

# Inspection of Barley (VA) Church of England First School

Church End, Barley, Royston, Hertfordshire SG8 8JW

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 January 2023

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|------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b> | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| The quality of education     | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Behaviour and attitudes      | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Personal development         | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Leadership and management    | <b>Good</b>                                                        |
| Previous inspection grade    | Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils happily attend this very small village school. They have firm friends and feel well supported by the staff. Pupils enjoy the various clubs and outside learning opportunities they have. They welcome new pupils to the school and show kindness while they settle in. Parents value the individual support they feel the school provides.

Pupils achieve well. They experience a broad and rich curriculum that extends their interests. Pupils have specialist teachers in some subjects, which they enjoy. Most of the time, high expectations mean pupils can learn in a quiet and calm environment. Pupils know that learning is important, so they work hard.

Pupils learn about how to take care of their feelings and emotions. They learn skills to build resilience and independence. Pupils are well prepared and can talk about their transition to a different school. Pupils say bullying is rare but, if it happens, they know the trusted adults around them will sort it out.

Pupils learn about different countries and cultures. For instance, they have links with a Kenyan school and learned about life in Ukraine. This helps pupils to consider other viewpoints and learn about life outside their village.

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

Over time, leaders have made changes to the curriculum. This has had a positive impact on the teaching and what pupils learn. Barley pupils attend a federated school until the end of Year 1. The Barley curriculum builds on the knowledge pupils learned at the previous school. In each subject, leaders have considered the knowledge pupils should learn. Teachers are well trained and have good subject knowledge. Staff present information in a way that helps all pupils to understand. For instance, in art, photographs and illustrations inspire pupils to ask questions and find out more. Pupils develop their understanding over time.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve well. They learn the same curriculum as their peers and are supported with adaptations to their learning if and when they need this. They take part in all school activities.

Leaders prioritise reading. They chose to use the same phonics scheme as their partner school. This is beneficial as it allows pupils to continue learning letters and the sounds they make in a way they are used to. When pupils can read and recognise all the sounds in the programme, they learn further spelling rules and comprehension skills. Leaders identify pupils' reading needs and make adaptations in response to this. For instance, some pupils in Year 3 and Year 4 have extra phonics teaching and more reading practise. However, not all pupils who need 'catch up' or 'keep up' sessions read books that closely match their phonic knowledge. This

means that these pupils are not able to build up their understanding as well as they might.

During lessons, teachers regularly check that pupils learn more and remember more. They use these checks to identify where pupils are less secure in their understanding. In most subjects, teachers use these checks to make changes to what is taught. However, in a few subjects they do not do this as well as in other subjects.

Leaders support pupils' personal development well through the curriculum. There is a programme for personal, social, health and economic education. This is implemented well across the school. Pupils enjoy these lessons and they understand that this is their opportunity to talk about their feelings and ask any questions.

Governors assure themselves, through regular visits and by talking with staff and pupils, that leaders' work to improve the school is making a positive difference for all pupils. Leaders and governors support all staff with their well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders regularly update the staff's safeguarding knowledge through training. Staff complete half termly scenarios where they consider what they would do if they had a child present with a particular concern. Staff understand how to log concerns and leaders act swiftly to follow up on these and keep pupils safe. Leaders support pupils who have emotional needs with a nurture group and with one-to-one check ins.

Pupils learn about e-safety, road safety and how to be careful when sending messages to friends via text services.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Pupils in the early stages of reading are not consistently reading books that match their phonics knowledge. This means that they read too many words that they do not know, or the books do not move their learning on in a systematic way. Pupils need to read books that match their understanding, so they can practise and develop their reading skills.
- Assessment information in a few foundation subjects is not used consistently by leaders to check teaching and plan strategically. This means that pupils may miss some important knowledge as gaps are not always addressed. Leaders need to check that assessment information is used in a strategic way to improve pupils' outcomes.

## 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

|                                            |                                                                                      |
|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 117386                                                                               |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | Hertfordshire                                                                        |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10255015                                                                             |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | First                                                                                |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Voluntary aided                                                                      |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 3 to 9                                                                               |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed                                                                                |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 29                                                                                   |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | The governing body                                                                   |
| <b>Chair of governing body</b>             | Amy Martin                                                                           |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Sharon Brown (federation executive headteacher)                                      |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.barleybarkway.herts.sch.uk/">www.barleybarkway.herts.sch.uk/</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 15 January 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                           |

## Information about this school

- Barley (VA) Church of England First School is much smaller than the average-sized school.
- In September 2017, the school became an equal part of a federation with Barkway CofE Voluntary Controlled First School. The federation headteacher and the governing body lead both schools. Each school is registered separately with the Department for Education. Each school is inspected separately by Ofsted.
- Pupils from both federation schools are taught together in single year groups. Nursery, Reception and Year 1 pupils are taught on the Barkway school site. Pupils in Years 2, 3 and 4 are taught on the Barley school site.
- Three Barley registered pupils attend Barkway school. Five Barkway registered pupils attend Barley school.
- Leaders do not currently use any alternative provision to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Two senior leaders have been appointed since the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection 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 lead inspector visited Barkway school. The inspector heard the Barley pupils who attend Barkway read, looked at their books and met with their class teacher. Both schools follow the same curriculum and have the same leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with the federation executive headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding leader. The lead inspector also spoke with a school improvement partner from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in four subjects: reading, mathematics, computing and art. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum documentation, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The lead inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation during the inspection, including curriculum plans, school development plans and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors considered the 10 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and 7 free-text comments. Inspectors also considered the 16 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school life, as well as observing the behaviour of pupils across the school.

## Inspection team

Jessie Linsley, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Linda Bartlett

Ofsted Inspector

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