

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Barton CofE VA Primary School

School Lane, Barton, Cambridge, Cambridgeshire CB23 7BD

Inspection dates:

23 April 2025

Outcome

Barton CofE VA Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in this calm, inclusive school where care and curiosity go hand in hand. Staff know pupils well and greet them warmly at the start of the day. The school's values shape daily life, helping children feel safe, seen and proud of who they are. Relationships are respectful and kind. Pupils say adults listen to them and help them with any worries.

Teachers have high expectations. Pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils speak with confidence about their learning. They enjoy opportunities to explore ideas, solve problems and express themselves. Pupils quickly become readers and their success in a range of subjects, as reflected in the published outcomes, prepares them well for the next stage of learning.

Behaviour is courteous and routines are well established. This supports pupils to concentrate, try hard and bounce back when learning feels tricky. Pupils value what they learn about other people's lives, beliefs and cultures. It helps them to develop empathy and respect for others.

Beyond lessons, pupils can develop a wide range of talents and interests by taking part in clubs, performances and academic challenges. They learn about responsibility, the wider world and how to care for others.

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

The school offers a broad, rich curriculum. It captures pupils' interests and prepares them well for their future learning. The curriculum is clearly sequenced and thoughtfully planned. Leaders have reviewed and redeveloped subject areas to ensure that pupils build

their knowledge securely over time. Leaders and teachers work collaboratively, with input from external experts to help guide their curriculum and teaching decisions.

Teaching is clear and consistent. Teachers use questioning well and adapt explanations where needed. In mathematics, for example, pupils show a strong grasp of number and problem-solving strategies. Teachers model vocabulary well and give pupils regular chances to practise and apply key skills. Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. They use this information to spot gaps and adjust their teaching.

While pupils become consistently knowledgeable in a range of subjects, pupils' achievement in writing is varied. The school has utilised expert advice and a range of strategies to strengthen its approach to writing, but this work is at the early stages of implementation. As a result, staff are still getting to grips with teaching this aspect of the curriculum.

Reading is a clear priority. Leaders have invested in high-quality phonics and reading programmes, supported by regular staff training. Pupils quickly learn to read and those who fall behind receive timely, targeted support to catch up. Reading is celebrated across the school. Older pupils speak enthusiastically about the books they enjoy.

In the early years, children benefit from a well-planned environment that supports their language development and growing independence. Staff plan activities with care and purpose. This means that children join in with enthusiasm and curiosity. Children successfully begin to understand the wider world through stories, songs and shared learning with Year 1 pupils.

The school fully includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) in school life. Teachers adapt the curriculum so all pupils can access learning and succeed. Staff know pupils well and quickly spot when extra support is needed. Adaptations for pupils with high levels of need are effective, including those for pupils with medical, anxiety or sensory needs.

Behaviour across the school is calm and purposeful. This is because pupils understand the rules and routines. They emulate teachers' expectations of politeness, focus and pride in their school. Restorative conversations support pupils to understand how their behaviour affects others. Leaders monitor absence closely and regularly promote the value of regular school attendance. Consequently, attendance rates are now above the national average.

The school's personal development programme supports pupils to learn about different beliefs and cultures, as well as how to be healthy and safe. The school is rightly proud of its enrichment programme. Pupils enjoy clubs, trips and opportunities to give back to their community, for example taking part in community projects and contributing their views through the school council. These experiences help pupils to become confident, respectful individuals.

Leaders, including governors, are outward-facing and proactive. Leaders have tackled previous areas for improvement and know what to do next. They are strategic in their work, balancing high expectations with care for staff well-being. Governors play an active role, have strong safeguarding oversight and attention to staff development. Staff feel valued and supported. Parents speak highly of the school, especially with regard to the support, communication and care their children receive.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Pupils' achievement in writing is varied. This is because the school's work to strengthen the way that writing is taught is at the early stages of implementation. The school should continue to embed its strengthened approach to teaching writing, ensuring that pupils are able to develop secure fundamental writing skills.

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 school to be good for overall effectiveness in May 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' 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	110829
Local authority	Cambridgeshire
Inspection number	10378445
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	119
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Caroline Parsons
Headteacher	Julie Martin
Website	www.bartonprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	25 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Church of England diocese of Ely. The last section 48 inspection was carried out in June 2017. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of this date.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The inspectors visited a sample of lessons in a range of subjects. They spoke with pupils about their learning experiences and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during breaktimes and in lessons.
- 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 reviewed a wide range of documents, including leaders' plans for improvement.
- The inspectors met with staff and considered their views expressed through Ofsted's staff survey. The lead inspector also considered the views shared through Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's pupil survey, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Hannah Stoten, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Curzon

Ofsted Inspector

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