

Gaskell Community Primary School

Thomas Holden Street, Bolton, Lancashire, BL1 2QG

Inspection dates 25–26 June 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Inadequate	4
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching; it is now good overall and outstanding in Key Stage 2.
- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points and almost all reach age related expectations by the end of Year 6.
- Staff has successfully created a positive and caring climate for learning where each pupil feels valued as an individual.
- Pupils’ behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. They are well motivated, polite and respectful.
- The headteacher has provided clear direction and successfully raised expectations.
- Senior leaders work effectively as a team to monitor the school’s work thoroughly and drive improvements in the quality of teaching and pupil achievement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- In the Nursery and outdoor area there are insufficient language and number linked resources and activities.
- Marking does not always give enough detailed attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, two of which were joint observations with the headteacher. They also visited intervention groups, listened to pupils read and discussed book choices and preferences with them.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils and discussed their experiences of school. They looked at a range of pupils' work and took account of the school's data on pupils' attainment and progress.
- Meetings were held with school leaders and other staff, two members of the governing body and two representatives from the local authority.
- There were insufficient responses to the online parent questionnaire (Parent View) to provide inspectors with data. Inspectors took account of surveys of parents carried out by the school. They also took account of the 37 questionnaires returned by staff.
- Inspectors looked at a number of documents; these included, plans for improvement, teachers' plans, safeguarding documents, records relating to behaviour and attendance, governing body minutes and records of the school leaders' monitoring of lessons.

Inspection team

Ruth James, Lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Dave Blackburne

Additional Inspector

Doreen Davenport

Additional Inspector

Full report

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement.

Information about this school

- Gaskell Community Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well above average.
- About 6% of pupils are supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. A slightly higher percentage is supported through school action. Both of these figures are slightly below the respective national averages.
- Almost three quarters of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds, which is well above average. The largest group is of Pakistani heritage and they comprise nearly half of the school population. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is high.
- The headteacher was appointed to the permanent position in September 2012, after a year as acting headteacher. Two new deputy headteachers were appointed in September 2012.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 through better sharing of the excellent practice that exists in Key Stage 2.
- Increase the emphasis given to spelling, punctuation and grammar in the marking of pupils work, especially in Upper Key Stage 2.
- Further promote the development of language and number skills of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - displaying more language based materials in the nursery environment
 - developing a wider range of language and number linked resources and activities in the outdoor area.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Nursery with social, language and number skills that are well below those typically expected for their age. As a consequence of targeted support, effective teaching and learning, as well as rigorous monitoring, pupils make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. However, levels of attainment remain below average by the end of Reception.
- Children continue to make good progress during Key Stage 1. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is close to average and attainment in writing and mathematics is below average.
- Progress accelerates rapidly during Key Stage 2 as a result of outstanding teaching so that almost all pupils reach at least the levels expected for their age in both English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Due to effective support, both within lessons and during small group interventions, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress, similar to their peers.
- The teaching of letters and sounds is effective in developing pupils reading skills and their love of books. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about the books in the school library. The school responded to the gap between boys and girls reading levels in 2012 by purchasing additional boy-friendly literature. The school also encourages boys in reading through 'Extreme Reading Challenge' which is helping to close the gap.
- The school uses pupil premium funds well to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals by giving additional support. For example, the school has increased targeted small group work in letters and sounds, reading and mathematics, and extra one-to-one and small group tuition from two experienced teachers; as a result, these pupils make very good progress from their starting points. However, they still reach lower levels of attainment than other pupils. In 2012 at the end of Key Stage 2, those in receipt of pupil premium funding were about two terms behind in English and nearly five terms behind in mathematics. Current school assessment data suggests that these gaps are narrowing.
- Pupils, for whom English is not the first language, make better progress than their peers and reach higher standards of attainment in English and mathematics.
- Pupils of Pakistani heritage achieve particularly well, especially in mathematics. In 2012 more than half of this group of pupils gained the higher Level 5 in mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- High expectations, well-planned and wide ranging staff development and whole school commitment mean that teaching has improved very well since the last inspection. The quality of teaching is now good overall and outstanding in Key Stage 2.
- In the best lessons, teachers astutely observe and skilfully question pupils, adapting their teaching to improve learning and understanding. Well-planned resources help to ensure that no time is wasted. Support is effectively targeted where it is most needed. Opportunities for collaborative working such as talk partners and small group work are managed well and enhance learning.
- The organisation of English and mathematics lessons in Key Stage 2 in ability groups has enabled teachers to closely match work and their teaching to the needs of pupils. This has led to rapid progress and pupils working with confidence. For example, in an outstanding Year 5 mathematics lesson the tasks set were well matched to pupils' differing abilities including the more-able pupils, who tackled challenging and thought provoking problems diligently and independently.
- Assessment of reading, writing and mathematics is completed each term and recorded on a school-wide tracking system. Each year group's progress is thoroughly analysed and weaknesses are identified. Any pupils who are not making the progress expected receive further support to

boost their learning.

- The teaching of reading is well established and effective. Pupils are taught the links between letters and the sounds they represent in appropriate ability groups. As a result, learning is accurately matched to pupils' needs and any gaps in knowledge are successfully tackled. There are increasing opportunities for pupils to apply their reading, writing and mathematical skills in different subjects so that learning is purposeful and relevant.
- Teachers deploy teaching assistants effectively to support learning, including for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Teaching in Key Stage 1, although good, is not as effective as in Key Stage 2 and this is reflected in pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning. Occasionally, pupils talk at the same time as the teacher or take time in settling to work. Group activities are not always sufficiently skilfully managed to ensure that all participate and make rapid progress.
- Resources in the nursery and outdoor area promote personal and social development very effectively. The Nursery does not have enough language based displays and labels. The outdoor area has insufficient resources and activities focused on language and mathematical skills.
- The marking of pupils work is generally effective and in many books, pupils have followed up teachers' comments and corrected or improved their work. However, spelling, grammar and punctuation errors are not pointed out assiduously enough.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The school is a harmonious environment and pupils fully understand the importance of good behaviour. They are courteous and helpful, and treat adults and their peers with respect.
- Pupils flourish in their personal development because the school fosters good relations and tackles any discrimination; this ensures everybody has an equal chance to learn. Individual pupils who sometimes find it difficult to behave appropriately are effectively supported because adults know all the pupils in the school very well and respond to their needs in a positive and caring manner.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is reflected in their very positive attitudes, the way they welcome newcomers and their willingness to take on responsibility.
- Relationships are strong and these underpin pupils' good behaviour in lessons. Any incidents of inappropriate behaviour are quickly resolved. Staff manages behaviour well, reward good behaviour and use sanctions judiciously and sensitively.
- Pupils feel safe and have confidence that staff will deal promptly and effectively with the very rare instances of bullying. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe and the importance of e-safety.
- Pupils' attendance has improved well as a result of very effective and well-targeted initiatives; it is now around the national average. Persistent absence has reduced because of close monitoring, analysis of patterns of absence, and effective work with families to resolve underlying causes.

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides clear and effective leadership. With calm authority and warmth she has successfully created a climate where expectations of all pupils are high. Together with senior leaders, she has improved staff morale and motivated teachers and other staff to improve the quality of teaching; this, in turn has accelerated progress and raised standards of attainment significantly.
- Senior leaders provide very good role models for teachers and pupils. New policies have been developed and senior leaders are rigorous in ensuring that they are followed consistently. The regular and thorough scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work are contributing well to raising pupils' achievement. Pupil progress meetings have resulted in greater ownership by

teachers. It has also resulted in a clearer focus on the intervention strategies that need to be implemented to secure accelerated progress where underachievement is identified.

- The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of pupils. It provides a range of positive experiences and promotes good quality learning, and personal development. A range of visits enhances the curriculum and helps to develop pupils' academic, personal and social skills.
- The performance management of teachers includes the setting of appropriately demanding objectives closely linked to pupils' progress; these are discussed in regular meetings following the class assessment weeks. The headteacher has robustly addressed elements of weak teaching and has developed thorough management systems to ensure the focus on improving the quality of teaching continues.
- Observations of teaching are followed up assiduously with action plans devised where teaching is judged to be less than good. However, not enough is done to spread the excellent practice that exists in Key Stage 2 more widely.
- Parents feel welcome in school. They are kept well informed about how their children are doing. A parents' forum encourages communication and parental involvement.
- Safeguarding systems are robust and meet all requirements.
- The local authority provides effective support, and this has included supporting governors to improve their understanding of performance data and their ability to challenge school leaders.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is well led by an experienced Chair of Governors who has provided effective strategic leadership through a difficult period for the school.
 - Governors now have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They demonstrate a good knowledge of the schools performance data and how this compares with other schools.
 - Governors understand the school's systems for improving teaching and managing the performance of staff. They have challenged and supported the headteacher and senior leaders effectively in the drive for improvement, with a strong focus on the quality of teaching and raising achievement.
 - Pupil premium funding has been well managed. In addition to classroom based support, funds have enabled eligible pupils to attend a before-school information and communication technology based mathematics programme, an Easter holiday club for Year 6 pupils and curriculum enrichment activities.

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	105155
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	408860

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	352
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Hinchsliff
Headteacher	Emily Kirk
Date of previous school inspection	29 February 2012
Telephone number	01204 333666
Fax number	01204 333667
Email address	office@gaskell.bolton.sch.uk

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