

Banks Lane Junior School

Hempshaw Lane, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 4PR

Inspection dates

16–17 January 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Until very recently, leaders have not taken effective action to ensure that pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The newly established leadership team has not been in place long enough to have a noticeable impact on the overall quality of education that the school provides.
- Although appropriately skilled and knowledgeable about many aspects of the school, governors do not hold senior leaders rigorously to account.
- Leaders do not use their own evaluation of the school's effectiveness and their analyses of pupils' progress information to formulate clear, precise school improvement priorities. Leaders do not set appropriate targets by which they can measure their success.
- The quality of teaching and learning is variable across the school. This is because teachers do not have consistently high expectations of what their pupils can and should achieve.
- Teachers do not sufficiently challenge pupils in mathematics. Consequently, some pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
- Some aspects of pupils' reading skills are not sufficiently well developed.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities do not perform as well as other pupils nationally.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' writing skills are not consistently high. Consequently, some pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar skills are underdeveloped and the quality of their written work is not good enough.

The school has the following strengths

- Recent appointments to the leadership team have had a positive effect on the quality of education that the school provides. For example, there are early signs of improvement in teaching and learning across the school.
- Staff share leaders' ambition and determination to improve the school further. They appreciate the ongoing training that they receive to improve teaching and learning.
- As part of a varied curriculum, pupils enjoy a full range of extra-curricular activities.
- Pupils are well cared for and they feel safe at school.
- Pupils' rates of attendance are improving rapidly. Far fewer pupils are regularly absent from school than was the case in the past.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - ensuring that teachers have the highest expectations of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities
 - matching work to pupils' ability in reading to ensure that they have enough opportunities to improve inference skills
 - ensuring that pupils improve their grammar, punctuation and spelling skills and their presentation so that the overall quality of pupils' written work is of a higher standard
 - challenging pupils more effectively in mathematics.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that leaders use their own evaluation of the school's effectiveness to set precise, quantifiable targets that support school improvement
 - ensuring that governors hold leaders robustly to account for the quality of their work
 - robustly monitoring and evaluating the impact of the teaching and learning on pupils' progress
- An external review of the school's use of pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Recent appointments and the restructure of the leadership team in September 2017 are beginning to have a positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The new deputy headteacher, the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) and the strengthened middle leadership team have quickly identified accurately areas for improvement. Staff morale is high because the school is improving and there is a real sense of 'team spirit'.
- Leaders' strategies to improve pupils' progress have not yet been effective in ensuring that pupils make at least good progress from their different starting points. This includes disadvantaged pupils and those who have SEN and/or disabilities.
- Pupils do not make consistently good progress across the school, particularly in reading and mathematics. However, leaders are working with local schools to develop and strengthen the teaching of English and mathematics at Banks Lane Junior School. There are clear indications that this support is beginning to improve the quality of teaching and learning for pupils.
- Leaders do not routinely use their self-evaluation, their analyses of pupils' progress and the information that they gain from monitoring the quality of teaching to produce specific, measurable targets for school improvement. As a result, development plans are not precise enough to ensure that they are helpful in driving the school forward.
- Leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning are at times overgenerous. They do not pay sufficient attention to pupils' progress. Consequently, the drive to secure improvement has not been as effective as it could have been and, as a consequence, some weaker aspects remain.
- Teachers are appreciative of the recent wider opportunities provided for ongoing staff training. Leaders rightly identify this as a key priority in securing improvements to teaching, learning and assessment. Closer working links with the infant school and collaborative work across other schools have led to a recent increase in enthusiasm from class teachers.
- Funding for disadvantaged pupils has not been used as effectively as it should be. It has not had the desired effect on improving outcomes for this group of pupils.
- As a result of a recent review, the newly appointed leader for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities has now given much more careful thought and consideration to how the SEN funding is spent. This is to ensure that focused plans support the progress and attainment of this group of pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the performance management of teachers is managed successfully and links to the school's priorities. The pay policy is applied thoroughly and fairly during annual appraisals and reviews.
- Leaders' use of additional physical education and sport funding is effective. Pupils enjoy a wide diversity of sporting activities as well as residential activities. Sport and extra-curricular clubs help pupils to maintain a healthy lifestyle. They promote active involvement in physical education.

- The curriculum broadly meets the needs of the pupils and matches their interests and experiences. Extra-curricular opportunities provide pupils with a varied range of enrichment activities. Pupils particularly enjoy the strong focus on music. The music provision links directly to the Fosbrook Folk Education Trust. This promotes quality opportunities for pupils to participate in dance, music and song within school and the wider community.
- Leaders are effective in preparing pupils for life in modern Britain. The curriculum provides good opportunities for pupils to reflect on their social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Regular assemblies allow pupils to develop a secure understanding of British values.
- The majority of parents are supportive of the school and would recommend it. However, there are a minority of parents who feel that bullying is not always dealt with appropriately or swiftly enough.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very knowledgeable about many aspects of the school and bring a wealth of expertise to their role. They have the skills to make the required improvements to the overall quality of education. However, the level of challenge offered to senior leaders is not as rigorous as it could be.
- Governors do not thoroughly track the progress leaders make towards achieving key improvement priorities.
- Governors have a broadly accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, they are aware of the issues relating to the weak progress of some pupils, particularly in reading. However, governors do not hold leaders to account for such weaknesses sufficiently effectively. This is because key school documents, including leaders' self-evaluation of the effectiveness of the school and the school improvement plan, currently lack quantifiable measures of impact.
- Governors effectively fulfil their statutory safeguarding duties.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that the necessary employment checks and vetting procedures are fully in place. Records are meticulously kept for staff, volunteers, governors, contractors and visitors.
- All staff have received training in child protection procedures and all middle leaders have received additional enhanced training. Consequently, the school's staff have a good understanding of what to do if they feel pupils are at risk.
- Leaders work relentlessly to identify and then support pupils for whom they have concerns. They are proactive in contacting the local authority or liaising with external agencies to support potentially vulnerable pupils. Leaders keep detailed records of their safeguarding work and the way in which they work with families who may need extra help to support them.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is not yet consistently good across the school. Although improvements are emerging, too much variability in the quality of teaching affects the pupils' learning experiences and reduces pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some teachers' expectations of what some pupils can and should achieve are not consistently high enough across a range of subjects.
- Leaders have introduced a new approach to the teaching of reading through ongoing staff training. This has strengthened teachers' subject knowledge. Teachers now promote a strong reading culture, which, along with visits from authors, is motivating pupils to enjoy books.
- Pupils are gaining in confidence. They speak positively about this new way of working and how this has improved their reading skills. However, at times, activities lack challenge. Teachers do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to develop more complex reading skills, such as working out exactly what an author might mean in a text.
- The teaching of mathematics requires improvement. For example, in mathematics lessons, pupils choose their own level of challenge and this can result in work being either too easy or occasionally too hard. Some teachers do not check how well pupils are achieving during lessons, nor move them on in their learning quickly enough when they show that they have understood. Pupils too often repeat work that they already know and can do. This slows their progress.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of pupils' writing. As a result, pupils' written work is not consistently presented to a high standard. It does not clearly demonstrate the application of the rules of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
- Some teachers and teaching assistants ask a range of challenging questions to extend pupils' learning. In these instances, pupils are encouraged to find answers for themselves and are not afraid to make mistakes. Consequently, pupils gain in independence and are not overly reliant on adult support.
- Teachers make some links across the curriculum. For example, inspectors observed pupils applying mathematical skills and knowledge to their investigation work in science and, in Year 6, pupils used a historical theme to write a letter.
- Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage them sensitively. This ensures a secure learning environment where pupils feel confident to participate in learning. Classrooms are generally calm, orderly and purposeful. Pupils know that they are expected to behave well and they mostly rise to these expectations.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy. Pupils are set activities to consolidate their learning in English and mathematics or are set appropriate tasks to match other areas of the curriculum which expand their skills, knowledge and understanding. A majority of parents who made their views known during the inspection believe that their child receives appropriate homework for their age.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare requires improvement.
- Some pupils' attitudes to learning are not yet consistently strong across the school. This can affect their learning and progress.
- Some pupils do not take sufficient pride in their work. For example, their handwriting and overall presentation are not good enough. This reduces the quality and standard of work being presented, particularly in English.
- Most pupils do not consider bullying an issue in this school. However, a small number of pupils describe being concerned about bullying. They are confident to report it to an adult and talk positively about the approaches used by the school, but equally feel that the resulting actions do not always fully resolve the issue.
- Leaders keep detailed records of bullying incidents and a recent review of bullying procedures identified clear strategies for keeping pupils safe. Staff strongly promote anti-bullying messages through assemblies, campaigns and the curriculum.
- Pupils' voice is at the forefront of pupils' welfare in school. Pupils are appointed as 'restorative approaches champions' and represent the views of pupils from each year group as well as supporting peers to resolve issues and concerns.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is catered for successfully. Pupils learn to appreciate diversity and show tolerance of others. Pupils understand the difference between right and wrong and apply this to situations in their own life.
- Pupils learn how to stay safe in a range of situations. Learning outdoors is a priority for the school and enables pupils to assess dangers independently in a real context. Pupils receive first-aid training across the whole school, preparing them well for keeping themselves and others safe.
- Welfare arrangements are strong. Staff fulfil their responsibility to take care of pupils and report any concerns promptly. Leaders diligently follow up any concerns that staff raise.
- Pupils are very aware of online safety. They know the importance of not sharing passwords with anyone and are confident in reporting anything suspicious to an adult. The school works very well with parents to develop their e-safety awareness.
- Visitors are made to feel very welcome by the warm, friendly and caring ethos of the school. This enables pupils to grow in confidence and become helpful members of the school community.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- During the inspection, pupils generally behaved well in lessons and in the playground.

However, there was some off-task behaviour. Typically, this occurs when teachers do not match work effectively to pupils' different abilities. As a result, pupils' interest and engagement are lost.

- Pupils are polite and friendly and are effectively supervised by staff, particularly when moving around the school site. They respond positively when adults make them aware that they are not meeting expectations.
- Pupils' attendance is continually improving. Historically, the number of pupils who were regularly absent from school has been above the national average. This figure is now reducing. Leaders and staff have worked effectively to improve pupils' overall attendance and have put in place robust procedures for dealing with absence. This has had a positive impact on all groups of pupils.
- The breakfast club supports pupils in starting the day well. This is helping to improve the drive to improve pupils' attendance.
- Leaders have put effective systems in place to monitor patterns of poor behaviour, identifying 'hot spots' around school and carrying out actions to remedy these. Their considered actions and focus on specific approaches to resolving behavioural issues have led to a reduction in the overall incidence of poor behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Progress across the school, particularly in reading and mathematics, is too variable. Pupils' progress in reading has fallen into the lowest 20% of schools nationally for three consecutive years. However, although pupils' progress in reading and mathematics is still below the national average, progress in reading in the 2017 national assessment test indicated strong improvement.
- The school's own information about pupils' outcomes indicates that there are improvements in the achievement of pupils currently in school. Many pupils make steady progress although it is not consistently good. Inspectors found clear evidence that improvements to pupils' outcomes can be seen since the new senior leadership team was formed and the restructured middle leadership team has been in place.
- Pupils enjoy reading. They become increasingly confident readers who enjoy a variety of books. Pupils talk confidently about the authors they prefer and appear more self-assured following recent changes to the teaching of reading. Pupils' workbooks show that their progress in reading is improving steadily.
- The progress in writing made by the most able pupils was above the national average in 2017. Pupils' attainment at both the expected and higher standards is above the national average. However, in 2017, attainment in the grammar, punctuation and spelling test was well below the national average at both the expected and the higher standard for all groups of pupils. Pupils' lack of knowledge and understanding of grammar, punctuation and spelling has a direct impact on pupils' ability to apply these to their written work. This holds them back in terms of confidence and affects the overall quality of their writing.

- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected and higher standards in mathematics was just below the national average. Pupils' progress in mathematics is more variable over time. Pupils' progress is improving most rapidly in mathematics when teachers set appropriately challenging tasks.
- Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils and for those pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is well below the national average. Leaders have appointed a new coordinator for SEN and/or disabilities and a 'pupil premium champion' to ensure that the targets put in place for this group of pupils are sufficiently challenging and take account of pupils' different starting points. Disadvantaged pupils currently in the school now make better progress.
- Leaders have promptly ensured that teachers' assessments of pupils' progress are more accurate than in the past. Leaders now have systems in place that enable them to track pupils' attainment and progress carefully over time.

School details

Unique reference number	106028
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10037795

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 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	354
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	J Graham
Headteacher	E Milner
Telephone number	0161 480 2330
Website	www.bankslane-jun.stockport.sch.uk
Email address	admin@bankslane-jun.stockport.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	20–21 February 2013

Information about this school

- The school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards that pupils are expected to reach by the end of key stage 2.
- The school is a larger than average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is higher than that seen nationally. The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The deputy headteacher was new to the school in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes. Several of these observations were joint observations with senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with pupils from Years 3 to 6 and listened to several pupils read. They spoke to pupils in lessons, during playtimes and around the school.
- Inspectors met with senior leaders to discuss their evaluation of the school, outcomes for pupils and other aspects of the school's performance. The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and seven other governors. She also met with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with a range of other school leaders, including the SENCo.
- Inspectors carried out a detailed scrutiny of pupils' books in all year groups and across all ability ranges.
- Inspectors considered 103 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 100 free-text responses. An inspector met with parents at the school gate at the start of the day.

Inspection team

Gaynor Rennie, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Shackleton	Ofsted Inspector
David Woodhouse	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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