

# Bowker Vale Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	105397
<b>Local authority</b>	Manchester
<b>Inspection number</b>	377237
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Stephen Wall

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	373
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Patrick Evers
<b>Headteacher</b>	Rachel Jacques
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	20 January 2009
<b>School address</b>	Middleton Road Crumpsall Manchester M8 4NB
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## Introduction

### Inspection team

Stephen Wall  
Kirsteen Rigby  
Sheila Mawer

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons taught by 15 members of staff. A sample of pupils' written work was also inspected. A Key Stage 1 assembly was observed, as well as pupils' conduct during playtimes and lunchtimes. The inspectors held meetings with staff, groups of pupils and representatives of the governing body. The inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at a wide range of documentation including: the school's evaluation of its effectiveness; the school development plan; attendance and behavioural records; records of monitoring teaching and learning; and minutes of meetings of the governing body. The inspectors analysed 89 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

Bowker Vale is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above average. A high proportion of pupils come from a wide variety of minority ethnic groups, the largest of which is pupils of Pakistani origin. Consequently, the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also much higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and those with disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The number of pupils who join and/or leave the school at other than normal times is high. A significant proportion of these pupils join the school speaking very little or no English. The school meets the current floor standard.

From May 2010 to December 2011, the school was led and managed by an acting headteacher and an acting deputy headteacher. A new, permanent headteacher joined the school in January 2012. The acting deputy headteacher was appointed permanently as deputy headteacher in January 2012. The school provides and manages daily before- and after-school supervision for pupils. The school has Healthy School status. It holds accreditation as an Every Child a Counter and Every Child a Reader school.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory and 4 is inadequate**  
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- This is a good school. Acting senior leaders and managers have tackled weaknesses in teaching rigorously and effectively. They have also given a much sharper focus to the use of assessment to track pupils' progress and set higher expectations. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement has improved rapidly and significantly; both are good.
- Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress and achieve well. Good progress is maintained in Key Stages 1 and 2. All groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and those with disabilities and pupils who join the school at other than normal times also make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is above average. They say how safe they feel in school. They work and play together harmoniously. Pupils treat the adults working with them and each other respectfully. Behaviour around school and in lessons is good.
- This is a school in which all pupils are valued equally. Pupils with emotional or behavioural difficulties and their families, and those who join the school from abroad with little or no English, are supported very skilfully and effectively.
- Teaching is consistently good. Teachers have good subject knowledge which they use effectively to plan interesting lessons. However, there are a few inconsistencies. For example, the level of challenge is not always closely enough matched to pupils' ages, previous learning and abilities.
- Good leadership and management are driving the school strongly forward. The issues for improvement identified at the time of the previous inspection have been tackled effectively. Development of the satisfactory curriculum has started. However, the school recognises that further development is necessary to maximise its impact on raising pupils' literacy and numeracy skills even further.

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

- Further raise pupils' attainment and accelerate their progress through increasing the amount of outstanding teaching to ensure that:
  - pupils are always appropriately challenged according to their differing needs, abilities and ages
  - more opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their skills as independent learners.
- Enhance the quality of the curriculum further by:
  - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop and apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a wider range of subjects
  - better reflecting pupils' ideas and interests in what they are taught.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Pupils make good progress and achieve well. In lessons pupils are eager to learn. They are industrious and strive to give of their best. Pupils are always keen to answer questions. They enjoy working independently in pairs and small groups where they willingly contribute their thoughts and ideas. Pupils listen respectfully to the views of others. However, in a few lessons opportunities for pupils to find things out for themselves are too limited. This acts occasionally as a brake on accelerating progress at a faster rate.

Children join the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are generally below age-related expectations and sometimes well below expected levels. They make good progress because teaching and provision support their learning very effectively. Pupils continue to make good progress as they move up through the school. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, attainment is in line with national averages and rising. Analysis of school contextual data shows that the influx of pupils who join the school in Key Stage 2 speaking little or no English depresses overall attainment statistics significantly. Some pupils, especially pupils of Pakistani heritage who have been in school throughout Key Stage 2, make outstanding progress. School data, confirmed by inspection evidence, show that attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 is set to rise further because expectations have been raised and the quality of teaching is securely good. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are known to be eligible for free school meals also make good progress because of the effective support they receive. The attainment of White British pupils, especially boys, is also rising securely. The gap between their attainment and other groups of pupils is closing rapidly and securely because teaching is providing a sharper focus on stimulating their interest and setting tasks more appropriate to their needs.

The teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) is good. As a result, pupils make good progress in developing their reading skills. By the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' attainment in reading is broadly average. Questionnaires returned by parents and carers show overwhelming satisfaction with the progress their children are making.

## Quality of teaching

Teaching is good. Parents and carers are unanimous in their satisfaction with the quality of teaching their children receive. Pupils also say that the teaching they receive is good. The school is keen to increase the proportion of teaching that is outstanding in order to raise attainment further and to enable pupils to progress at an even faster rate.

The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the previous inspection, especially in the nursery. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the quality of teaching has also improved because teachers are more secure in knowing how well individuals are doing and what the needs of different groups are. Teachers plan activities that are usually appropriately challenging for different groups of learners by age and ability. However, sometimes the level of challenge is too high for some groups of pupils and too low for others. Teaching is conducted at a lively pace with good variety so that pupils are kept interested and on their toes. For example, in one Key Stage 2 English lesson, pupils' interest was stimulated and held by a wide variety of activities such as role play, independent research, active involvement and excellent creative use of information and communication technology (ICT). As a result, pupils were fully engaged and appropriately challenged. Their progress was consequently outstanding. Most teaching uses pair work and small group work effectively to give pupils opportunities to learn independently. However, on some occasions teachers take too long over explanations and provide information too readily when pupils might make better progress if given more opportunities to find things out for themselves. Marking is regular and gives clear indications of what pupils need to do to improve their work. Learning support assistants make an effective contribution to supporting the learning and progress of lower-attaining pupils, those with special educational needs and those with disabilities. Support for pupils who are slow readers or whose numeracy skills are weak is well planned and very effective in accelerating their progress.

Good teaching is supported by a satisfactory and improving curriculum. Topic work has been introduced to provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy and numeracy skills in more meaningful contexts. However, curriculum development is at an early stage and lacks some rigour in planning how to exploit the impact of developments to full effect. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work respectfully together and with the adults working with them. This and the strong relationships between adults and pupils, make a valuable contribution to pupils' good social, moral, spiritual and cultural development.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Returned questionnaires show that a small minority of parents and carers do not feel that behaviour in lessons is good enough. However, pupils say that behaviour is consistently good. Pupils state that lessons are very rarely interrupted because of inappropriate behaviour and, if this happens, adults are quick to deal with it effectively. This was borne out by inspection observations and analysis of the school's behavioural records which provide strong support for behaviour being good. Pupils are clear about what behaviour is expected of them and any failure to live up to the high expectations is dealt with fairly and consistently. Most parents and carers do not express any concerns about bullying. Pupils say that bullying is rare and, again, on the few occasions when it occurs, it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Racial bullying or name-calling is also rare and is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Pupils who join the school from abroad or who speak little or no English are treated with patience and unerring respect. The support provided for these pupils and their families is outstandingly effective in enabling them to understand the school setting and to

settle in seamlessly. The work of the team of therapeutic support workers provides highly effective support for pupils who find it difficult to manage their own behaviour and involves families closely in the implementation of support strategies.

The school has very comprehensive procedures in place to check on and promote attendance. As a result, and because of pupils' very positive attitudes towards school, attendance levels are above average. Punctuality to school and to lessons is consistently good. Pupils say how safe they feel in school. Parents and carers are almost unanimous in feeling that the school keeps their children safe. They talk knowledgeably about the dangers inherent in using the internet. They understand what constitute potentially dangerous situations and how to avoid and/or handle them.

## **Leadership and management**

Good leadership and management provide the school with a sharp focus on improvement and a clear vision for future development. Accurate self-evaluation informs good quality strategic planning that provides a step-by-step pathway to successful implementation of its aims and objectives. The governing body provides good support and holds the school rigorously to account. Since the previous inspection, the overall effectiveness of the school has improved from being satisfactory to good thus demonstrating the school's strong capacity for further improvement. Teaching and learning are monitored regularly and rigorously. Professional development of staff is well planned and effective in driving up the quality of teaching and learning. Subject leaders are secure in their roles. They monitor their subjects accurately and use the outcomes to tackle relative shortcomings effectively. Leaders and managers have tightened procedures for tracking pupils' progress towards demanding targets. As a result, pupils are much clearer about the progress that is expected of them and what they need to do to improve their learning.

The curriculum is satisfactory and improving. Although the curriculum currently effectively promotes pupils' overall good progress, it is currently satisfactory rather than good. This is because it is at a relatively early stage of providing more enjoyable pupil-initiated experiences and wider opportunities for them to further develop their literacy and numeracy skills across a range of subjects. Its development to maximise its impact on pupils' learning and progress is at a relatively early stage. The introduction of topic work is proving popular with pupils, although they would welcome more input into what topics they might study and more opportunities to provide feedback on what works well and what aspects are less successful. Leaders' and managers' impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very positive. They promote a strong ethos for pupils to work and play together harmoniously, and pupils' good behaviour shows their strong understanding of right and wrong. Pupils' understanding of diversity and other cultures is promoted effectively through visits, a range of visitors to school and in the curriculum. The racial harmony that is clearly evident in this ethnically diverse school testifies to pupils' respect for diversity, other cultures and religions. Procedures for safeguarding meet statutory requirements. Staff training in child protection is regular and of good quality. The governing body is meticulous in ensuring that policies relating to safeguarding are in place and reviewed regularly. The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination very effectively.

The before- and after-school childcare provision is led and managed effectively. It is welcoming and happy. It takes place in a safe and secure environment because there are good levels of adult supervision. It provides a good range of activities for pupils of all ages.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.



## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Bowker Vale Primary School, Manchester, M8 4NB**

Thank you for your warm welcome when my colleagues and I inspected your school recently.

Bowker Vale is a good school. It has improved a lot since its last inspection because leaders and managers have tackled the then weaker aspects of the school's work very effectively. It was good to see how well you all get on together and how well you behave. Nearly all of you attend school regularly – well done! It was also pleasing to see how well you welcome newcomers to your school and help them settle in; especially pupils who speak little or no English. You make good progress because the teaching you receive is good and because you have positive attitudes to learning.

- In order to help you make even better progress and attain even higher standards, I am asking your school to do the following things:
  - make sure that more teaching is outstanding
  - ensure that teaching is always challenging enough for your differing needs, abilities and ages
  - make sure that you always get opportunities to find out more things for yourselves
  - make sure that what you study is planned with a sharper focus on how it can help you make even more progress in literacy and numeracy and reflects your ideas and interests more.

I am confident that you will continue to work hard to make sure your school continues to improve even further in the coming years.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Wall  
Lead inspector

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