

Barnston Primary School

Address: Sandham Grove, Heswall, Wirral, Merseyside, CH60 1XW

Unique reference number (URN): 105030

Inspection report: 3 March 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils typically make secure progress through the curriculum and across subjects. Over time, pupils often acquire the knowledge that they need to be ready for the next stage of their education. Outcomes in national assessments sit consistently above national averages, except for the multiplication tables check for pupils in Year 4. Leaders have prioritised this aspect and improvement in pupils' knowledge of multiplication, although not currently reflected in national tests, is evident in pupils' work.

Most pupils, including those who may face barriers to learning, achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities typically make appropriate progress from their starting points. This is underpinned by targeted academic support alongside wider care beyond the classroom. Sometimes, inconsistencies in the quality of feedback that pupils receive slows progress for a small proportion of pupils. This means that a few pupils have gaps in their writing knowledge that are not addressed rapidly.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders prioritise attendance. They have established consistent systems to track and respond to any issues with pupils' attendance. Leaders use appropriate strategies to support families and to reinforce expectations where attendance is a concern. Leaders draw on their analysis of behaviour and wider support provided to identify emerging issues early. Leaders act promptly and adapt support when needed. These approaches help the majority of pupils to attend school regularly.

Most pupils behave well and contribute to a positive, respectful environment. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and pupils are cared for well. Pupils understand the school's behaviour expectations and know that concerns, including any incidents of bullying, are addressed promptly. Pupils generally behave sensibly during breaktimes, lunchtimes and during transitions, such as home time. They speak with fondness about their friendships throughout the school. Leaders have introduced a taught behaviour curriculum which includes shared language to further promote consistency and positive attitudes. Early signs of the impact of this work are evident. In the very occasional instances where low-level disruption occurs, it is usually dealt with consistently across the school. Overall, pupils are polite and tolerant towards others. Staff understand the behaviour policy, and reasonable adjustments are made if necessary for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard 

Leaders have constructed a broad and balanced curriculum which is set out logically from the early years to Year 6. Leaders are ambitious for pupils and maintain clear oversight of how well the curriculum is taught. Leaders have effective oversight of the implementation of the curriculum and use this information to identify strengths and what needs to improve. They provide support, including from external partners, to refine teaching practice where appropriate. Leaders develop staff's subject knowledge through targeted training. They

consider pupils' needs when designing and delivering the curriculum. Staff use appropriate strategies that help to reduce barriers to learning.

Leaders prioritise early reading. Children in the Reception Year start to learn to read as soon as they begin school. In lessons, most pupils benefit from well-designed tasks and carefully considered approaches that help to deepen their understanding. Teachers usually check pupils' learning well and use this information to correct misconceptions. However, the teaching of key writing knowledge is sometimes inconsistent. On occasion, teachers do not check pupils' understanding closely enough, which means errors in spelling and handwriting can be missed. As a result, a small number of pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are not closing as quickly as they could.

Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum is well established and designed to develop a secure foundation for learning. Leaders map children's development clearly from entry in the Reception Year into Year 1, placing sharp focus on communication and language. Leaders use information when children join the school to identify any gaps, such as skills for developing hand and finger control, to shape activities accordingly.

Staff typically provide purposeful activities that enable early learning. Interactions between staff and children often extend children's language and vocabulary. Staff model language well. They encourage children, who are settled and happy, to talk about their ideas and reinforce key concepts through play and conversation. Most children engage confidently, sustain their attention and develop positive learning behaviours.

Reading is prioritised. Children learn phonics from the start of the Reception Year to help them to secure early reading and writing knowledge. Handwriting practice supports children's early literacy skills. Most children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged, access the curriculum successfully.

Leaders ensure that children develop the knowledge and positive learning habits needed for the move to Year 1. Leaders work closely with parents and carers, sharing information about their children's development and offering guidance to support learning at home. This enhances children's readiness for the next stage of their education.

Inclusion

Expected standard 

Leaders have created a culture in which pupils' needs are identified early through thoughtful systems. They oversee these systems carefully. Leaders ensure that pupils who need support have helpful targets which are reviewed routinely. Leaders ensure that pupils who may face additional barriers to their learning access the full curriculum alongside their peers.

Specialist input from professionals further enhances Barnston's provision. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive well-rounded and appropriate support. Leaders have prioritised training to enable staff to use a range of inclusive strategies in their practice. Staff typically use effective adaptations that help pupils to access their learning. However, on occasion, the specific approaches that staff use to enable pupils

to learn are not as effective as they could be. This means that some pupils do not benefit from the same level of precision as their peers.

Leaders track pupils' learning through purposeful conversations and activities. This enables leaders to ensure that the support put in place helps most pupils to catch up in their learning. Leaders understand the needs of pupils experiencing disadvantage and prioritise actions that have the desired impact. This includes the effective use of additional funding to help pupils to access the many opportunities that the school provides including beyond the classroom.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

In recent times, the school has experienced significant change, including the appointment of a new headteacher and new staff. Leaders have focused on providing stability during this period and they provide clear direction. Staff morale is high and they appreciate leaders' consideration for their wellbeing.

Leaders understand the school's areas of established practice and those requiring refinement. They have identified appropriate priorities, drawing on external partners to inform and support improvement work. Leaders and governors make decisions in pupils' best interests, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged.

Governance provides appropriate support and challenge. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities and understands the school's strategic priorities. However, sometimes the governing body does not assure itself of the effectiveness of leaders' actions beyond leaders' own assurances. This can limit governors' ability to identify and act on any emerging issues.

Professional development is coherent and evidence informed. Staff describe useful training, such as structured mentoring for early career teachers. Leaders act on staff feedback and workload is considered through consistent approaches and personalised adjustments for staff. Leaders use parent survey feedback informatively and work with local partners to support families.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard 

Pupils have a broad and coherent personal development programme. Through lessons, assemblies and wider curriculum themes, pupils learn to reflect on their personal views, consider moral issues and contemplate issues from different viewpoints. They are encouraged to cooperate with others and to show respect for different beliefs. Pupils learn about cultural diversity and the importance of tolerance. This is supported by practical application of learning, for example by visiting different places of worship.

The relationships curriculum is thoughtfully planned and builds pupils' knowledge over time. Pupils learn about online and offline risks to their safety. Many can describe how to keep themselves safe. Leaders are reflective and continue to refine the curriculum so that pupils gain a balanced view of life in modern Britain. Pupils recall key ideas. Sometimes, pupils'

knowledge of a few aspects of the personal, social, health and economic education curriculum is not as detailed and secure as leaders intend.

Enrichment opportunities such as clubs, outings, charitable activities and leadership roles broaden pupils' experiences and help them to learn beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils value these opportunities, particularly older pupils, who can take part in residential visits and enjoy contributing to school life in their leadership positions. Leaders promote pupils' personal development through displays and planned opportunities, such as careers week, where various professionals showcase their careers to inspire pupils.

The school provides well-considered support for pupils to promote their wellbeing. For example, targeted interventions are delivered where needed for pupils who are disadvantaged, as well as for pupils who need support with personal aspects such as confidence, wellbeing or attendance. Staff know pupils well and create an environment where pupils are helped to feel safe, included and well cared for. Reasonable adjustments are made for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities so that they can participate fully in the life of the school.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils feel safe, welcome and valued in the warm atmosphere at Barnston Primary School. Staff know pupils well. They are ambitious for pupils and ensure that they participate fully in school life. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and those known to social care. Clear systems help leaders to identify pupils' needs early. Pupils gain a secure sense of belonging because support is typically well considered.

Across the school, including in the early years, pupils show confidence and enjoyment in their learning. They interact with staff and peers courteously. Pupils trust staff to deal with concerns. They are assured that rare incidents of bullying are addressed quickly. Relationships are based on trust. Most pupils attend school regularly because they feel happy and settled.

Pupils engage well with the broad and well-sequenced curriculum. They enjoy the range of experiences that it offers. Staff typically select classroom tasks that help pupils to learn new concepts successfully. When pupils struggle to grasp new knowledge, leaders act promptly, enabling most to catch up securely. At times, teachers' checks on basic knowledge in writing lack precision. This limits progress for a few pupils.

Overall, pupils achieve well and have done over time. The majority of pupils acquire the knowledge that they need for the next stage. Outcomes in national tests remain above national averages. The exception to this is the Year 4 multiplication tables check. In response to this, leaders have taken effective steps to improve pupils' learning. Pupils who face potential barriers to learning make progress from their starting points because leaders frequently identify and address obstacles effectively.

Pupils benefit from a range of enrichment to broaden their experiences. Educational visits deepen pupils' learning, such as the visit to Chester where pupils learn about the Romans.

Leadership roles, including the 'eco committee', enable pupils to contribute to school life and the wider community. Pupils also take part in charitable activities. These opportunities help pupils to learn beyond the academic curriculum.

Next steps

- Leaders should further develop the consistency of adaptations to learning where needed, so that pupils receive precise and effective support across the curriculum.
 - Leaders should strengthen the precision of checks on learning and the impact of feedback, so that misconceptions in pupils' foundational knowledge are identified and addressed promptly, enabling all pupils to achieve as well as they could.
 - The governing body should continue to strengthen its oversight so that there is robust assurance and evaluation of the school's work.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Amy Winter.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our updated inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, assistant headteachers and several other leaders, including the special educational needs coordinator, during the inspection. The lead inspector also spoke with the chair of the board of governors and members of the governing body, as well as a representative of the local authority.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school has undergone a significant change in leadership and staffing since the last inspection. The current headteacher took up their role in April 2024.

The school does not use any alternative provision.

Headteacher: Lynsey Thompson-Broom

Lead inspector:

Sheena Clark, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Tracy Beaty, Ofsted Inspector

Nichola Tomkow, His Majesty's Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 3 March 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

302

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

315

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

2.65%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.99%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

6.29%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	76%	61%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	82%	62%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	61%	Above
2022/23 (final)	74%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	85%	74%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	89%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	74%	Above
2022/23 (final)	83%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	87%	72%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	95%	72%	Above
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	85%	71%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	84%	73%	Above
2024/25 (revised)	87%	74%	Above
2023/24 (final)	85%	73%	Above
2022/23 (final)	81%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	33%	46%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	47%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	46%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	44%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	63%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	62%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	60%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	33%	59%	Below
2024/25 (revised)	S	59%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	58%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	58%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	67%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	S	61%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	59%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	59%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been mirrored and applied in the report card.

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	33%	68%	-34 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	69%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	67%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	66%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	80%	S

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	S	78%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	33%	78%	-44 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	78%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	78%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	77%	S

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	67%	80%	-13 pp
2024/25 (revised)	S	81%	S
2023/24 (final)	S	79%	S
2022/23 (final)	S	79%	S

‘S’ in the table above indicates the data has been suppressed, which is usually due to small cohorts. The suppression rules applied by the DfE when publishing the data have been

mirrored and applied in the report card.

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.0%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	2.9%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	3.9%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	2.2%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.5%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	5.3%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) inspects services providing education and skills for children and learners of all ages, and inspects and regulates services that care for children and young people.

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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