

Bowburn Junior School

Surtees Avenue, Bowburn, Durham, DH6 5DZ

Inspection dates 26–27 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Senior leaders, managers and governors are ambitious for the school and have maintained a good quality of education. They are determined to raise achievement further for all pupils.
- The curriculum offers pupils a wide range of interesting activities and, as a result, pupils enjoy their learning. Sport is a particular strength of the school.
- Teaching is consistently good. This ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well.
- All groups of pupils achieve well. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average in writing and mathematics.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. They are respectful of one another and their teachers. Attendance has been improving and is now good.
- Pupils say they feel safe and have confidence in adults to listen to them and help with any problems they may have.
- Parents are pleased with the work of the school, especially the way that their children are cared for.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teachers' expectations of what pupils, including the most able, can achieve, are not high enough.
- Progress in reading is not as rapid as that in writing and mathematics, particularly that of disadvantaged pupils and boys.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to practise their reading skills to help them make faster progress.
- Middle leaders are not yet fully involved in checking on and supporting the quality of teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited several lessons or parts of lessons, one of which was observed jointly with the headteacher. They looked at a range of pupils' work and heard a number of pupils from Year 6 read.
- Meetings took place with the headteacher, senior leaders, staff and groups of pupils. Inspectors also met the Chair and other members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation, including the school's data on pupils' progress and records relating to pupils' behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed indoor playtimes and lunchtimes. Displays around school and also in classrooms were scrutinised.
- Inspectors took into account 15 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) as well as the results of a parent questionnaire carried out by the school.
- The views of staff and pupils were also considered.

Inspection team

Christine Millett, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Barbara Redhead

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bowburn is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Almost all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium funding is well above that found nationally. The pupil premium is additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- Since the school was inspected in 2010, there have been some changes in staffing, including the secondment of an acting headteacher to the school in September 2014.
- The school holds a daily breakfast club for its pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress of all pupils, particularly in reading, by:
 - ensuring that teachers always have high expectations of what individual pupils can achieve, including the most able
 - ensuring that pupils are given time to practise and apply their skills in reading
 - exploring ways to engage and motivate boys to read
 - bringing the standards of disadvantaged closer to those of other pupils in the school and other pupils nationally
 - strengthening the roles of middle leaders to enable them to make an effective contribution to improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides the school with clear direction and has high expectations which staff and pupils respond to well. He is ably assisted by the deputy headteacher with the backing of staff, governors and parents.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school's performance and development plans have been effective in maintaining overall standards and ensuring continued capacity to improve further.
- Senior leaders check the quality of teaching and pupils' progress regularly throughout the year at pupil progress meetings. This information is used to set targets in order to accelerate rates of progress for different groups of pupils. However, middle leaders are not yet fully involved in the monitoring of teaching and learning in their areas and in supporting its improvement effectively.
- The school has adopted a good system for managing the performance of teachers. Teachers' pay is clearly linked to how effectively they enable pupils to learn. Staff training is suitably linked to targets set for teachers, as well as current priorities for improving the school.
- The range of subjects taught engages pupils well and provides them with a range of interesting and appealing activities. It is enriched by regular educational visits within the local area and beyond, as well as inspirational visitors to school. These, alongside pupils' involvement in sport, music and drama, contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school promotes tolerance and respect for all through assemblies and religious education lessons. British values of democracy and responsibility are encouraged through pupils' involvement in the election of their school council and enthusiasm for charitable fund-raising events.
- Funding available through the pupil premium is used carefully to help eligible pupils make at least similar progress to that of their classmates. The school has recognised that its use has not been as effective in the teaching of reading as it has been in writing and mathematics and has put plans in place to address this. However, it is not yet possible to measure the impact.
- The government's new primary sport funding is being used very effectively by the school. All pupils benefit from additional opportunities to take part in competitive sporting events of many different kinds within school, as well as with other local schools. Staff and pupils benefit from specialist coaching. Both participation levels and pupils' physical well-being are enhanced as a result.
- The school promotes equality of opportunity in all that it provides. Sensitive and caring support enables all pupils to be integrated fully into school life.
- The local authority has a good relationship with the school and has increased its level of support since the appointment of the acting headteacher. The school is benefitting from the expertise of their educational development partner, as well as the training opportunities offered by the local authority.
- Parents are increasingly supportive of the school. They are actively encouraged to come into school and celebration assemblies and parents' meetings are well attended.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is committed to supporting the school to continue to improve. Governors keep a careful check on how well pupils are doing, both in their academic achievement and their personal development. They ensure that performance management systems are thorough and that leaders' and staff targets are linked firmly to pupils' progress and school priorities. They are aware of the links between the achievement of progress targets and salary progression. Governors have taken advantage of several training opportunities to develop their expertise, particularly in their knowledge of the school's performance data. This means they are better equipped to challenge senior leaders on any areas of underperformance. Governors make sure that school finances are in order and that extra funding, such as the pupil premium grant and the primary school sport fund, are used effectively to support eligible groups. The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met, particularly with regard to the effective safeguarding of pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils are polite and courteous. Relationships within the school are highly positive because pupils are keen to do their best for teachers and teaching assistants.
- Pupils have a high opinion of their school which they describe as being 'friendly', 'kind', 'helpful', 'exciting', 'fun' and 'sporty'.

- Pupils' behaviour in all parts of the school is good. For example, lunchtimes are pleasant, social occasions where pupils catch up with their friends. Movement along corridors is calm and orderly. No outdoor playtimes were observed during the inspection because of the weather. However, there are good routines in place for wet playtimes which ensure that pupils are occupied and kept safe.
- Pupils are very welcoming to visitors who comment on how well behaved pupils are and how carefully they listen.
- Overall, pupils respond quickly to instructions from staff which limits disruptions to learning in lessons. Pupils learn to express their ideas well and to be patient as they listen to the contributions of others, because teachers manage discussions well.
- The school's strategies for promoting good attendance have had a positive impact. Attendance has improved and is now above average.
- Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, such as being a member of the school council or a playground friend. Pupils also have many opportunities to represent their school at sporting or musical events.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good.
- Pupils say they feel safe at school and parents express confidence in the care the school provides for their children.
- Pupils are aware of the difference between bullying and falling out. They understand there are different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and are certain it is not an issue in their school. Pupils are in no doubt that staff will help resolve any problems quickly and fairly.
- Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe in various situations, including e-safety, and acknowledge the contribution to this aspect of their well-being from external visitors, such as the emergency services. Residential visits enable them to be adventurous and take managed risks in carefully controlled situations.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is good and this helps pupils achieve well over time.
- One of the features of this good teaching is the particularly strong subject knowledge that teachers have. Consequently pupils are motivated to become keen to learn and become fascinated by the tasks in hand.
- Staff encourage pupils to develop confidence in speaking and listening by giving them opportunities to discuss their work and express their views. The impact of this has been seen in improving standards in writing, particularly in the increased proportion of pupils who achieve the higher levels.
- The school has recently revised its teaching of mathematics and there is now a greater emphasis on ensuring that pupils can apply their mathematical skills to problem-solving. Pupils' progress in this aspect of mathematics has improved as a result.
- Imaginative strategies are used to capture pupils' interest, such as Shakespeare being brought alive when pupils had the opportunity to perform *Macbeth* on stage in a local theatre as part of the Shakespeare Schools Festival.
- Positive relationships between adults and pupils are evident in every class. However, occasionally teachers do not display high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve and there is sometimes insufficient challenge, especially for the most able. Consequently not enough pupils are making better than expected progress.
- Pupils enjoy their lessons, but some say that they would like to spend longer periods of time reading their reading books and be able to visit the library to change them more frequently. This limits both the progress made by some in reading and opportunities to foster the joy of reading for pleasure.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs learn well, because teaching assistants help them to develop their skills by providing effective support that is well matched to their needs. Pupils supported by pupil premium funding also benefit from support best suited to their abilities.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and thoroughly. Pupils are expected to respond to their teachers' comments. This helps them to understand for themselves what they need to do in order to improve their learning further.
- Displays in classrooms and around school reflect the topics being studied and examples of good quality work by pupils are celebrated. This practice gives pupils a better idea of what is expected of them and how to improve.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils start school with broadly average skills in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Over time, the results of national tests for Year 6 pupils show attainment in reading, writing and mathematics to be above that found nationally.
- Results in 2014 continued to be above the national average in writing and mathematics, but similar to the national average in reading. The attainment of boys in reading was lower than that of girls.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was below that found nationally in reading and similar to the national figures in writing and mathematics.
- Overall the levels of progress made by pupils are good. The most recent test results show that from their starting points, by the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils making expected progress in writing and mathematics is similar to that found nationally. However, in reading it is below that expected. The proportion making better than expected progress is similar to the national average in mathematics, but lower in reading and writing.
- The most-able pupils achieve well in writing and mathematics, but fewer than expected achieve the highest levels in reading.
- Over time, as a result of the effective use of pupil premium funding, disadvantaged pupils make similar levels of progress as other pupils in school do. However, results in national tests in 2014 show there is a gap in attainment in reading between disadvantaged pupils in school and other pupils nationally, with the school's disadvantaged pupils being two terms behind. The deficit is approximately half a term in writing and mathematics.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is small. However, pupils receive extra help tailored to their needs which ensures that they make good progress.
- Work in books and assessments show that pupils in all classes are making at least expected progress. Most recent assessments carried out in school show some signs of improvement in reading. Pupils in Year 6 are on track to achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of the year.
- Although achievement in reading has not been as strong as that in writing and mathematics, those pupils heard to read did so confidently, fluently and with expression, showing an awareness of punctuation. They were also able to answer questions about the text accurately and thoughtfully, thus demonstrating secure understanding of the author's intended impact on the reader's feelings.
- Pupils leave school well prepared for their move to secondary school.

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	114087
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	448772

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	173
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Collinson
Headteacher	R Bushby
Date of previous school inspection	21 April 2010
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