum is carefully planned to promote pupils' personal development.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Leaders identify accurately the individual needs of pupils. Teachers use a range of effective strategies so that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers. This includes imaginative use of digital technology and individual support in lessons.

Staff said that leaders are considerate of staff well-being and workload. Leaders have made many changes to the curriculum in recent years. Staff said that leaders consult with them when making decisions and listen to the views of staff.

The trust enhances the work of the school well with a carefully structured offer of challenge and support. Trust leaders provide expert advice and help to ensure that systems and practices are robust.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the centre of leaders' work. Staff know pupils well and are vigilant about keeping them safe. Pupils know that they can talk to any adult at school if they are worried about something. Staff are quick to take appropriate action once a concern has been raised. Leaders are alert to the risks their pupils might face and go above and

beyond in their work with families. Leaders use this contextual knowledge to ensure that pupils are taught how to stay safe, including online. When needed, leaders use external support well. Leaders carry out all the necessary pre-recruitment checks when appointing staff.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, where the curriculum has gone through recent changes, teaching does not check that pupils' knowledge is as secure as in other subjects. Leaders should continue their work to embed the new curriculum in all subjects and ensure that pupils remember knowledge long term.
- Some pupils struggle to read fluently. This is because they are not routinely using their phonics knowledge to help them to read unfamiliar words. Leaders have plans in place to build up their fluency which include encouraging pupils to use their phonics knowledge. Leaders should realise their plans to ensure that all pupils develop reading fluency.

Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. 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 outstanding in November 2016.

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	140321
Local authority	Bexley
Inspection number	10240535
Type of school	Junior
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	241
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Harwood
Headteacher	Louise Shields
Website	www.barnehurstfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	2 and 4 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher took up post in January 2019.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection of the school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other senior leaders, including those responsible for SEND and safeguarding, and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with two trustees from the Primary First Trust, the chief executive officer of the trust and the trust's director of education.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils to understand their views of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject

leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also discussed with leaders the curriculum in some other subjects, including physical education and religious education.

- The inspector observed behaviour in lessons and at other times of the school day.
- The inspector looked at how the school keeps pupils safe. He met with the leader with responsibility for safeguarding. The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including a record of staff pre-employment checks and case files. The inspector spoke with pupils and staff to evaluate the school's safeguarding culture.
- The views of pupils and members of staff who responded to the online surveys were considered. Responses to Ofsted's online survey for parents, Parent View, were taken into account.
- The inspector reviewed a wide range of documentation provided by the school. This included the school improvement plan and leaders' evaluation of the school.

Inspection team

David Lloyd, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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