

Inspection of a good school: Barnes Farm Infant School

Henniker Gate, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 6QH

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

Outcome

Barnes Farm Infant School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

There is always a friendly smile to be seen around this school. Pupils learn and play together. They say that everyone is welcome to join in the games at breaktime. They chatter excitedly about their learning.

From the start to the end of the day, relationships are kind and caring. Adults get to know the pupils well. They quickly spot anyone who needs a helping hand. Pupils said an adult will always help them if they need it.

Pupils feel safe and are safe here. They understand that bullying is wrong. It happens rarely and, when it does, pupils are confident that adults will stop it straight away.

From the start of early years, children learn the school code of 'kind hands, kind words, kind feet'. They understand and respond well to the high standards of behaviour their teachers expect. In lessons, they learn to listen to their teachers.

Pupils become resilient, successful learners. Everyone is proud to wear the 'capoes of success' around school. These help pupils to understand values, such as teamwork and perseverance.

Pupils can develop their talents in clubs such as football and gymnastics after school. They take part in sports events with other schools, such as 'teddylympics'.

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

Leaders have put a well-planned curriculum in place across the school. They have made clear links between the curriculum for children in Reception and those in Year 1. This ensures that pupils are well prepared as they move through the school. Teachers know the small steps of learning needed to enable pupils to achieve well. They make these clear in lessons. Teachers regularly introduce new vocabulary. Occasionally, they do not

explain these words clearly. When this happens, pupils are less sure about the meaning of new words or how to use them.

Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning during lessons. They provide extra help straight away to support pupils to understand new ideas. They build in extra practise when pupils need it. In daily 'maths meetings', pupils revisit and secure their mathematics learning. This helps them to understand and remember more. Pupils can explain how they use what they learn to tackle new concepts.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported in school by skilful adults. Leaders form strong relationships with local nurseries, parents and carers. Help is put in place quickly for those who need it. Detailed plans identify the support that pupils need to make progress. These include advice from external professionals.

Leaders have recently introduced a new curriculum for reading. This clearly sets out expectations for learning. Children in the early years start to learn phonics straight away. Well-matched books and regular practise provide the skills they need to learn to read. Older pupils use their phonics knowledge to tackle new words with confidence. They become enthusiastic readers. Regular checks ensure that adults know which pupils need extra help. They are clear about what these pupils need to learn next. Leaders put support in place to help these pupils to make progress. Recent changes in staff and resources mean that some teaching assistants require further training to support the teaching of phonics. Leaders are ensuring that this is swiftly put in place.

Pupils behave well throughout the school. Consistent routines help children in the early years get used to school life. 'Golden squares' reward sensible behaviour. These enable pupils to work together and achieve rewards for doing the right thing. As a result, everyone can get on with their learning.

Pupils are consistently encouraged to display positive behaviours. They describe 'being brave' and 'keeping on trying' when faced by new challenges. They also learn how to be healthy, caring citizens. Health champions encourage everyone to eat healthily and take regular exercise. Pupils can describe the qualities of a good friend and proudly explain how they care for each other. 'Friendly Owls' help out around the school each day.

Adults appreciate the consideration shown for their well-being by leaders. They get the training they need to do their jobs well. This includes extra sessions run by the trust to build their curriculum knowledge. Subject leaders have the time and expertise they need to support their colleagues. Teachers contribute to developments in school through working parties. They feel genuinely included in changes to bring about improvements. They are proud to be part of the team at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders at every level have built an effective safeguarding culture at this school. Adults are well trained to spot any signs that pupils may not be safe. Systems are in place for pupils to let staff know straight away if they have concerns.

From the early years, children learn how to keep themselves safe. Strong relationships with families enable leaders to get early help in place when needed. Accurate records are kept. Leaders act swiftly on concerns and work effectively with external agencies.

Leaders have safer recruitment checks in place to ensure that adults are suitable to work in schools.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have recently strengthened further the teaching of phonics. However, not all teaching assistants have had the training they need. Leaders should ensure that teaching assistants receive training in the new phonics programmes, so that all pupils benefit from consistent phonics provision.
- In a few subjects, new vocabulary is not introduced clearly enough. As a result, pupils sometimes develop misconceptions and cannot apply the new words they learn across the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that systems are in place to ensure that new words are introduced clearly, so that pupils understand them and can use them.

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 predecessor school, Barnes Farm Infant School to be good in March 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](#)' 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	146000
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10240358
Type of school	Infant
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	231
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Roger Blundell
Headteacher	Zanya Farmer
Website	www.barnesfarminfants.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Leaders work in partnership with one alternative education provider.
- Leaders run a breakfast and after-school club on site and also on the site of the adjacent junior school.
- Barnes Farm Infant School converted to become an academy school in July 2018. When its predecessor school, Barnes Farm Infant School, was last inspected by Ofsted it was judged to be good overall.

Information about this inspection

- 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 meetings with senior leaders and teachers, including subject leaders.
- The inspector met with representatives from the trust and the governing board, including the chair of governors.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in three subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, met with pupils to speak about their learning and looked at samples of their work.

- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and other staff to discuss safeguarding.
- The inspector scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including school development plans, safeguarding and behaviour records.
- The inspector considered responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. She also considered responses to the staff survey and responses to the pupil survey.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning in lessons to understand what it is like to be a pupil in their school. She also observed the behaviour of pupils at breaktimes and around the school.

Inspection team

Lynne Williams, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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