

Woodbank Primary School

Brandlesholme Road, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 1AX

Inspection dates	12–13 April 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader who has energised staff and raised morale in the school. She delegates responsibilities effectively to a strong team of leaders. The school is improving rapidly.
- Teachers have embraced change and feel that they are valued members of the community. Purposeful training has increased their skills and ensured that teaching is effective. As a result, pupils make good progress.
- Teacher's assessment of pupils' progress is thorough and accurate. Pupils who need extra help are identified swiftly and supported effectively. Consequently, pupils who have special educational needs or disability make good progress.
- Pupils and parents are highly appreciative of the positive changes to the school's environment and to the emphasis on high-quality learning.
- The school has a highly positive ethos. Displays celebrate high-quality work. Staff and pupils are welcoming and contribute to a happy atmosphere.
- Pupils are well cared for and feel safe. Behaviour is good. Pupils are polite and eager to share their positive views of the school.
- Provision in the early years is effective. The children settle happily and make good progress. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- The curriculum has been completely changed to ensure that it meets the interests and needs of the pupils. Pupils recall many happy memories, especially the exciting visits to interesting places.
- Governance is good. Governors have played a full part in the journey of improvement. They are well informed and challenge actions to check that the best is provided for the pupils.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not all subject leaders, especially those new to the role, identify precisely what is needed to raise attainment in their subjects.
- Pupils' presentation, spelling and the use of their number skills to solve problems are not as well-developed as their other basic skills.
- Not all teachers use assessment information to ensure that work is sufficiently challenging especially for the most able. Occasionally, misunderstandings are not corrected to enable pupils to learn from their errors.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching and pupils' progress, by:
 - ensuring consistency in teachers' use of assessment information to challenge pupils, especially the most able
 - building on pupils' errors so that they learn from their misunderstandings
 - looking for even more ways for pupils to apply their number skills to a greater depth when solving problems
 - giving more attention to pupils' accuracy in their spelling and presentation of work.

- Build on the expertise of the leaders of English and mathematics so that all subject leaders identify precisely what is needed to raise attainment in their subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher is an outstanding leader who sets a very clear educational direction for the school. She has taken swift action to address underachievement. All the staff have welcomed the initiatives she has introduced to tackle concerns. The impact is clear: increased rates of progress are being made by pupils across the school. The newly formed senior management team and governing body add strength and experience to the leadership, ensuring that the school now has a strong capacity to move forward.
- The impact of change is apparent to all in the raised ambitions for the pupils and in an ethos that celebrates achievement. Pupils now learn in an attractive environment that is conducive to effective learning.
- The school's evaluation of its performance is accurate because it is based on a detailed analysis of what is working well and what needs further development. Priorities are clear and the school's plan for improvement links closely to identified areas for development. Actions are practical with clear procedures to measure success. The impact of change is most evident in improved teaching and pupils' progress across the school. Most success is seen in mathematics with the sharpening of pupils' ability to apply basic skills; leaders recognise that this remains a priority.
- Recently introduced assessment systems are robust and accurate. Leaders analyse data meticulously and this guides the school's priorities well. Regular meetings with staff check on the progress of pupils and if a dip is noted, support is swiftly put in place. This supports the effective achievement of pupils with the only exception being the most able who make good progress overall but at times are not challenged enough in lessons.
- The development of the leadership of English and mathematics has rightly been the priority for the school. These leaders have brought about significant improvements in pupils' progress and the quality of teaching of mathematics and reading. The spotlight is now on developing the skills of other subject leaders, especially those new to the role. Currently, teachers share their skills well. Their plans show attention to how they will provide good coverage of the new curriculum. However, their plans make limited reference to pupils' achievement and do not include precise actions needed to raise attainment.
- The monitoring of teaching is effective in identifying where teachers need support and this is provided by individual guidance, sharing of good practice and training. Success is evident in stronger teaching with only a few weaker aspects requiring attention. Staff are unanimously supportive of the school's leaders and are proud to work at Wodbank. All staff know how to improve their teaching and have clear targets linked to pupils' progress.
- A complete overhaul of the curriculum has resulted in a rich and varied range of experiences for all pupils. New topics have been selected to improve the progress of boys. A review of the different styles of writing resulted in a precise plan that ensures all aspects of writing receive detailed coverage. The wide range of clubs enhance pupils' experiences. Overall, there is much evidence to show that the new curriculum is having a positive effect on pupils' personal development as well as their good academic progress.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is key to the school's ethos. Relationships are very positive and pupils treat adults and each other considerately. Pupils help each other, especially the older ones when they support the younger ones at play. They respect differences and welcome pupils from cultures different to their own.
- Many displays promote British values. The school council helps pupils to understand democracy and pupils vote for different activities in school. Weekly sessions on reading the news raise pupils' awareness of current affairs such as the debate about staying in or leaving the European Union. This understanding of British traditions translates into daily life as pupils accept responsibility for their own learning and contribute to the local and wider community. Pupils understand the impact of hard work and know how to be successful. Their aspirations rise as they learn about important people and their achievements. Pupils leave this school well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Leaders use the pupil premium effectively to support disadvantaged pupils. Additional support for Year 6 last year was successful in enabling many to reach the standards expected for their age. Booster classes, additional support from teaching assistants and help for families through a parent support officer have all contributed to these pupils making good progress.
- The physical education and sport funding is used successfully to extend pupils' opportunities to try out new activities. Extra resources at lunchtime provide opportunities for pupils to take part in energetic activities. Staff learn from watching specialist sports coaches and so enhance their own teaching skills.

- All classes have taster sessions in yoga to learn the skills of relaxation. Pupils say that these sessions improve their behaviour and increase their appreciation of being calm.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of changes made over the last two years. They appreciate the improved communications and the opportunities to be more involved in school activities.
- The local authority has offered effective support for the school. Training has been helpful in supporting improvements. Moderation of pupils' work has enabled staff to feel confident that assessment is accurate. The local authority is reducing its support as the school's improvement is strong.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors keep a close eye on what is happening in school to ensure that improvement does not stall.
 - Governors contribute fully to the life of the school. They have good links with subject leaders and these give them a clear view of the work of the school. They understand the school's priorities and help steer actions taken to improve the school.
 - Governors recognise the improved ethos of the school. They regard the care of the pupils as paramount and ensure their welfare is a priority so that they can be safe and happy in school.
 - Members of the governing body are knowledgeable about the quality of teaching. They receive detailed reports that add to their own information gleaned from their regular visits to school. They have challenged weaker teaching when this has been necessary. Governors set challenging targets for the headteacher and know teachers have targets linked to their impact on pupils' progress.
 - Governors check on the effectiveness of how additional funding is used. They have put in place a link governor to monitor the spending of pupil premium expenditure. This governor has regular contact with school and identifies the impact of support. Gaps in pupil achievement between different groups are narrowing.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Secure procedures are in place to ensure that the environment is safe. Relevant and regular training for all staff keep them up to date with matters such as child protection and the risks of extremism. Discussions with staff show they have confidence in their ability to raise any concerns and are reassured that these will be dealt with thoroughly. Parents, carers and others involved with the school are kept fully informed about the safety of their children and have no qualms about leaving them in the care of the staff.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The overall quality of teaching is good and has improved in response to closer monitoring and effective guidance when needed. Stability in staffing has brought consistency in practice and this has enabled pupils to build on their skills as they move from class to class. Improved teaching is reflected in the good progress pupils now make.
- Classrooms are now vibrant learning environments for pupils. Pupils' work is celebrated in attractive displays. Often there are inviting corners for pupils to sit and enjoy a book. Pupils use the prompts on the walls to find guidance that extends their basic skills in writing and mathematics.
- Teachers are growing in confidence when using new assessment systems. Information is used very successfully to provide support for pupils who have special educational needs or disability. Help for these pupils often includes practical tasks that pupils enjoy as well as extend their learning. At times, especially for the younger pupils in mixed-age classes, work set for the most able is not hard enough and this slows progress. On the other hand, older pupils are challenged effectively, as reflected in the work in their books and the data showing their good progress.
- The teaching of mathematics is effective. New systems to teach quick calculations have been welcomed by staff. They have raised friendly rivalry in classes and a desire in pupils to improve their competence in calculating mentally and recalling their multiplication tables. Teachers have good subject knowledge. They make a point of using the correct terminology which pupils then use in their responses. Evidence in books shows that pupils gain confidence in calculating using a variety of methods. Pupils are encouraged to give a full explanation as to their choice of method. Some books show ample opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to solve problems and carry out their reasoning to a greater depth but this is not always the case.
- Reading is taught effectively, starting with the successful teaching of phonics (letters and their sounds). Teachers apply new approaches for older pupils to extend their skills of reading for understanding consistently so that pupils gain confidence in reading to research in other subjects. The love of reading is promoted when a text is used as a focus for a topic. For example, younger pupils enjoyed making masks as

they followed up their knowledge about wolves as part of their current story.

- The teaching of writing is good but has still a way to go to ensure that pupils gain confidence in their basic skills, especially spelling. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they cover all of the skills in the new curriculum. Pupils now have more opportunities to write extended pieces of work. Writing done by pupils in Year 6 includes some lengthy stories with clarity of structure and imaginative plots. Lessons often have exciting openings and activities to engage pupils. This has improved the progress of boys as they now find writing activities more stimulating.
- Teachers use questioning successfully to assess and extend learning. They often encourage pupils to explain their calculations. Teachers reassure pupils that it is fine to make a mistake as long as they recognise it. In many cases, pupils learn from their errors, but on occasions these opportunities are missed.
- Teachers' expectations of behaviour are high and based on good relationships. Pupils enjoy humour in lessons and feel their efforts are valued. Teachers insist on good presentation of work, especially of writing, but occasionally pupils' presentation, especially in mathematics, is not neat and this leads to errors.
- Homework is used most effectively to extend learning. Many examples of work on display show individual projects completed at home. These are often of high quality, showing effective extensions of literacy and numeracy skills, inventiveness and research.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships throughout the school are warm and friendly. Pupils respect the feelings of others and are eager to support those needing help. Teachers encourage pupils to discuss any concerns and talk through their ideas with a neighbour. The pupils' contributions are valued and this raises their self-confidence to try out new activities. Teachers often provide pupils with clear guidance on what is needed to achieve the best results and this enables them to become successful learners.
- Pupils have a good understanding of bullying. They recognise that it can take many guises and includes 'upsetting pupils on the inside'. Those who spoke to inspectors identified some name-calling and understood that this was hurtful. Older pupils felt some unkind words were used by younger ones because they did not understand their meaning. They explained that important messages given to pupils in assemblies helped to extend their understanding and all felt staff dealt with any problems effectively.
- The pupils appreciate that the staff look out for their safety and many opportunities are provided to help them understand how to look after themselves. Visitors, role play and special events inform them about how to keep healthy; topics include dental hygiene, the dangers of smoking and drug misuse. Pupils recall messages from the police about how to avoid dangers including when using the internet. These events help them to make informed choices about how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils enjoy carrying out duties in school. The school council has organised events that include other pupils in raising funds for those less fortunate than themselves.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave sensibly in lessons and around school. They are very proud of their school and eager to share their positive views. Pupils appreciate the rewards and sanctions in place and strive to achieve praise. A few younger pupils find it difficult to sustain close attention to their teachers or lose interest when their enthusiasm is not captured. Some work in pupils' books suggests that at times they do not always give their best efforts to presenting their work as neatly as they can.
- Pupils enjoy the special events organised for them. They recall happily their experiences of the school visit to the cinema.
- Attendance is above average because pupils enjoy coming to school. The school is working with families to improve the punctuality of a few who are late to school.
- The school council were very enthusiastic about the opportunities available and said, 'We enjoy being encouraged to follow our own path'. They also said there are only a few things they would change about the school and that they were very happy.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Progress has improved rapidly over the last two years. In response to the effective changes and rigorous assessment systems now in place, standards are rising and progress from pupils' individual starting points is good.
- The focus on accelerating progress for the pupils in Year 6 in 2015 was effective in ensuring that the proportion reaching the expected level in reading, writing and mathematics was in line with the national average. This was a considerable achievement for many. The school's data shows that pupils made rapid progress in their last year in school. However, there was insufficient time to close all of the gaps in learning for the most able. This resulted in very few reaching the above average levels of which they were capable. This is reflected in the results in mathematics and writing in the 2015 national tests.
- The impact of improved teaching and effective leadership is now very evident across the school. Inspection evidence, including a thorough review of books, observations of learning in lessons and a detailed analysis of school data, indicate good progress in reading, writing and mathematics at both key stages. Detailed checking of assessments by the local authority, independent consultants and the school's assessment leader validates the good progress evident in school. The school's data and inspection evidence show improved attainment with most pupils currently working at the level expected for their age and beyond in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Parents support the view that over the last two years the expectations of their children have risen considerably. Some parents expressed concern about the pressure to achieve highly but pupils who spoke with inspectors said they enjoyed learning and like the challenges, especially in mathematics.
- The focus on reading has been a priority for the school and is reflected in the stronger results in the 2015 national tests. More attention is now given to teaching basic skills. The impact is clear in the rise in the number of pupils reaching the expected level in the phonics check in Year 1. Pupils in Year 2 are confident when applying these skills to tackle harder words. A book is often central to a topic and this has created an enthusiasm for different authors. Those who read to the inspectors revealed a love for humorous books, and older pupils could scan a text for information and predict how a story might conclude.
- Writing is improving, with a priority given to extending pupils' confidence to write imaginatively and apply their skills in other subjects. Close attention is given to improving grammar, punctuation and spelling skills. Success is evident in pupils' books but weaker aspects remain to be tackled, especially spelling.
- Improvement in mathematics is possibly the school's best success story. Pupils are more confident in their basic number skills and have a range of methods to refer to when solving problems. Their success in applying their skills is evident in many books but varies between classes. Some classes lack enough opportunities for pupils to apply their skills to investigate at a deeper level.
- The improvements to accelerate the progress of the most able is another triumph for the school. These pupils now make good progress. Gaps in their prior learning have closed. School records show that every pupil currently in Year 6 who achieved above average levels in Year 2 is on course to reach a higher level than expected for their age this year. Inspection evidence, did, however, identify that these pupils could be challenged even further to ensure that they make as much progress as possible.
- The 2015 results of national tests at the end of both key stages revealed the gaps were closing between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and others in school and all pupils nationally. Despite this, the gaps were still wide at the end of key stage 2. For current pupils, this is no longer the case. The school's assessment information shows good progress across the school.
- The leadership of the pupils with special educational needs is effective. Staff meet together regularly and are flexible in providing support that is always aimed at those who need it most. During the inspection, many examples of group and individual support showed patience, challenge and effective learning. As a result, overall progress for these pupils is good with examples of accelerated progress for pupils requiring considerable support.
- Few pupils are learning English as an additional language but the school seeks the help of bilingual staff when needed. This enables these pupils to make similar progress as other pupils.
- Previous data revealed that boys did not do as well as girls. New topics are adding interest for boys. Visits used at the start of topics capture their enthusiasm. Current analysis of data and observation of learning in lessons show that boys now learn at the same good pace as girls.
- Visitors to the school cannot fail to notice the richness of opportunities offered to pupils across the curriculum. Pupils' high-quality art and craft work is prominently displayed.

- Pupils' improved competence in reading, writing and mathematics ensure that they are well prepared for the future.

Early years provision

is good

- When children start school, what they know and can do is below that typical for their age. This varies each year. Some children have particular weaknesses in number, communication and aspects of their personal development.
- During their time in the early years children make good progress. This is a result of the stimulating curriculum and good teaching they receive. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is in line with the national picture and an upward trend is predicted for the current cohort. As a result, children are ready to move to Year 1 with a secure foundation, especially in early reading, writing and number skills.
- A rich variety of activities capture children's interests. As they move from nursery to reception there is a subtle change to focus on the basic skills needed to extend the children's early literacy and number skills. In reception, children enjoy lively sessions to learn phonics. Examples of work show these skills are used successfully when writing longer words. Vocabulary is extended through effective questions as well as opportunities to take on the role of other characters in the imaginative role play areas. The focus on practical activities makes learning enjoyable. Children in the Nursery make cress sandwiches and learn about seeds and growth, for example. Discussions revealed that they know the seeds are 'going to become flowers' and that they need 'sunshine and water'. Occasionally, children appear to lose interest or need additional input to ensure that learning is purposeful.
- Management of the children is based on warm and sensitive relationships. Children behave well and share their resources. The focus on the safety of the children is paramount and children learn in a safe and secure environment.
- Leadership of the early years is very effective. The leader also has responsibility for assessment throughout the school. This expertise is exploited to the full in the early years to track children's progress and ensure their needs are met. More attention to the interests of boys, especially in the outdoors, has resolved a prior weakness in their progress. Effective use is made of pupil premium funding to check on any underachievement. This ensures that disadvantaged children make good progress and gaps between them and other children do not widen. A close eye is kept on the needs of children who have special educational needs or disability. Advice from external agencies, such as bilingual support and guidance for supporting special educational needs, is used effectively. This aids the support offered to children and their inclusion in all that is on offer in the early years.
- Good relationships with parents are established right from the start. Ample opportunities are provided for parents to ensure that staff have a full picture of the needs of the individual. Parents are kept informed of the progress their children make.

School details

Unique reference number	105292
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10012096

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	285
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janet Fitton
Headteacher	Mrs Kelly Macadam
Telephone number	0161 761 1253
Website	www.woodbank.bury.sch.uk
Email address	woodbank@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 March 2014

Information about this school

- Woodbank Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who are eligible for support through the pupil premium is above average. The pupil premium is additional funding to support the educational achievement of pupils who are eligible for free school meals and those looked after by the local authority.
- A below-average proportion of pupils are from minority ethnic groups.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is slightly above the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there have been changes to staffing, including the headteacher. The senior leadership team has been reorganised.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in all classes. The headteacher observed learning in one class jointly with the lead inspector. Inspectors analysed pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and a representative of the local authority. Inspectors met formally with two groups of pupils as well as observing them informally throughout the day.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised work in their books, especially in Years 2, 4 and 6. Detailed analysis was made of the records of pupils' progress maintained by the school.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documentation including the school's plans for future improvement, records of the governing body meetings and a selection of policies including those relating to safeguarding and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of the 40 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for parents (Parent View) as well as several detailed comments submitted by parents. Inspectors also chatted with parents as they arrived at school with their children. Inspectors also considered the 41 responses to the online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jennie Platt, Lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Nicholas Capron	Ofsted Inspector

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