School report

Inspection of Barnwell Academy

Whitefield Estate, Penshaw, Houghton le Spring, Tyne and Wear DH4 7RT

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 June 2023

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

What is it like to attend this school?

This is a school where pupils achieve extremely well. Pupils say that they 'love' coming to this friendly school because 'teachers help you to learn a lot'. Leaders ensure that the quality of education that pupils receive is exceptional. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Lessons are taught by teachers with expert knowledge of the subjects that they teach. Teachers ensure that pupils make excellent progress from their starting points.

In the early years, staff make sure that children understand and follow routines. This helps pupils to learn to cooperate with each other. The high levels of respect seen throughout the school are learned in the early years. Barnwell Buddies help pupils to restore friendships. This means that incidents of bullying are very rare. Pupils are encouraged to share their worries with staff. Staff respond promptly to individual concerns. This helps pupils to feel safe in school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of exciting experiences as they move through the school. Leaders make sure that the programme of extra-curricular activities contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. All pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Many pupils enjoy performing in assemblies and at the 'Sage' in Gateshead.

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

Leaders have designed an exemplary curriculum for all pupils. From early years to Year 6, the curriculum exceeds the expectations of the national curriculum. The sequence of learning for each subject ensures that pupils are exceptionally well prepared for their next stage of education. There is a significant focus on pupils acquiring subject-specific vocabulary. This gives pupils the confidence to talk about what they have learned. Staff make sure that pupils get plenty of practice to apply their knowledge in different contexts. For example, pupils in Year 5 use prior knowledge from mathematics lessons to understand time zones around the world in geography.

Teachers check pupils' understanding to ensure that activities build on pupils' prior knowledge. Pupils consistently achieve the goals of the curriculum. In the early years, children are deeply engaged in activities that prepare them extremely well for Year 1. For example, in mathematics, children share 12 toy ducks into two groups of six to show equal quantities. Teachers recap prior learning often during lessons. This ensures that pupils remember important knowledge.

Pupils' knowledge is excellent. For example, in geography, pupils use maps to compare the elevation of the school site with the gradient profile of Penshaw Monument. In music, pupils learn musical notations. They apply this to improve their performance in lessons, such as playing a melody by ABBA in unison on the recorder.

Children start learning phonics in Nursery. They remember and talk about their favourite books. Pupils practise reading using books that match their phonic knowledge. This is helping pupils to read fluently. A few pupils receive extra help to keep up with the phonics programme. Teachers ensure that the help that these pupils receive is matched accurately to their needs. This ensures that pupils gain the phonic and comprehension knowledge that they need for future learning. Daily story time inspires pupils to talk in detail about their favourite authors and novels, such as 'Charlotte's Web' by E Nesbitt. Pupils also enjoy reading poetry. For example, older pupils read sonnets by William Shakespeare. This helps them to understand how authors use language that they later include in their own writing.

Pupils with SEND are supported exceptionally well. The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with teachers to ensure support for pupils is specific to meet their individual needs. For example, some pupils receive support to improve their speech and language. This support gives pupils the knowledge and skills to work independently alongside their friends in class. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve extremely well from their starting points.

Pupils model the school values exceptionally in their behaviour. Their attitudes to learning are exemplary. They take pride in their work. They love coming to school. This is reflected in the high levels of attendance.

The curriculum for pupils' personal development is excellent. Some pupils are members of the school council, well-being ambassadors and Barnwell Buddies. The school council ensure the outdoor sports facilities reflect what pupils want. Pupils understand how to live a healthy life. This includes how to maintain healthy relationships. Equality is very well understood and valued by pupils. Pupils benefit from the wide range of clubs and experiences to develop their talents and interests. For example, pupils enjoy creating art with the local Coalfields Heritage Group.

Leaders provide high-quality professional development for all staff. Staff feel that leaders support their workload and welfare by giving them excellent resources to accomplish their work. Leaders are invited into schools in the region to share their excellent practice and offer support to colleagues.

Governors and trustees ensure that the school's vision 'to provide an outstanding education' is fulfilled. They have a thorough understanding of the school. This ensures that they hold leaders to account to benefit all pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Leaders ensure that all staff receive the most up-to-date national and local safeguarding information through training. Staff know and use the procedures and policies for keeping children safe. Respectful relationships with pupils and their families help staff to be vigilant to any signs of concern. Leaders ensure concerns are acted upon promptly to ensure that

pupils and their families get the right support. Pupils learn how to stay safe, including when online. The physical education (PE) curriculum helps pupils to learn how to stay safe in, and near, water.

Leaders make thorough checks on adults who work at the school.

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	140700
Local authority	Sunderland
Inspection number	10255625
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	236
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Stephen Wharton
Headteacher	Ashley Emmerson
Website	www.barnwellacademy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 and 14 January 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school is part of Barnwell Academy Trust. Barnwell Academy Trust also runs full day care for children up to the age of four on the same site.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club for pupils who attend the school.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the second routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, SENCo and the early years leader. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, the trust board, including the chair of the trust, and spoke to a

representative from the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, geography, music and PE. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, 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 also observed some pupils read to their teacher.
- Inspectors also looked at samples of pupils' work in religious education and personal, social and health education and scrutinised curriculum plans in all curriculum subjects taught in the school.
- Inspectors examined a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes from the governor and trustee meetings and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead, the school business manager and a range of staff.
- Inspectors 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. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour throughout the school day.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's surveys for school staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Kathryn McDonald, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Richard Beadnall	His Majesty's Inspector
Vic Good-Bruce	Ofsted Inspector

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