

Inspection of Barnsole Primary School

Barnsole Road, Gillingham, Kent ME7 2JG

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires Improvement

The head of school is Jonathan Smales. This school is part of The Maritime 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, Nick Osborne, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Tiffany Beck. There is also an executive headteacher, David Marsh, who is responsible for this school and two others.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They enjoy being with their friends and say that school makes them feel happy, safe and valued. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that the school provides, such as being house captains and school councillors. Pupils enjoy taking part in forest school activities, where they sit around the firepit and listen to stories. There are trusting relationships between staff and pupils. For example, during 'mindfulness sessions', pupils learn how to keep mentally healthy by sharing their feelings and emotions.

The school is a calm and orderly environment. Staff have high expectations and pupils behave well. The school aims for pupils to be resilient and have a lifelong curiosity about the world. There are high expectations for all pupils to do well. Pupils strive hard to meet these high expectations, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The trust and school have continued to keep improving the school through a period of significant staff turnover. Staffing is now stable, and this has led to faster improvements. Parents are very supportive and praise the many positive changes. They say their children have kind, caring and supportive teachers, who really care about their children's well-being and education.

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

The quality of education across the school is now effective. The school and trust took decisive action to address the areas identified as requiring improvement at the time of the previous inspection. The school rightly recognises that there is still more to do. Published outcomes last year were low because pupils still had gaps in their learning. Currently, due to improvements in the curriculum and teaching, pupils are making strong gains in their knowledge and understanding. This is evident in subjects such as reading, science and mathematics. However, gaps in writing skills still remain for some older pupils, which means that they do not achieve as highly as they could.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum. It identifies the important knowledge and vocabulary that pupils need to learn. In history, for example, pupils learn about significant national historic events and how these relate to the rich maritime history of the local area. The curriculum is well sequenced so that pupils can build on their previous learning.

Teachers are well trained to deliver the curriculum. They check on pupils' learning effectively to make sure that they know more and remember more. Any gaps or misunderstandings are spotted and addressed quickly. Teachers make sure that the needs of disadvantaged pupils, including pupils with SEND, are accurately identified. The curriculum is carefully adapted, where necessary, so they can achieve the best possible outcomes. Children in the early years enjoy many exciting activities, both inside and outside. However, staff do not always check on what children in the early

years already know and can do. This means they do not learn as much as they could.

The school prioritises phonics and early reading. Staff deliver the phonics programme with expertise. They help pupils to learn new sounds and blend them together accurately to make words. Staff check pupils' phonics knowledge well and provide effective support any pupil, including those with SEND, who is falling behind. Books are well matched to the sounds that pupils know. Once pupils can read fluently, the school helps them to develop their love of reading with a range of different fiction and non-fiction texts. Pupils particularly enjoy using the reading nooks, which are decorated with child-sized models of sharks and dinosaurs.

Pupils behave well. They understand how good behaviour helps towards the smooth running of the school community. Children in the early years learn to follow routines quickly. Older pupils talk confidently about the 'Barnsole Values'. They understand why it is important to show kindness and behave responsibly. Pupils attend well, and absences are rigorously followed up by the school and sometimes external agencies.

The school promotes pupils' personal development well. The school is very inclusive, and pupils know about the protected characteristics. There are many opportunities for pupils to expand their cultural knowledge, including through local visits. While there are some opportunities for extra-curricular clubs, mainly in reading, music and sports, the school is keen to develop this area further. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. They are aware of the risks of social media and the dangers that they may encounter online.

Trustees and local governors have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. They know the strengths and next steps that the school needs to take. Staff are proud to work at this school. They feel well supported to teach the curriculum. The school has introduced new initiatives, including the use of artificial intelligence, to help staff manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some older pupils have gaps in their writing skills. This makes it more difficult for them to write well across the curriculum. The school should continue taking swift action to rectify this by teachers providing focused support.
- In the early years, staff checks on what pupils know and can do are not always consistently effective. This means that children do not develop the knowledge and skills across all areas of learning as well as they could. The school needs to

extend the knowledge and expertise of staff to ensure that children get the support needed.

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	144423
Local authority	Medway
Inspection number	10296443
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	663
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Tiffany Beck
CEO of the trust	Nick Osborne
Headteacher	Jonathan Smales
Website	www.barnsoleprimary.medway.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	16 to 18 November 2021

Information about this school

- Barnsole Primary School joined The Maritime Academy Trust in May 2017.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- The school has a nursery.
- There has been a significant change in staffing since the time of the previous inspection.
- The school runs an on-site before- and after-school provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, history, mathematics, music, physical education and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector heard some pupils read to a trusted adult.
- 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.
- During the inspection, the inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other senior leaders and staff.
- The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body, members of the board of trustees, including the chair of the board of trustees, and the deputy and chief executive officer of the trust.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and in informal situations. They spoke to pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors considered the response to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff.

Inspection team

Liz Bowes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jenny Ashley-Jones	Ofsted Inspector
Adnan Ahmet	Ofsted Inspector
Jon Chaloner	Ofsted Inspector

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