

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Dorothy Barley Infants' School

Davington Road, Dagenham, Essex RM8 2LL

Inspection dates:

24 and 25 June 2025

Outcome

Dorothy Barley Infants' School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This school sits at the heart of the local community. Staff know the pupils and their families well. They greet pupils, parents and carers warmly each morning. Relationships between staff and pupils are built on mutual respect. Pupils are polite and considerate. They treat others kindly. The school is a stimulating place for pupils to learn. They know that there are trusted adults, who will help them if they have any concerns. Pupils are happy and safe. They thrive in this supportive environment.

The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils live up to these expectations by listening carefully and working hard. They understand and follow the school's 'golden rules'. Pupils are calm and focused in lessons. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve well across the curriculum.

Pupils take full advantage of what the school offers. They appreciate the clubs that are available, such as choir dance and games club. Pupils actively contribute to the life of the school by becoming, for example, house captains or members of 'team protect'. Pupils are proud to carry out these roles and to help to improve their school.

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

The school has created an engaging and ambitious curriculum. This sets out the essential knowledge, skills and vocabulary that pupils should learn, and the order in which they should learn them. This is carefully arranged so that pupils can build on their previous learning. For example, in the Reception class, children learn about pulse, beat and pace, when listening to different pieces of music. In music in Year 2, pupils use this learning to help them to play a tune on the recorder in time with their peers.

Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects that they teach. This helps them to explain and model ideas well to pupils. The school regularly checks what pupils know and remember. Teaching supports pupils to address any mistakes or misunderstandings that they may have. However, sometimes, in some subjects, pupils' long-term recall and understanding of subject content are not fully secure. This is because, sometimes, teaching does not revisit learning from previous years sufficiently well to ensure that pupils have mastered ideas fully.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Staff help children to settle quickly in the nurturing environment. Children rapidly understand and follow the school routines. They show good levels of determination and concentration to complete the different activities staff plan for them, both inside and outside.

The school places a high priority on enabling pupils to secure early reading skills. Well-trained staff teach phonics effectively. Staff use their checks to ensure that pupils read books, which are well matched to their phonics knowledge. Pupils who need extra support to learn phonics, quickly get the help that they need. Teachers instil a love of reading by bringing books to life when they read aloud. Pupils read and write with developing fluency. Pupils also secure early mathematical skills and concepts well.

The school provides highly effective support for vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND. Staff swiftly identify the needs of these pupils very well. They spot areas in the curriculum where pupils might struggle and adapt their teaching, so that pupils can successfully learn alongside their peers. Pupils progress well through the curriculum.

The personal development offer for pupils is exceptionally well considered. It is woven throughout the curriculum and life of the school. Pupils learn about different cultures and how to be responsible citizens. They learn to value differences and understand the importance of treating others fairly. Pupils build the skills and understanding that they need to lead happy, healthy lives. They learn about important issues, such as how to keep safe online. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps.

Raising attendance remains an ongoing priority for the school. The school's proactive approach includes regular checks and effective communication with parents. They act swiftly to intervene and offer support, where pupils are at risk of lower attendance. As a result, pupils' attendance has improved.

The governing body knows the school extremely well. It has a sharp and thorough oversight of the impact of the school's actions. The challenge and support it provides ensures that the school's development in all areas of its work is focused on providing the very best for pupils. Governors and senior leaders consider staff's workload and they support staff's well-being. Staff feel proud to work at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to revisit and secure their learning. Where this is the case, pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. The school should ensure that teaching fully supports pupils to revisit previous knowledge and make strong connections to current learning.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2016.

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	101188
Local authority	Barking and Dagenham
Inspection number	10379092
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	243
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sue Matthews
Headteacher	Lauren Pearce (executive headteacher) Samantha O'Hara (head of school)
Website	www.dorothybarleyinfant.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- There have been changes to the school's leadership since the school was last inspected. The executive headteacher was appointed in January 2021 and the head of school was appointed in September 2024.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the executive headteacher and other school leaders. He held discussions with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. He spoke to a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of school 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 inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector considered the provision for pupils with SEND.
- The inspector discussed behaviour and attendance with school leaders.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. In addition, he met with pupils, formally and informally, to hear their views.
- The inspector considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. He also took into consideration the responses to the online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Chris Birtles, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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

© Crown copyright 2025