

# Lower Fields Primary School

Fenby Avenue, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 8RG

**Inspection dates** 25–26 June 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
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.

- This is a school where the wide range of backgrounds, cultures and beliefs represented are very much celebrated and valued.
- Standards are rising and pupils achieve well. Pupils make at least the progress expected of them and many do even better.
- Most teaching is good. Staff are committed and hard-working and the leadership of teaching and learning is strong.
- Pupils work hard and behave well. They carry out a range of roles in school with maturity. For example, the 'green team' carefully checks that electricity is not needlessly wasted during 'switch-off fortnight'.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school and that they would find someone to help them if they had a problem.
- The headteacher, well supported by senior leaders, has high aspirations for pupils at Lower Fields. The school has improved significantly over the last three years.
- Governors know the school well and skilfully challenge the senior leaders to secure further improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- The school provides a good curriculum. The school grounds have been extensively developed. Pupils enjoy being active outdoors and such activities help support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in particular.
- Pupils are immensely proud of their school. A group of Year 6 pupils spoke very fondly about their time at Lower Fields. Their views are typically summed up in the comment: 'It is a place I would gladly stay at.'

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not yet outstanding and too few pupils make rapid progress. Occasionally, learning activities do not interest, inspire or challenge pupils enough to try their very best.
- Pupils' work is sometimes spoilt by poor grammar, punctuation and spelling and not all work is presented well.
- Marking does not always help pupils improve their work.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 20 part-lessons and made several other short visits to lessons to observe teaching and learning. Seven lessons were observed jointly with a senior leader.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ work, observed break times and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with pupils, school staff, senior leaders, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A number of documents were examined. They included the school’s own view of its performance, records of the checks made on teaching and learning, the school improvement plan, information about pupils’ progress and records relating to attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents through informal discussion with parents. Responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were too few to be available to inspectors for scrutiny.
- Inspectors analysed the 30 responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire about their views of the school.

## Inspection team

Fiona Gowers , Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Alan Parkinson	Additional Inspector
Nicola Shipman	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is much larger than that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for the free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above average, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported at school action is broadly average. However, the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is much higher than that found nationally.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school has the Quality Mark for Nurture Groups.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching from good to outstanding so pupils' achievement also becomes outstanding by:
  - ensuring lessons interest, challenge and inspire pupils to do their very best work, including those lessons situated outdoors
  - ensuring pupils act upon the marking and feedback provided so that they learn from the points for improvement and do not repeat the same mistakes
  - ensuring the presentation of pupils' work in all subjects consistently matches the very best examples in school
  - continuing to improve the teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling and pupils' knowledge of letters and the sounds they make.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When children start school here, their skills are generally well below those typical for their age, particularly in their communication and language development and their personal, social and emotional development.
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage has improved significantly since the previous inspection. This means that most children get off to a good start to their time at the school and quickly develop a keen desire to learn. Over half the children now reach a typical level of development for their age by the time they start Year 1. This is a marked improvement on former rates of progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Standards have historically been below average at Key Stage 1. However, improved teaching and much higher expectations in most classes are helping pupils learn more quickly. Standards at Key Stage 1 are rising rapidly in most subjects.
- Pupils at Key Stage 1 are steadily gaining a more secure understanding of letters and the sounds they make. However, in 2013, the proportion of pupils achieving a similar standard to most others nationally was below average and these weaknesses continue to hamper the fluency in reading among some pupils.
- Standards remained below average in the Key Stage 2 national tests and assessments in 2013. However, most pupils in the key stage make the progress expected of them or even more than this relative to their starting points. A detailed scrutiny of pupils' progress data and of the books in every year group shows standards are rising. The proportion of pupils who are reaching the age-expected level in most classes at Key Stage 2 is now close to the national figure.
- All staff have received additional training in the teaching of reading and this has helped to improve pupils' comprehension skills, in particular. This was shown in the quality of their reading observed during the inspection and in the detailed responses in their reading journals.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics from their starting points. The school is successfully identifying and addressing gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Approaches to mathematical calculations have been clarified and this has helped pupils tackle mathematical problems with greater confidence and accuracy.
- The quality of pupils' writing is improving, particularly in their English books. Some pupils' work is very well presented. However, pupils' writing in other subjects in particular, is sometimes spoilt by poor presentation, spelling and grammar.
- The school celebrates diversity and the different languages and cultures of its pupils. It endeavours to ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to succeed. As a result, previous gaps in pupils' learning are closing.
- Newcomers, including new learners of English, quickly settle in because relationships are strong. Pupils are helped to quickly grasp a basic grounding in English through additional support. This helps them understand their lessons more easily.
- Many of the most able pupils are making faster progress than previously because expectations are much higher in some classes. However, pupils' work is too easy, at times, in a few lessons.
- Pupil premium funding is used well. The most recent test results at the end of Year 6 in 2013 showed that pupils known to be eligible for free school meals made as much progress as other pupils in their class, even though they were four terms behind in their mathematics attainment and two terms behind in reading. In many other classes in school, there is no significant gap in attainment and progress between these two groups of pupils. Both groups typically do as well as each other, relative to their individual starting points.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is particularly high; standards can fluctuate a little from year to year. However, pupils with special educational needs do well, because staff are keenly aware of pupils' specific needs and analyse their progress regularly, continually adapting their approach to help these pupils learn as well as they can.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Most teaching is good. A scrutiny of pupils' work, the school's own records and reviews from the local authority and other external consultants confirm it is typically good.
- Teachers and teaching assistants mostly have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They usually provide work and tasks that get pupils thinking hard and inspire them to try their very best. Misconceptions are most often addressed swiftly. As a result, pupils usually learn quickly. An example of this was seen when pupils in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson were making rapid progress in solving complex problems.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children stay focused on their work for extended periods of time. They enjoy a wide range of activities, currently around the theme of animals, which really captivates their imagination. For example during the inspection, children made up their own stories while playing with some toy zoo animals and made animal masks for themselves.
- When pupils swiftly move on to more difficult work as soon as they are able, they make good progress. This was clearly seen in a Key Stage 1 mathematics lesson, where some of the six-year-old pupils were confidently and accurately adding and subtracting numbers to 100 and were clearly very proud of their accomplishments.
- Questioning is good because questions are carefully directed to suit pupils' different levels of language acquisition or ability. For example, in an English lesson at Key Stage 1, adults skilfully helped pupils to improve their descriptive language and extended their vocabulary as they encouraged them to use their senses to describe a particular setting.
- Many teaching assistants make a very significant contribution to pupils' learning both in the classroom and in group situations. For example, a group of pupils, who are in the early stages of learning English, really enjoyed learning a poem in Spanish and Slovakian, as well as in English. This focused support is helping them to rapidly improve both their understanding and use of the English language. However, in some classes, the role of the teaching assistant is not as well developed, because it is not always targeted well enough at extending pupils' learning and skills throughout the whole lesson.
- The teaching in a minority of classes requires improvement. Pupils do not learn as quickly because the work set does not interest them to the same extent and it is sometimes too easy.
- Most teachers carefully mark pupils' work. There are some very good examples of marking in some classes. However, the impact of marking is sometimes limited because pupils do not always have enough time to act on the feedback provided. This means pupils sometimes continue to make the same errors in their work or they fail to learn as quickly as they could.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils are very friendly, polite and courteous.
- Pupils have a real sense of belonging and feel they have a genuine part to play in the day-to-day running of the school. For example, the blue, yellow and green 'banders' work hard to help to keep lunch times safe and happy.
- Relationships are very positive and founded on mutual respect between adults and pupils. Adults take time to listen closely to pupils and help them learn to handle their own feelings and behaviour. In this way, they gain a better understanding of how their actions might affect others.
- The school does a lot to celebrate good behaviour and promote positive attitudes to learning. For example, pupils are thrilled to be rewarded with a 'high five' during a lesson or to be commended in 'Achievement Avenue'.
- Many pupils meet the school's high expectations and try very hard with their work. However, occasionally, a few pupils sit back in lessons and let others do all the hard work. When pupils are not as interested in their work or when they find it too easy, they sometimes do not work as

hard as they could. Sometimes, they do not take as much care with the presentation of their work.

- The schools' work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. They say bullying is rare and that if any unkind behaviour does occur, then it is swiftly dealt with by adults in school. A group of pupils agreed that: 'Behaviour is everybody's business here. All adults deal with this. Ours is a safe school.'
- Parents, who made their views known to an inspector, were overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Most consider that their children are happy and well cared for at school.
- Attendance levels remain just below the national average, but they are rising rapidly. The school works very hard to encourage good attendance. For example, the Parental Community Involvement Officer has successfully fostered very good relationships with parents and has helped avoid any unnecessary absence by providing support and guidance.
- The school has the 'Quality Mark for Nurture Groups' in recognition of the very effective support provided for pupils. Staff sharply tailor support to help individual pupils develop the skills to cope and learn well in the classroom.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe and avoid unnecessary risk. They are aware of the potential dangers when using social networking sites. They are very much encouraged to take measured risks in a safe and secure environment, such as when climbing in the adventure park outdoors, for example.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- The school provides a very warm and welcoming environment, founded on very high levels of mutual respect.
- The headteacher, well supported by senior leaders, provides strong leadership. Senior leaders have high expectations for staff and pupils alike. Staff are very committed and hard-working. Indeed, the responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire about the school were almost all entirely positive.
- This is a school that knows itself well. Three years ago, senior leaders became very concerned that the school was not as effective as it had been. Following a very rigorous evaluation of the key issues, senior leaders took swift and decisive action. A strong, shared commitment among staff to provide the very best for its pupils was established. As a result, the school has subsequently improved many key aspects.
- Under the clear guidance of the senior leaders, middle leaders have grown in confidence and developed key roles in school. Many have undertaken national training programmes to enhance their leadership skills and clear impact is evident in the work of the leadership of special educational needs, key stage leaders and core subject leaders, for example.
- More robust systems have been developed that keep a sharp check on how well pupils are doing. Questions are asked if any individual pupil is not doing as well as expected and standards are rising at every key stage, although they remain a little below average.
- Strong leadership of teaching and learning has improved the quality of teaching in most classes. Careful support and mentoring ensure existing strengths are built upon and weaker aspects are being addressed, although some inconsistencies in teaching still remain. Recently appointed teachers have been well inducted to the school's procedures.
- The school provides a good curriculum, which is increasingly encouraging a love of learning and a thirst for knowledge amongst many pupils. To this end, the school grounds have been extensively developed to include a wildlife area, adventure park, quiet reading area and an amphitheatre, for example. However, opportunities to extend pupils' learning outdoors across the whole curriculum are as yet not fully utilised.
- The primary school sport funding is helping pupils gain a better understanding of how to lead a more active and healthier lifestyle. There has been increased participation in sporting activities both within the school and with other schools. For example, a girls' football team has been recently introduced and the school has maintained its successful trend in a recent ballroom

dancing championship.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- A key aspect of the school's keener school improvement drive has been the significant development of the skills and influence of members of the governing body over the past three years. Senior leaders have actively welcomed the increased challenge from some very experienced governors who have been appointed.
- Governors have the expertise to ensure they maintain an up-to-date and accurate view of pupils' achievement, alongside the effectiveness of teaching and learning. They have a clear understanding of how performance management is used to reward good teaching and to develop leadership roles among existing staff.
- New governors are quickly helped to develop the necessary skills by accessing training courses, as well as working alongside more experienced governors.
- The governing body has sought to enhance the learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage, and rigorously checks how well different groups of pupils are doing, including those eligible for support through the pupil premium funding.
- Governors ensure safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	132182
<b>Local authority</b>	Bradford
<b>Inspection number</b>	439883

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

<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>	420
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Steven Allan
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Edwards
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 November 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01274 770312
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