

# Inspection of Options Barton

Barrow Road, Barton-upon-Humber, North Lincolnshire DN18 6DA

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Inspection dates: 10 to 12 May 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection Good

Does the school meet the independent school standards? **Yes**

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

Pupils delight in being at this school. They feel happy and they feel safe. The strong and trusting relationships between staff and pupils are tangible. Pupils know that staff have high expectations for them and pupils rise to meet these. Pupils experience remarkable journeys at this school; they are justifiably proud of their achievements.

Staff use a range of resources and adaptations in their delivery of the curriculum to ensure every pupil is included and has the chance to achieve well. All pupils have a voice. Leaders listen to pupils' views and act. Independence and preparation for adulthood are woven seamlessly into all aspects of school life.

Staff are passionate about helping pupils to improve their social skills. They teach them the skills of how to interact with others. Consequently, pupils are able to develop positive friendships. Pupils rarely use repeated, unkind language towards one another and bullying is rarer still.

Pupils benefit from the many different experiences on offer. The school council offers purpose to those with aspirations of leadership. Pupils rejoice in the chance to experience work at a local garden centre or to cook for friends in the school's well-equipped bistro.

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

Leaders have designed a well-organised and ambitious curriculum that closely meets the needs of individual pupils, as well as students in the sixth form. There are a wide variety of subjects available to pupils, who are taught in carefully designed pathways. These are all focused on giving pupils as much knowledge and help as possible to prepare them for adult life. Leaders have thought carefully about what they want pupils to know and be able to do. They have arranged the learning in a logical order. Leaders are prioritising developing subject knowledge among teachers. They are also intent on empowering middle leaders to further develop aspects of the curriculum under their expert, guiding hands.

Leaders know that communication and reading are essential in pupils' and students' successful next steps. Leaders organise the teaching of these subjects well. Some pupils are unable to read because of their needs. Leaders ensure that these pupils successfully learn effective ways to communicate with others, this includes visual ways of communicating. Those who are able are supported to read using their developing phonics skills. Leaders' relatively new approach to phonics is effective. Adults are well trained; they use their skills well in nurturing a love of reading. Some pupils read well and do so with fluency and accuracy. They delight in sharing their love of books with other pupils.

The school exudes calm and purpose. The nature of pupils' needs means that there is occasional disruption in learning. Adults respond promptly and sensitively, in line

with leaders' new strategies, when this is the case so that disturbance is kept to an absolute minimum. Leaders have further increased opportunities for shared learning. This is now the norm. As such, some pupils are adapting to changes in their working groups and where new relationships are being established. Leaders are working hard to ensure consistent routines and expectations during this welcome period of change. For example, they make sure that staff are familiar with new policies and procedures. They monitor and record behaviour incidents closely. Leaders have identified that as these new arrangements are being embedded there are clear signs of improvement in pupils' self-regulation.

The majority of pupils attend school regularly and often. Leaders have put in place effective support for the small numbers of pupils who do not attend school as regularly as they should.

Leaders provide well for pupils' wider personal development both in and out of the classroom. Activities such as trampolining, the well-equipped sensory garden and many activities within the school's attractive grounds support pupils' emotional needs and mental health. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils learn genuine respect for diversity. They find out about matters such as the fundamentals of democracy and life in modern Britain. There are inspiring careers opportunities in place which carefully match pupils' interests, and potential paths to pupils' strengths and interests.

Governors know the school, its work and priorities in great detail. They are passionate and committed to the pupils at Barton. Governors provide challenge and support for school leaders; they employ an innovative approach of peer governors with other Options schools, which is well regarded. Members of staff were unanimous in saying that senior leaders are most thoughtful about their welfare and workload. Leaders support staff well; there is a strong collegiate culture.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The culture of safeguarding pupils is strong at Barton. Expert staff who lead the school's work in this area are knowledgeable about the potential dangers that pupils might face. They ensure that teaching and support staff understand their roles fully in the school's work to protect pupils.

Senior leaders and directors oversee the school's safeguarding arrangements diligently. Policies are fit for purpose and understood by all. Systems to recruit staff follow relevant guidance. Timely work with outside agencies to support pupils and their families plays a big part in ensuring that the welfare and health and safety of all at the school are protected.

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

### **(Information for the school and proprietor)**

- Leaders should continue to build leadership capacity so that the ambition and vision leaders have for the school are fully realised and evident in common practice through the whole school.

## **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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	134315
<b>DfE registration number</b>	813/6004
<b>Local authority</b>	North Lincolnshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10267633
<b>Type of school</b>	Other independent special school
<b>School category</b>	Independent special school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	8 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	34
<b>Number of part-time pupils</b>	0
<b>Proprietor</b>	P Bloom Ltd
<b>Chair</b>	Ann Henderson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Hannah Mackley
<b>Annual fees (day pupils)</b>	£97,166
<b>Telephone number</b>	01652 631280
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bartonschool.co.uk">www.bartonschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:hannah.mackley@optionsautism.co.uk">hannah.mackley@optionsautism.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 to 28 March 2019

## Information about this school

- The school is registered to provide full-time education for boys and girls aged eight to 19.
- The school is in Barton-upon-Humber in North Lincolnshire. It was registered as an independent school in September 2006 and is housed in a range of refurbished and purpose-built premises within attractive grounds.
- The school's last standard inspection was in March 2019 when it was judged to be good overall.
- The school meets all of the independent school standards.
- Options Barton is an independent special school within the Outcomes First Group. The school provides education for pupils who are diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder. All pupils have an education, health and care plan. Many have attended several schools, and some have missed a significant proportion of their education.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this inspection under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. The purpose of the inspection is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

This was the first routine inspection the school 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.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, PSHE and the creative arts, which include art and design, design technology and music. They visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and met with curriculum leaders. They also spoke with pupils about their work. Teachers and other staff met with an inspector to talk about these subjects.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and a range of senior leaders. They also met with leaders with responsibility for safeguarding, attendance and behaviour, and personal development.
- The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chairperson.
- Inspectors checked a range of school documentation and policies, including pupils' safeguarding records.
- The responses to the online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, were analysed, along with the free-text comments that parents submitted.
- Inspectors gathered the views of staff through Ofsted's online survey, meetings and in informal conversations.

- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Marcus Newby, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lynda Florence

Ofsted Inspector

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