

Inspection of Barming Primary School

Belmont Close, Barming, Maidstone, Kent ME16 9DY

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 September 2024

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

The headteacher of this school is Christopher Laker. This school is part of the Orchard 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, Ashley Crittenden, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Nigel Smetham and Anne Mailing.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils love being part of this vibrant school where staff welcome them enthusiastically each day. Pupils are taught to treat everyone kindly as they carry out their roles of responsibility, such as being school councillors and house captains. They look forward to social times and the many choices of activities on offer. They enjoy playing with their friends in the mud kitchen, building shelters and competing at table tennis. Some pupils prefer to read a book quietly, crochet, or relax while colouring. As one parent put it: 'Barming Primary School is not only a school but a family and community.'

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement. Pupils respect adults and strive to live up to their high hopes for them. Staff teach pupils how to care for their emotional well-being. Pupils feel safe and accepted, knowing there is always a trusted adult to talk to. They persevere when learning is challenging and practise new learning diligently. Pupils appreciate their morning 'well-being time', saying it helps them get ready for learning.

Pupils behave commendably because they understand the standards set out in the school rules and routines. They concentrate in lessons and politely hold doors open for each other in corridors.

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

Leaders recognise that since the COVID-19 pandemic, pupils have not attained as well as they could by the end of key stage 2. Since this point, the school introduced a more ambitious curriculum. Now, pupils' learning builds more securely, in small steps, from Reception to Year 6. Staff identify any gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and fill those gaps expertly. This has got pupils' learning back on track successfully. Pupils achieve well now. Their attendance has also improved. They enjoy coming to school and attend regularly.

The school has placed a strong emphasis on reading. It has introduced a more rigorous early reading curriculum and, as a result, children learn to read securely. Children love stories right from the Pre-school, where they learn rhymes, sing songs and explore new words at every opportunity. Children get off to a strong start in Reception. They begin the early reading curriculum straight away. In lessons, adults consistently check that children understand new learning and give ample time for them to practise it. Adults pick up on any children who struggle, and they adapt the teaching so that no one is left behind. The school is ambitious for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Some of these pupils have tailored support and they learn to read successfully. As pupils develop in fluency, the school ensures that they continue to read a wide range of books across the curriculum.

Teachers know the most important elements of the curriculum that must be taught. Pupils revisit and make connections between new and previous learning. For example, in history, they understand how the concept of power in the monarchy has changed as they make comparisons between King Henry VIII and the present King Charles III. Pupils discuss

confidently how previously learned skills in physical education (PE) help them to master more advanced concepts needed for different sports.

The school is still developing how it adapts teaching in some areas of the curriculum. This is so that all pupils can access the whole curriculum and learn securely right from the start of school. Staff know their pupils well and understand how to identify any learning needs, including for pupils with SEND. Activities are sequenced carefully for all. For example, in mathematics, pupils use counters and place value frames to consolidate their understanding of number. This means that pupils' learning builds securely and they attain well. Leaders know what must be done so that pupils achieve equally highly across the whole curriculum.

Pupils are knowledgeable about the school values and how they should behave. They understand the fundamental British values. Pupils are passionate about celebrating each other's differences and treating everyone fairly. They comment, 'It doesn't matter what you look like on the outside, it's what's on the inside that counts.'

The trust understands the strengths of the school and provides effective support to address the next steps of school improvement. The whole team has worked together successfully to make the necessary changes happen. Leaders focus on staff development. Staff feel valued and recognise how their workload has been taken into consideration through this time of change. They appreciate the training they have received and share the trust's ambition for their pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Activities in some lessons are not consistently adapted to meet pupils' needs across some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. The school should continue to develop teaching so that all pupils achieve equally highly across the whole curriculum, and none are left behind.

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	142924
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	10341809
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	482
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Nigel Smetham and Anne Mailing (co-chairs)
CEO of the trust	Ashley Crittenden
Headteacher	Christopher Laker
Website	www.barming.kent.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	8 and 9 May 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with members of the governing body, the headteacher, deputy headteacher and executive headteacher.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into reading, mathematics, PE and history. For each deep dive, they 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.
- 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 inspectors reviewed a range of the school's documents, including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times. They spoke with pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- Inspectors considered the results of staff and parent surveys.

Inspection team

Jo Brinkley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Andrea Harris

Ofsted Inspector

Liz McIntosh

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
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