

Chowbent Primary School

Laburnum Street, Atherton, Manchester, M46 9FP

Inspection dates 19–20 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
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 good because

- Standards at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have been significantly below average overall in English and mathematics for some time. From their individual starting points, pupils do not make consistently good progress.
- Not enough teaching is good or better to accelerate pupils' progress to a good rate. Teachers' expectations of the efficient use of time are not always high enough and so learning time is lost.
- The spelling and handwriting skills of older pupils are not secure enough to ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of education.
- Exceptional circumstances, leading to unavoidable and significant disruptions in staffing in the current school year, have hampered efforts of leaders to improve the school at a good rate.
- The planned programme of staff training aimed at improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement has not had a full impact. Leaders have yet to ensure that the best teaching practices are effectively shared among staff and bring about consistency in teachers' practice.

The school has the following strengths

- Pupils now in Year 2 and Year 6 are making good progress. As a result, standards are beginning to rise.
- Behaviour is good and this makes a good contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average.
- The school is improving. Actions taken by senior leaders have resulted in good improvements in pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make (phonics). Standards in reading are now improving at a good rate.
- Parents speak highly of the extensive help they receive from the school to enable them to support their children's learning and behaviour at home.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well.
- There are robust systems for checking the performance of staff.
- Governors have supported senior leaders particularly effectively through a very difficult period. They have a good understanding of pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 11 teachers and higher-level teaching assistants in 18 lessons, one of which was a joint observation with the headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of short visits to lessons.
- Discussions were held with staff, parents, pupils, and members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority and the headteacher of a partner school in the local consortium of schools.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised the work in their books.
- They looked at the school’s development plan, documentation about pupils’ progress, procedures for safeguarding pupils and monitoring the performance of staff.
- Inspectors took account of the 39 responses by parents to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), an analysis of the school’s survey for pupils, and also two letters received from parents. In addition, they scrutinised 20 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

Shirley Herring, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

John Shutt

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school and all its classes contain just one age group.
- Most pupils are from a White British background.
- For much of the current year, including during the inspection, three of the seven classes are being taught by agency supply staff. Some of these classes have had several teachers during this school year.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average while the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is broadly average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and children who are looked after.
- The school is part of a local consortium of schools sharing expertise and the training of staff. The independent before- and after-school club on site, School Shuttle, is inspected separately and the report is available on the Ofsted website.
- The school meets the current floor standards for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics set by the government.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good so that pupils make good progress and so that that attainment by the end of Year 6 in English and mathematics is at least average by ensuring that:
 - teachers always have high expectations of the pace of learning, particularly when pupils are moving between activities
 - all teachers give pupils time to address any misunderstandings identified from marking pupils' work at the earliest opportunity so that pupils do not repeat the same mistakes in future work
 - pupils are given more chances to use and develop their numeracy skills in investigating and solving mathematical problems
 - pupils are given more opportunities to use their improving phonic skills by widening the range of reading in order to enrich and improve the quality of pupils' writing, including their spelling
 - teachers always insist that pupils pay attention to how they present their work, especially so that pupils do not mix printing and joined up writing in the same task.
- Further improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that the best teaching practices are shared more effectively among staff and that these practices are adopted by all staff.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because the quality of teaching is not consistently good and so the rate of progress is not fast enough. Not enough pupils make progress at a better rate than that expected nationally.
- Children enter the school with a range of skills that overall are below what is typically expected for their age. Most children make at least the expected progress in the Reception class but nevertheless, the skills of some children are below the level expected for their age by the time they enter Year 1.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 1 have been significantly below average for several years. However, the school's assessments and the quality of work seen in pupils' books show an improvement for the current Year 2. There has been a significant increase in the number working at the expected level because their progress is speeding up. However, fewer pupils are working at the higher levels of attainment than are expected to do so nationally.
- Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 have been significantly below average overall for the past two years, although they are better in mathematics than in English. Assessments for the pupils currently in Year 6, along with the work seen in pupils' books indicate an improving picture. The proportion of pupils now working at the level expected for their age is similar to the national picture. Furthermore, there are now more pupils exceeding the expected level than previously. Previous weaknesses in pupils' spelling and handwriting skills are now being addressed so that the proportion making at least the expected progress is at least average and improving. Even so there is more to do to make sure that pupils make good progress. Pupils' handwriting, for example, is improving, but teachers do not always insist that pupils pay attention to how they present their work. Some pupils mix printing and joined up writing in the same task.
- Pupils' achievement in reading is improving at a good rate. Although the results of the national reading check in Year 1 in 2012 were low, an increased focus on the daily teaching of letter sounds has resulted in a considerable improvement in this aspect in the current year. Attainment in reading is below average in Year 2 and Year 6, but is also improving. Pupils are using their phonic skills increasingly well to help them develop into more confident readers. However, their reading experiences are still not yet wide enough to enrich their writing skills, including their spelling.
- In the past, the proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium in the school making the expected level of progress has been below that of those pupils not eligible and lower than that of similar pupils nationally. Their levels of attainment have also been lower. In 2012, for example, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals were about three terms behind their classmates. However, provision for these pupils is now improving, such as, more targeted support in lessons and additional booster sessions and, as a result, this previous wide gap is starting to close.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive well-targeted support and so they are making similar progress to that of their peers.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Although the quality of teaching is improving, not enough teaching is yet good to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress. Several unavoidable staff changes in the current year have hampered the efforts of leaders to bring about consistency in teachers' practice.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils are to achieve within the time available are not always high enough. This is particularly the case as pupils move from one task to the next, when too much learning time is sometimes wasted.
- Teachers mark pupils' work carefully, giving pupils clear suggestions as to how they can improve. Where teaching is good, teachers address any misunderstandings identified from

marking pupils' work early in the next lesson and, as a result, pupils do not repeat the same mistakes in future work. This good practice, however, is not used consistently across the classes.

- The quality of teaching is improving. In Key Stage 2 for example, pupils are now taught in groups of similar ability and as a result, the work planned and provided meets pupils differing needs and abilities more precisely. The skills of well trained teaching assistants are effectively deployed and they make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers' explanations and expectations are clear and so pupils know what their particular target is and know how to judge whether they have achieved it.
- There is now an improved emphasis on developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills in specific lessons and in other subjects. Pupils in Year 3, for example, wrote about Nelson Mandela in their topic work. However, there are not yet enough opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical skills in solving problems to ensure that they develop their skills at a good rate.
- Teachers make good use of high quality resources to help pupils develop their skills and understanding of new topics. This was seen when pupils used geared clocks to help them to work out how long certain activities took.
- Teachers promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, for example by arranging visits to the local chapel and to a mosque.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Questionnaires completed by pupils, parents and staff all indicate that behaviour, over time, is good.
- Pupils are polite, friendly and well-behaved and this supports their learning well.
- Most pupils listen carefully in class, are keen to answer questions and get on with their work. Sometimes, pupils do not move between activities quickly enough and this slows their learning.
- Pupils have a good awareness of different forms of bullying, including prejudiced-based bullying, and are clear that rare instances are dealt with quickly and effectively.
- As 'Eco-Warriors', pupils learn to care for the environment and the school holds the highest award as an Eco-school.
- Pupils care a good deal about the needs of others around the world less fortunate than themselves. They raise money for charities, such as Water Aid in order to provide running water for people in Africa.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They clearly understand the dangers related to use of the internet and pupils learn about road safety at a young age.
- Extensive efforts by the school, including working with parents, have resulted in a substantial improvement in punctuality and attendance. Attendance is now above average.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- The school's leadership is beginning to improve the school. The decision to reorganise teaching groups according to pupils' ability in Key Stage 2, for example, is beginning to have a positive impact on raising standards. Improvements in pupils' recognition of letters and sounds, the improving standards now evident at the end of Years 2 and 6 and improved attendance all indicate that the school has the capacity to improve further.
- Nevertheless, the pace of improvement is steady, rather than good. Extensive disruptions to staffing in the current school year have impacted on the efforts of leaders to improve the quality of teaching and to accelerate pupils' progress to a consistently good rate. Too much teaching still requires improvement. Some leadership roles have recently been undertaken on a temporary basis to support the school during this time of disruption.
- There are now rigorous systems in place to check the performance of staff and these are being used well to identify staff strengths and their training needs. Even so, leaders are aware that they have yet to ensure that the good teaching practices evident are effectively shared among

staff and that agreed approaches to teaching are applied consistently well.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and is improving, particularly in reading. However, leaders have yet to ensure that pupils' spelling, handwriting, and skills in investigating and solving varied mathematical problems improve at a good rate.
- The school's procedures for gaining a precise view of its performance are accurate and provide a good basis for planning further improvements. Senior leaders know that their next steps include making sure that pupils' reading experiences are widened even further in order to enrich and improve their writing skills.
- The school is committed to providing equal opportunities and discrimination is not tolerated. Even so, some variances in the achievements of pupils, while narrowing, still remain.
- The local authority is providing appropriate support. It facilitates a close link with local schools within the consortium, from which the school is benefiting, such as sharing in staff training sessions.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors are now well trained. They are well aware of their responsibilities in safeguarding pupils and staff and all the required systems are in place. They have provided exceptional and compassionate support for the school during a difficult year. They are a regular presence in school. They are particularly knowledgeable about the data related to the school's performance in comparison to that of similar schools. They are aware of how the pupil premium is being used and how it is affecting the progress of pupils who are entitled to it. They know the school well and have a clear understanding of the quality of teaching. They provide well-informed support and challenge for senior leaders.

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	106443
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	405035

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	176
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Heapy
Headteacher	James Randle
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2011
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