

Barnfield Moorlands Free School

Leagrave Hall, High Street, Luton, LU4 9LE

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
Achievement of pupils	Good	2
Quality of teaching	Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	Good	2
Leadership and management	Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils attain well in English and mathematics and make good progress from their starting points in most classes.
- Teaching is improving as a result of good support and monitoring by the Principal and Vice-Principal, together with regular reviews by the Barnfield team of advisers.
- Pupils who need extra help with their learning get a good level of support and, as a result, make good progress.
- Additional government support (the pupil premium) is used well to help eligible pupils make good progress.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous to visitors.
- The Principal leads the school exceptionally well. Over the last year she has made sure that other leaders take a full part in school improvement. She rightly holds teachers to account for the achievement of pupils in their classes.
- The Barnfield Executive Board provides outstanding governance to the school. They keep a close eye on standards and progress and provide excellent support to the Principal and leadership team.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although teachers have good systems for teaching, they do not always understand what good learning looks like for their pupils. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they could in some lessons.
- Sometimes teachers do not explain clearly enough what they expect pupils to achieve. As a result, when working without adult support, pupils do not always produce their best work.
- Pupils are not always encouraged to take an active part in lessons through discussing their ideas with each other. This means that not all pupils are included or thinking as deeply as they could about what teachers ask or explain to them.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed the quality of teaching in 22 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the Principal and one with the Vice-Principal.
- Meetings were held with pupils, parents and carers, the Director General of the Barnfield Federation, a member of the Barnfield Executive Board and a member of the school's advisory board, school staff, including the Principal, Vice-Principals and key stage leaders. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents. These included information about pupils' achievement, the school's monitoring of teaching, records of behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding. Inspectors also scrutinised pupils' books.
- Inspectors considered the 11 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), which were all made at the time of the inspection and the school's recent survey of parents' and carers' views. Inspectors considered six questionnaires completed by members of staff.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Alan Jarvis

Additional Inspector

Vreta Bagilhole

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school was one of the first of its kind to be established as part of the government's free school initiative. It is one of only two that were previously fee-paying independent schools. It opened in September 2011 with mainly two classes in Reception to Year 6. In April 2012, the school joined the Barnfield Federation as a full member. A new Principal joined the school and it expanded to three form entry from September 2012. There are plans for further expansion and a new school building.
- The school serves an urban area of high disadvantage in west Luton where there is increasing demand for primary school places.
- Most pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, or pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure the quality of teaching is good in every lesson so that pupils' progress continues to accelerate by making sure that:
 - all teachers understand what good learning looks like in their year groups and how to achieve this
 - pupils take responsibility for doing their best work at all times, even when they are not working with an adult
 - pupils are encouraged to take a more active part in lessons by discussing their ideas with each other.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Most children start in the Reception classes with skills and experiences that are broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress and by the time they begin Year 1, the proportion attaining the expected levels has increased. A few children achieve better than others of their age.
- Pupils in Key Stage 1 continue to make good progress. Their attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics, and is on track to show better results than last year. As a result of daily phonics (the sounds letters make) lessons introduced this school year, pupils achieved above expected levels in the recent national check. This is an improvement from last year.
- Although Year 6 pupils' attainment was above average in 2012, the progress they made required improvement. The school has taken rapid and robust action to deal with this. Pupils in the current Year 6 have made much faster progress because of consistently good teaching and additional support where needed.
- Evidence from lesson observations and from looking at books in Year 6 shows that pupils are working above levels indicated by data from 2012. They make good progress from their starting points.
- All pupils enjoy reading. Lower-attaining pupils in Years 2 and 6 make good use of phonics to help them work out words they are not sure how to read. Higher-attaining pupils read widely and fluently. One Year 6 girl explained that she likes reading 'old fashioned books like Jane Eyre'. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress in reading and writing.
- Those pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium, together with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. This is because the school has a well-trained team of staff who give additional support to these pupils, helping them achieve the challenging targets set for them. As a result of accurate assessment and well-targeted support, all groups of pupils in the school achieve as well as each other.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good in most classes across the school. Although some teaching seen during the inspection required improvement, the school's own records and evidence of good progress in pupils' books shows that teaching is typically good.
- In the best teaching, tasks are interesting and challenging, and pupils understand exactly what the teacher would like them to achieve by the end of the lesson. As a result, pupils work with great concentration and commitment, and produce a good quantity of neat and carefully thought-out work. They are able to challenge themselves to do their best because the teacher explains what they must do to be successful in their learning. Pupils discuss their ideas with each other and are fully involved in thinking deeply about the teachers' questions.
- In an outstanding Year 5 mathematics lesson higher ability pupils worked together to solve a challenging calculation. They were able to say how they had solved the problem and how their learning had improved by the end of the lesson.

- Where teaching occasionally requires improvement, teachers do not show a good understanding of how pupils learn well. They do not involve all pupils in thinking about the questions they ask and do not give them the opportunity to talk through their ideas with each other. As a result, some pupils get frustrated because they do not get the opportunity to share their thinking. In a few lessons, it is not clear what groups working without adult support are expected to achieve. This leads to some pupils not completing tasks as successfully as they could.
- All teachers mark pupils' work very carefully. They explain why a piece of work is good and precisely what a pupil must do to improve. The school has worked very hard to make sure that all teachers mark in the same way and this contributes strongly to improvements in pupils' achievement over the last year.
- In the Reception classes, pupils enjoy learning because teachers plan interesting activities for them to choose from. During the inspection, the children were working on a beach theme and loved coming into school in their beach clothes and writing postcards about their holidays. Currently, children do not give their ideas for learning themes and activities. Teachers say moving to the classrooms outside the main school has been a great help because it means they can make the most of the outdoor area. As a result, they make sure that children get good opportunities to learn outside as well as inside the classroom.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn. As a result, attendance is high. They behave well in most lessons, and are careful and considerate of each other. They move sensibly and quietly from one lesson to another, for example when moving into their ability sets for mathematics and English every morning. They understand the school's house system, and value the stickers and house points they can earn for good behaviour as well as good work. They love the half termly invitations to tea with the Principal, and say that this motivates them to do and behave well.
- Pupil's behaviour on the playground and around the school is good. They say there is no bullying of any kind and, if there is an incident of unkindness, this is quickly dealt with by the staff.
- Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, especially when using the internet. They are well supervised when using computers and activities using the internet are carefully planned by teachers.
- Parents and carers who met with the inspection team and the very small number who gave their views via Parent View say their children are safe in school, and that they are very well cared for by all the staff.
- The school has acted very effectively, working closely with parents and carers, to improve pupils' behaviour where appropriate. One carer wrote at length about how behaviour had improved dramatically as a result of the school's excellent care and hard work.

The leadership and management are good

- The Principal is passionate about making sure that every pupil achieves their best while at the school. She gives outstanding leadership to the school and has built a good team of leaders to support school improvement. She is ably assisted by the two Vice-Principals and together they manage the staff's performance well. Teachers say they now know what accountability means and, although they sometimes find the rigorous monitoring of their work uncomfortable, they

appreciate how important this is in making sure pupils achieve their best.

- Leaders have increased the frequency with which teachers formally assess pupils' attainment and progress, and have ensured they are able to judge more accurately the standards pupils are reaching. This has resulted in staff being able to identify quickly any individuals or groups of pupils who need extra help, and give them the support they need to make up any lost ground.
- The school receives excellent support from the Barnfield Federation which has provided good training and development opportunities for all staff.
- Leaders at all levels regularly and thoroughly check the quality of teaching, and of pupils' work in different subjects and year groups. They provide robust and supportive feedback to teachers following lesson observations. Over the last year, leaders have focused on teachers using good approaches to teaching and this has helped to make sure most teaching is good across the school. However, they have not given sufficient time for teachers to develop their understanding of what good learning looks like in their year groups. As a result, these approaches are not always used as consistently, frequently or effectively as they could be.
- Leaders ensure that pupils study a wide range of topics and learn the skills they need for everyday life. There are lots of trips to places of interest and pupils benefit from many opportunities to develop their skills in music, drama and art. At the time of the inspection, the Year 6 pupils were presenting their end-of-year production with singing and acting of a high standard.
- The school ensures that pupils learn to respect each other's beliefs, values and ways of life. As a result, pupils of different abilities and from a different range of traditions and backgrounds work and play happily together. There is no discrimination of any kind.
- These factors, together with the good opportunities that pupils have to reflect upon moral issues during assemblies, indicate the school's strong and effective promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Most parents and carers confirm that the school responds to any concerns they raise, believe the school is well led and managed, and would recommend it to others. They say the Principal is very approachable and is always on hand every morning to meet the children and listen to any points parents and carers wish to make.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The Director General of the Barnfield Federation and members of the Barnfield Executive Board have an excellent understanding of the quality of education offered at the school. They have a detailed knowledge of pupils' achievement and of the quality of teaching and are determined to make sure this is outstanding. They are extremely rigorous in holding the Principal and Vice-Principals to account for the school's performance. They know how pupil premium funding is being used for the benefit of eligible pupils, and of the positive impact it is having on their achievement. They make sure that teacher's pay is closely linked to teachers reaching their targets and to the quality of their work. They carefully check on how the school uses its financial and other resources and ensure that the school meets all requirements with regard to safeguarding children. They bring a wide range of experience and expertise to the school and have made sure that the new local advisory board reflects a similar range of skills. Their crystal-clear vision, high level of ambition and proven track record of school improvement demonstrate an excellent capacity for further improvement.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	137324
Local authority	Luton
Inspection number	400335

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Academy free school
School category	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	360
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sir Peter Birkett
Headteacher	Carrie Matthews
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
Telephone number	01582 573376
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