

Inspection of a good school: Darwen, St Barnabas CofE Primary Academy

Knowlesly Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 2JA

Inspection dates:

28 and 29 March 2023

Outcome

Darwen, St Barnabas CofE Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, and children in the early years, arrive at school happy and ready to learn. They look forward to the warm welcome that they receive every morning. Parents and carers appreciate that their children can benefit from the school's nurturing atmosphere.

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, and pupils do their utmost to live up to these. Pupils work hard during lessons and behave well at social times. Pupils recognise the importance of trying their best and how this approach will serve them well in later life. Pupils feel safe in school and they know that adults in school will support them to look after their mental health and well-being.

Pupils understand what bullying is and know that they can talk to a trusted adult if they have any concerns. Leaders act swiftly and effectively when incidents of bullying are reported. The systems that leaders have in place ensure that pupils feel well supported and that friendships are rebuilt.

Pupils look forward to taking on roles of responsibility. For example, they are keen to be involved in the worship our way (WOW) group, or acting as well-being warriors or 'rota kids'. These activities also encourage and allow pupils to play an important role in the local community as well as supporting those who may be less fortunate.

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

Leaders have made sure that reading is a priority in school to support all pupils to successfully learn the full curriculum. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively. Children in the early years are excited by the progress they have already made in learning new sounds. Pupils use their phonic knowledge confidently when reading. This is because leaders ensure that books are matched well to the sounds that pupils have learned already. When pupils struggle to keep up with reading, leaders ensure that they receive additional support. This helps pupils to catch up quickly.

Older pupils enjoy reading and they talk about books they have read with enthusiasm. Leaders have chosen texts carefully to ensure that pupils are given a broad range of authors and styles to listen to and read. Pupils enjoy listening to their teachers reading to them. They explained that books help them to fill up their 'happy tanks'.

Leaders have designed a broad, suitably ambitious and well-thought-out curriculum. They have made it clear to teachers what pupils, including children in the early years, should learn. In most subjects, teachers have the information and guidance that they need to design learning logically. This supports pupils to build securely on earlier learning. However, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not design learning that supports pupils to build their knowledge as securely as they should over time. As a result, some pupils learn less well in these subjects.

In the main, teachers check what pupils have understood and address any misconceptions quickly. Most staff use assessment strategies effectively to ensure that pupils have remembered new learning. Skilled staff ensure that pupils receive extra help when needed.

Pupils behave well during lessons and they learn without disruption. They are polite and respectful to one another and adults. Leaders have encouraged pupils to be inquisitive, and pupils communicate with adults well.

Leaders and teachers identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Staff successfully use their expertise to meet these pupils' needs. Teachers carefully adapt their delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can access the same high-quality learning as their peers. Leaders make effective use of many external agencies when needed. Pupils with SEND are equipped to succeed.

Leaders ensure that pupils have a wealth of opportunities to develop personally as well as academically. For example, pupils understand the importance of British values such as tolerance and democracy. Older pupils talked about their trip to the Houses of Parliament and their excitement at seeing the Prime Minister.

Leaders provide a range of ways for pupils to develop their interests and talents. For instance, members of the engineering club work closely with the performing arts club and the choir to create the costumes and props for the upcoming school production. Pupils enjoy the broad range of sports clubs available and are proud of how well they represent their school in competitions.

Governors work closely with leaders to ensure that they are clear about the priorities to improve the school further. Staff feel appreciated and recognise that leaders have put strategies in place to support their workload. Teachers benefit from additional training through the multi-academy trust such as through regular professional development meetings.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff are clear about the potential signs that indicate a pupil may be at risk of harm. They report and record any safeguarding concerns promptly. Leaders use external agencies well to provide early help for pupils and their families when needed.

Pupils have a well-developed understanding of possible risks that they may encounter, including when they are online. Pupils know what to do if they are concerned about something, including telling a trusted adult in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, some teachers do not design learning that supports pupils to build their knowledge securely and cumulatively over time. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that, in these subjects, staff receive the support that they need to ensure that pupils can make links with what they know already and build securely on earlier learning.

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 school to be good in September 2017.

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	141483
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10241893
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Lloyd
Headteacher	Becky Ham
Website	www.stbarnabasdarwen.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19 and 20 September 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school is part of Cidari Multi-Academy Trust.
- This is a Church of England school. The school's last section 48 inspection was in July 2017.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This is the first routine inspection that the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other school leaders and the chief executive officer of the multi-academy trust. She also met with a group of governors from the local governing committee and with a member of the trust board. She held a conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to different groups of pupils about their learning and their views of the school. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.

- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. She considered the views of pupils and staff shared through the Ofsted online surveys.
- The inspector evaluated a range of safeguarding documentation provided by school leaders or made available on the website. She checked the arrangements for keeping pupils safe and met with leaders, governors, trustees, staff and pupils to talk about safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, discussed the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, looked at a sample of pupils' work, spoke to teachers and talked to pupils about their learning. The inspector also observed pupils in key stage 1 reading to familiar adults.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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