

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Barlow Hall Primary School

Darley Avenue, Chorlton-Cum-Hardy, Manchester, Lancashire M21 7JG

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 January 2025

Outcome

Barlow Hall Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The executive headteacher of this school is Jayne Kennedy. This school is part of Link 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), Jayne Kennedy, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Adrian Young.

What is it like to attend this school?

Barlow Hall Primary School provides pupils with a nurturing, stimulating and safe environment where they thrive. The school is a vibrant hub at the heart of the community. Staff build exceptionally strong relationships with families. This supports children in the early years to settle well.

The school has high aspirations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils rise to these expectations. They achieve well across a wide range of subjects. Pupils' enthusiasm for learning shines through. They enjoy coming to school, describing lessons as exciting.

Behaviour is exemplary throughout the day. Pupils are kind, respectful and supportive of one another. They take immense pride in their school and actively contribute to its success. Leadership opportunities are abundant, from house captains and school councillors to digital ambassadors and young leaders, who assist younger pupils during playtimes. These roles build pupils' confidence and understanding of responsibility.

Beyond the classroom, pupils benefit from rich and diverse experiences that broaden their horizons. Trips to museums and nature reserves deepen their understanding of the world. Pupils relish opportunities to represent the school in sporting events, such as football and dodgeball competitions, and taking part in the mini triathlon.

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

The school has continued to improve since the last inspection. The curriculum is broad and tailored to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and present lessons clearly. They design engaging activities that help pupils to learn the important knowledge and skills. The school has taken effective action to improve the use of assessment strategies in the wider curriculum subjects. Teachers check pupils' understanding, correct misconceptions and provide constructive feedback that supports pupils to learn well. Teachers make effective use of strategies to support pupils to remember their learning. This means that over time, pupils develop a rich body of knowledge across a range of subjects.

Early reading is prioritised, particularly in the early years, where children are exceptionally well prepared for future learning. In the two-year-old provision and in the Nursery class, children learn songs and rhymes. This helps to support these children's early language and communication development. Phonics teaching is structured well and most pupils keep up with the pace of the programme. Effective support is put in place to help pupils to catch up when required. As a result, most pupils become confident and fluent readers. The school fosters a love of reading by ensuring that pupils have access to high-quality texts.

The pupils who left Year 6 in 2024 did not achieve outcomes in line with their peers nationally in writing. The school has made strong progress with aspects of its work to further improve outcomes in writing. It has focused on supporting pupils' oracy to help with writing composition. However, a few pupils have not learned to form letters and use punctuation accurately. This hinders these pupils' ability to write well across the curriculum.

The school has secure systems in place to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND are well supported. They benefit from strong relationships with staff. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND can learn alongside their peers through thoughtful adaptations to lesson activities. This includes those pupils in the school's specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. The school works closely with external specialists to provide additional support where necessary.

In classrooms, behaviour is calm and purposeful and low-level disruption is rare. When it does occur, teachers follow the school's policies to address it promptly. Routines are well established, particularly in the early years. Children are supported well to develop learning behaviours that prepare them effectively for key stage 1.

Most pupils attend school regularly. Where this is not the case, the school puts effective support in place for these pupils and their families to improve attendance.

The school has put together an exceptionally well-considered offer to support pupils' personal development. It ensures that pupils are prepared for life beyond the school by fostering high levels of respect. Pupils show a developed understanding of equality and equity. They recognise that some pupils may require additional support to succeed. Pupils

learn about different cultures and religions, helping them to appreciate diversity. They access a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities, such as football, gymnastics, science and comedy clubs. Pupils make good use of these clubs to develop their talents and interests.

Leaders engage well with staff to support their well-being and manage their workload effectively. Trustees and the local academy council provide effective oversight. They ensure that the school remains focused on delivering high-quality education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school has not made sure that pupils learn how to write legibly and with accurate punctuation consistently well. This hinders the quality of a small number of pupils' written communication across a range of subjects. The school should review aspects of its approach to the teaching of writing so that pupils write accurately and fluently across the curriculum.

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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school to be good for overall effectiveness in November 2012

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	144128
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10366755
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	259
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Adrian Young
CEO of the trust	Jayne Kennedy
Executive Headteacher	Jayne Kennedy
Website	http://barlowhallprimary.co.uk/
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school has a before- and after-school provision.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school has a specially resourced provision. This caters for up to seven pupils with speech, language and communication difficulties and autism. There are six pupils on roll currently. These pupils are in Year 2 to Year 6.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and staff. The inspector met with representatives from the local academy council and the chair of the board of trustees. She also spoke on the telephone with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning, looked at samples of pupils' work and listened to some pupils reading. The inspector also spoke to pupils about wider school life.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector also considered the responses to the staff online survey. There were no responses to the pupil online survey.

Inspection team

Collette Mather, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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