

# Bowness Primary School

Church Street, Little Lever, Bolton, Lancashire, BL3 1BT

**Inspection dates** 5–6 February 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not a good school because:

- Not enough pupils make good progress or achieve well over time in reading, writing and mathematics. As a result, attainment is below average at the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Teachers do not always set work that challenges pupils to achieve as well as they can, especially the most able.
- There is inconsistency between classes in the quality of advice given to pupils during lessons to help them improve.
- There are not enough activities provided that challenge pupils' thinking skills by having to work things out for themselves.
- Pupils do not use punctuation, spelling and grammar accurately.
- There are not enough opportunities for pupils to write at length in different subjects and to read independently from a wide range of texts.
- Pupils' quick mental recall skills are not well-enough developed.
- The checking of teaching lacks rigour in ensuring that teachers respond successfully to identified areas for improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- Leaders and governors have a realistic view of the school's performance. They are ambitious and determined to drive the school forward.
- Consistently good teaching in the Years 5/6 class means that these pupils make good progress.
- Pupils behave well and know how to stay safe.
- Pupils' learning is enlivened by a wide range of enrichment activities.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well.
- The care and welfare of pupils is at the centre of the school's work.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed eight lessons or parts of lessons taught by five teachers. Two of these were joint observations with the executive headteacher and five with the acting headteacher.
- Discussions were held with the Chair of the Governing Body, other governors, staff, pupils and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at school documentation, including that relating to safeguarding, records of meetings of the governing body, assessment information and curriculum planning. Work in pupils' books and displays around the school were examined. The inspector listened to groups of pupils read.
- Account was taken of the 15 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in carrying out the inspection.

## Inspection team

Melvyn Hemmings, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- Bowness is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above average.
- The proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- There is an above average proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The pupil premium provides additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The majority of pupils are White British, with an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join the school other than at the normal time is above average. An increasing number of these pupils are international new arrivals.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school is led by an executive headteacher who is a National Leader of Education from a local support school, alongside an acting headteacher.

### What does the school need to do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better by:
  - ensuring that teachers always give pupils work that enables them to reach their full potential, particularly the most able
  - making sure that in all classes pupils are given effective advice on how to improve their work during lessons
  - increasing the number of activities that have more than one possible solution in order to challenge pupils to work things out for themselves.
- Raise achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
  - improving pupils' ability to use grammar, punctuation and spelling accurately
  - providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to write meaningfully and at length in different subjects, in order for them to practise and improve their writing skills
  - giving pupils sufficient time to read independently from a wide range of texts
  - improving pupils' quick mental recall skills across the four rules of number, so they can carry out calculations more quickly.
- Strengthen leadership and management by rigorously checking that teachers respond successfully to areas for development identified during lesson observations.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- From their different starting points the proportion of pupils making expected progress is close to the national figure in reading, writing and mathematics. The proportion exceeding expected progress is below the national figure.
- The fact that pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2 has been below average over time in reading, writing and mathematics and that not enough pupils are making good progress indicates that achievement requires improvement.
- Children's skill levels on entry to school are generally well below those expected for their age. They make good gains in their speech and language development in the Early Years Foundation Stage, although attainment in literacy and numeracy is below average on entry to Year 1.
- Progress through Key Stages 1 and 2 is variable because of inconsistency in the quality of teaching, being strongest for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- Pupils enjoy reading and talk with interest about their favourite authors, such as Jacqueline Wilson and Roald Dahl. There are limited opportunities for pupils to further their reading skills by reading independently from a wide range of texts.
- Pupils can write imaginatively to express their ideas, as seen in the work of pupils in Years 5 and 6 when writing about the poem 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes. However, pupils' use of grammar, punctuation and spelling lacks accuracy. There are not enough opportunities for them to practise and improve their skills by writing meaningfully and at length in different subjects.
- In mathematics, pupils do not have well-enough developed quick mental recall across the four rules of number. This slows the rate at which they can carry out calculations and solve number problems.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make the same progress as that of other pupils because extra support is provided to meet their specific needs. Pupils whose first language is not English also receive extra support to enable them to make progress similar to that of other pupils.
- The most-able pupils are not always given work that stretches them to do their best and this limits their progress at times.
- The high number of pupils who start school other than at the normal time has a dampening effect on standards at the end of Years 2 and 6. This is particularly the case for the increasing numbers of international new arrivals, many of whom have little or no spoken English.
- The funding for pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium has been used successfully to narrow the gap in attainment between pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils in school. As a result, their attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 matches that of other pupils not supported by the pupil premium. This demonstrates the school's successful commitment to equality of opportunity.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Although teaching is improving it is still judged to require improvement because there is inconsistency in its quality.
- The activities provided for pupils do not always stretch them sufficiently, especially the most able, and this slows the progress they make. There are limited opportunities for pupils to further their thinking skills by tackling activities that have more than one possible solution. Pupils say they enjoy activities when they can work things out for themselves, for example in science investigations. The advice given to pupils during lessons is not always effective in helping them to improve.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults have worked well together to improve the outdoor area to provide a greater range of learning experiences. The way that on-going observations of

children's' progress are carried out has been improved, so that adults can set more precise next steps in their learning. As a result, children have many more opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, in particular, through a range of practical activities, both inside and outdoors. This is especially the case when they are learning to link letters with the sounds they make.

- In Key Stages 1 and 2, teachers make sure lessons start on time and manage classrooms well, so that lessons run smoothly. Marking has been improved to guide improvement better and pupils say, 'It helps us to know how to do better.' Teachers have secure subject knowledge and are able to ask relevant questions in order to find out what pupils know and to deepen their understanding in different subjects.
- Consistently good teaching in the Years 5/6 class means these pupils make good progress. This was evident in a mathematics lesson in which they were learning how to calculate the perimeter and area of simple compound shapes.
- Teaching assistants provide sound support for all pupils, particularly disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs, pupils eligible for the pupil premium and those whose first language is not English.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and considerate to others. The views of parents, staff, pupils and the school's behaviour logs indicate that behaviour is good. Pupils say that 'Behaviour in our school is very good and we all help each other.'
- There is a good awareness among pupils of the different types of bullying, such as cyber and physical bullying, and they say that any such occurrences do not exist. They are confident that any bullying would be dealt with promptly by staff.
- Pupils wear their school uniform with pride and work hard to ensure that classrooms and other areas are kept tidy and litter free. They get on with their work well and say they enjoy learning because, 'Our teachers make lessons fun.'
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is shown in the significant improvement in attendance over the last year and in the fact that they arrive at school on time.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils' understanding of the dangers related with roads, railways, water and the use of the Internet is promoted well by the school. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves and others safe.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school because adults look after them so well, such as by making sure all exterior doors are locked.
- There are opportunities for pupils to take on a variety of responsibilities, including older pupils looking after younger ones. The school council takes its role seriously in helping the school develop, such as being involved in the provision of a wider range of outdoor play equipment for pupils to use.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The school's leadership is securing improvements in the school's performance, but these have not had time to have full impact. Leadership and management still require improvement because there remain inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Attainment has remained below average over time and not enough pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The executive headteacher and acting headteacher work well together to provide clear educational direction for the school. Leaders and governors are ambitious and know how successful the school can be.
- The arrangements for checking how well the school is doing give a realistic view of its performance. The correct areas for further development have been identified and precise plans put into place to bring about improvement.

- The role of middle leaders has been improved since the previous inspection, so they have a clearer view of teaching and learning throughout the school and a more effective influence on school improvement.
- The management of staff performance and training of teachers and other adults has been adapted so that it is tightly focused on raising pupils' achievement. The performance of teachers is linked to their salary progression.
- Lesson observations are carried out by senior leaders and strengths and areas for development conveyed to teachers. However, subsequent observations do not check rigorously if teachers have responded successfully to these areas and inconsistencies in teaching remain.
- Leaders successfully promote equality of opportunity and the tackling of discrimination.
- The new primary sport funding has been used wisely to widen the breadth of physical education and sport provision and improve its quality. As a result, more pupils are taking part in sporting activities.
- Leaders and governors place strong emphasis on ensuring that all pupils are safe and looked after well.
- The local authority provides light-touch support for the school.
- Pupils' learning experiences are enlivened by a variety of extra-curricular activities and visits, including the nearby Moses Gate Country Park. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, such as by encouraging pupils from different cultural backgrounds to share their traditions and beliefs.
- Improvements, particularly in attendance and in governance, made by leaders and governors over the past year show they have sufficient ability to take the school forward.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The expertise of governors has been improved since the previous inspection. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and have an accurate view of the quality of teaching. Governors understand the data relating to the school's performance and know how the management of performance is used to improve staff expertise and reward good teaching. The governing body ensures that safeguarding requirements are met. Governors manage the budget effectively and hold the school to account for the way the funding for pupils eligible for the pupil premium is used to raise their achievement.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	105197
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	432093

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	108
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Andrew Gallimore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mike Tonge
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	19 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333140
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