

Banks Lane Junior School

Hempshaw Lane, Stockport, Cheshire, SK1 4PR

Inspection dates 20–21 February 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress and achieve well from their starting points.
- The performance gaps between pupils eligible for pupil premium funding and other pupils are less than those typically found.
- Teaching is effective in capturing the interest and imagination of pupils and producing a real sense of excitement and anticipation in learning. As a result, pupils learn well.
- Pupils are polite, respectful and well-behaved. They are responsive to the rewards and sanctions of the school's behaviour policy and feel safe in school.
- Leaders and managers, including governors, are highly ambitious for the school, setting a clear improvement agenda. Staff changes have been managed effectively with a strong focus on ensuring teaching is of a good quality.
- Accurate and detailed tracking systems are used well to check pupils' progress and set challenging targets.
- The curriculum gives pupils rich and varied learning experiences. The music curriculum is a particular strength, providing many opportunities for pupils to play a variety of musical instruments and learn a range of traditional folk activities.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The proportions of pupils making more than expected progress from their starting points in both English and mathematics are lower than those seen nationally.
- Not enough pupils reach the higher Level 5 and above in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.
- In lessons the work set does not always match the needs and abilities of pupils sufficiently to allow the more able pupils to make the progress of which they are capable.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 23 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher and deputy headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons, intervention support groups and assemblies.
- Meetings were held with three groups of pupils including the school council, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, other members of the senior leadership team, the literacy and special educational needs coordinators, a local authority representative and four governors including the Chair and vice-chair.
- The 22 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 39 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were taken account of, as were the analyses of the school's questionnaires for parents and pupils.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised the work in pupils' books, and a range of documents including the school's development plan, data on pupils' current progress, minutes of governing body meetings and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Michael Blaylock, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

Carol Machell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Banks Lane Junior School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. Over 97% of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is average. Pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after by the local authority or from service families.
- The proportion of students supported by school action is well above average, although the proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The current headteacher was appointed in May 2011, having served as acting headteacher since the unanticipated retirement of the previous headteacher in February 2010 after 12 years in post.
- In the past two years the school has experienced considerable change, with a newly appointed headteacher, deputy headteacher, Chair and vice-chair of the Governing Body and high levels of staff turnover.
- In 2012 the school met the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement in English and mathematics from good to outstanding by accelerating pupils' progress further, particularly for the more able, so that more pupils reach the higher levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 by:
 - ensuring that all work, in all lessons, provides sufficient challenge for all pupils
 - implementing a revised school marking policy to make sure that teachers' marking is more consistent and helps all pupils to improve their work.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils' achievement is good. The achievement of pupils in Year 6 in 2012 showed improvements on the previous year's results, although fewer pupils reached the higher levels than is the case nationally, particularly in reading.
- The proportions of pupils making expected progress in English and mathematics improved from 2011 to closely match the national figures in 2012. However, the proportions making more than expected progress were below national figures in English and mathematics
- In Years 3, 4 and 5 school data show pupils' progress is good and improving securely as a result of good teaching.
- In the current Year 6 pupils are now making faster progress than they made in previous year groups, particularly in reading. This is enabling them to make up for slower progress in the past, although their current attainment is still lower than it should be.
- Pupils' progress is checked regularly and targets are set. This helps to push pupils on faster.
- Work in pupils' books confirms that standards are improving across the school. Pupils' work is well presented; pupils take pride in their work, especially with their learning logs.
- Specialist teaching helps pupils to achieve high standards in music and also in Spanish.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress and reach standards similar to those found nationally. Their progress is monitored closely and teaching assistants provide good-quality support.
- The school uses pupil premium funding well to provide extra support for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. This is helping these pupils to make faster progress and the gap between their achievement and that of non-free school meal pupils is smaller than found nationally.
- Pupils develop their confidence and a love for reading. This is through guided reading sessions in class and support outside the classroom from teaching assistants. The linking of letters and sounds is used well to support weaker readers in Year 3. Well-structured guided reading sessions include focused questions to ensure that elements of grammar and inference are understood. The evidence from the school's own tracking systems and from lesson observations is that pupils are now making better progress in reading than previously was the case.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of the teaching observed throughout the course of the inspection was consistently good with some that was outstanding.
- Good pupil-teacher interaction is a positive feature of the teaching, as is the use of talk partners. The introduction of a 'traffic light' self-assessment system throughout lessons ensures that any pupils who are struggling are identified and helped, either by the teacher or fellow pupils. Other techniques to check pupils' understanding, such as using named lolly sticks to choose pupils to answer questions, are effective in generating excitement and interest.
- The best teaching enables pupils to achieve well, work at high levels, enjoy their learning and gain a real sense of achievement. Varied resources and approaches are used effectively in engaging the interest of pupils. The use of a video clip in a Year 4 English lesson, for example, inspired spontaneous singing along by pupils. A focus on checking answers in mathematics and the emphasis on 'does it make sense?' is good practice in developing pupils' mathematical thinking and understanding.
- Provision for lower-attaining pupils and those with special educational needs, both in class and through the use of intervention support led by teaching assistants, enables these pupils to make good progress. However, teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge to enable more-able pupils to reach the higher levels. This was evident from lesson observations and the

scrutiny of pupils' work. Pupils of all abilities are sometimes given the same work to do, so the brighter pupils are not always stretched in their thinking. The use of teaching assistants in class to help and support these more able pupils is underdeveloped.

- Weaknesses in reading have been identified and addressed. There is an attractive newly designed library and the school has links with the Stockport Library Service, Stockport Book Awards and other literary initiatives. Together with improved classroom teaching this is helping pupils to develop a joy of reading and make faster progress than they used to.
- Marking is mostly good with some helpful identification of next steps and its impact is seen in the well-presented work in pupils' books. However, there is some variability in marking between classes within year groups, which means some pupils get more helpful feedback than others. At the time of the inspection the school's marking policy was under review with the aim of increasing consistency of practice.
- Parents and teachers agree with inspection findings that teaching is good. The responses to Parent View showed that almost 90% of parents agreed with the statement 'My child is taught well at this school'. The school's own questionnaire responses showed increasing satisfaction over three years with, most recently, over 99% agreement with the statement 'The quality of teaching is good'. There was universally strong agreement in the staff questionnaire with 'Leaders do all they can to improve teaching'.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils are polite, considerate of each other and very positive about their school. Mutual respect is evident in the positive relationships between pupils and staff, summed up by one pupil who said, 'Teachers treat everyone equally. Everyone is polite to each other'.
- Teachers manage the behaviour of their pupils well with high expectations and effective use of praise and rewards to affirm good behaviour. The school's merit system is highly motivating for pupils and there is an awards assembly every Friday for 'Gold Medals' and a headteacher merit award. Winners are posted on the school's website; the winner of the headteacher merit reward receives a lunchtime pass to jump the dinner queue and a postcard is sent home to parents.
- Pupils are keen to learn and their good behaviour helps them to learn well. They know their teachers try to make learning fun as well as challenging. Pupils also appreciate that they can help each other learn, with one saying, 'We look at each other's work'. Another pupil commented, 'We learn something new every day'. Older pupils have a good knowledge of the targets they are working towards in English and mathematics.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. Parents and staff agree. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying and know that their teachers can be trusted to resolve any issues. They are also aware of risks, including the importance of safety when online, covered in a recent internet safety day.
- Attendance has improved over recent years and is now in line with national averages, with persistent absence lower than average. There have been no permanent exclusions in the past three years.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and deputy function well as a team to provide strong leadership. Following their lead senior leaders and governors, with the support of the local authority, share a common vision and are committed to continuing school improvement. They are ambitious for the school and aspire to become an outstanding school.
- There is now a greater accountability following a restructuring of the timetable and more regular checking of pupils' performance. Changes have generally been welcomed by the staff still in the

school, one of whom commented, 'Our role has changed dramatically over the last few years. We are regularly observed and given positive feedback which makes us valued and professional'.

- The recently appointed deputy headteacher, along with the headteacher, support the professional development of their colleagues well. Year group leaders play a key role in supporting colleagues and in bringing consistency to the school's work. The long-serving literacy coordinator is passionate about the subject and confident that increased teacher accountability and improvements in teaching, coupled with a greater focus on checking pupils' progress, are beginning to drive up results. Currently, the headteacher and deputy are covering for the numeracy coordinator who left the school in December 2012.
- The school's recently introduced tracking systems provide detailed information about the achievement of every child throughout the school. This is used to inform regular pupil review meetings and to set challenging targets to accelerate progress. This information is also used to identify individuals in need of extra support and to check the effectiveness of such support.
- The progress made by pupils is an important element in the performance management targets set for all teachers. Appropriate links between performance management and salary progression are clearly understood by all.
- A rich and varied curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils. Less rigid setting structures for mathematics and English have increased the accountability of classroom teachers. Pupils have a wide variety of opportunities. Every child is taught how to play a keyboard and many go on to perform with the Fosbrook music group. The high-quality music contributes significantly to the good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. Good-quality extra-curricular activities also feature, including theatre trips and residential trips, and contribute very well to pupils' all-round development.
- The election of school council representatives and good early links with a nearby school with greater multicultural diversity help to prepare pupils for life in modern democratic Britain, prevent extremist behaviour, tackle discrimination and promote equal opportunities.
- The local authority knows the school well and has provided good support that is appreciated by senior leaders and governors and is helping them drive improvements.
- The school's safeguarding procedures meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Recent changes in governance have resulted in a relatively inexperienced governing body but one that is more actively involved in the life of the school and more prepared to play its part, both in supporting the school and providing challenge. Governors are aware of the progress that the school has made in raising standards and in improving the quality of teaching. They are involved in recruitment and staffing issues including the recognition and rewarding of good teaching as well as the performance management of the headteacher. Governors are well informed about the pupil premium funding and aware that in this school underachievement for eligible pupils is not currently an issue. Funds have been used for learning mentors, promoting boys' reading and subsidies where needed.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	106028
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	402998

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Graham
Headteacher	Ed Milner
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2008
Telephone number	0161 4802330
Fax number	Not applicable
Email address	headteacher@bankslane-jun.stockport.sch.uk

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