

Chowbent Primary School

Laburnum Street, Atherton, Manchester, Lancashire, M46 9FP

Inspection dates 12–13 May 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Requires improvement	3
	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
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides determined and highly effective leadership and management. This has led to significant improvements since the previous inspection in teaching, pupils' achievement and in improving links with parents.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve well, especially in reading and mathematics.
- Children make good progress from their starting points in the early years.
- Teaching is good with some aspects outstanding. Teachers make sure that pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their own work.
- Pupils behave well and feel safe in school. They benefit greatly from the school's outstanding provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Provision for disabled pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs is outstanding.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, carry out their duties well and have a clear focus on continuous improvement.
- Governors provide a good level of challenge and support to school leaders.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most-able pupils do not achieve as well in writing as they do in reading and mathematics.
- Opportunities are sometimes missed for pupils to use and develop their speaking skills in lessons.
- There are missed opportunities for pupils to regularly use and apply their numeracy skills in solving challenging mathematical problems.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed pupils' learning in classrooms. The inspectors also observed group work and listened to pupils reading. They observed pupils as they arrived for school and at break and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors carried out a review of pupils' work.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- A wide range of documentation was reviewed including systems for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding arrangements, policies, a record of the school's lesson observations and pupils' work in their books.
- Pupils' views of the school were gathered through informal discussions with individual pupils in lessons and at break and lunchtimes. Discussions were also held with representative groups of pupils and with parents.
- Thirty-two responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were considered alongside the school's most recent questionnaire.
- The responses from staff questionnaires were also considered.

Inspection team

Geoffrey Yates, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Machell

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is slightly smaller than most primary schools.
- The majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly in line with the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported through the pupil premium, is above the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and children who are looked after by the local authority.
- 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 Reception class provides full-time early years education.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that it leads to pupils making outstanding progress, by:
 - building on the good improvements in teaching made since the previous inspection
 - ensuring that the most-able pupils use and develop their writing skills well
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their numeracy skills
 - ensuring that pupils are given every opportunity to use and develop their speaking skills.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The vision and determination of the headteacher, senior leaders and governors to improve teaching, standards, the learning of all pupils and the quality of pupils' personal development have led to rapid improvement since the last inspection.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, brought together by accurate self-evaluation.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Many opportunities are taken to teach pupils how to value and respect one another and this is reflected in their good behaviour.
- The provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is outstanding. Key components are the exceptionally clear systems in place, the clear focus on the needs of the individual and a tenacious belief in never giving up on a child.
- Effective monitoring of teaching, including some changes in staffing, has led to good improvement. However, there is not yet enough outstanding teaching across the school.
- Procedures to manage staff performance have been strengthened. All teachers are accountable for the progress their pupils make. Leaders set improvement targets and check that they have been achieved. As a result, rates of progress for most pupils are improving quickly. However, there is still room for improvement with regard to the progress made by the most-able pupils in writing.
- Middle leaders are knowledgeable about their areas of responsibilities and are increasingly effective. As a result, the school's capacity to improve further is strong.
- Good relations are promoted well throughout the school. Leaders are successful in ensuring that discrimination of any sort is not tolerated and demonstrate a firm commitment to equality of opportunity.
- Very strong links have been established with parents, including regular visits made by parents to school to find out how their children are doing and how they can help them (Impact sessions). Parents' positive comments about the school include, 'You never feel your child is a statistic.'
- Additional funding to support disadvantaged pupils is used well. As a result, these pupils are making good progress. The gap between their overall achievement and that of others in the school is small. The gaps between them and other pupils, both in the school and schools nationally, are closing.
- Pupils benefit from a well-planned curriculum with topics chosen carefully to interest them. For example, during the inspection, pupils in Year 3 were engrossed in researching information about Stone Age villages using hand-held computers. Other pupils were proud to talk about the quality of the replica canopic jars they had made as part of a project focusing on ancient Egypt.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils who are Eco-council members appreciate that they have been elected by their classmates, not just chosen by teachers. Pupils take part in the mock trial of Goldilocks, learning at first-hand how issues are dealt with in a democratic society.
- The local authority has brokered good support for the school since the previous inspection. It now sees the school, accurately, as a good school with the capacity to improve further.
- Additional primary sports funding is used well to enable an increasing number of pupils to take part in competitive sport. Money is used to secure the expertise of sports coaches and to extend the range of out-of-school sporting activities. More pupils are now involved in sporting activities.
- Safeguarding procedures meet requirements. They are effective in ensuring that pupils are safe and looked after well both inside and outside in the playground.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - 'We know all there is to know about our school.' This is an accurate reflection, made by a governor, of the good quality governance in this school. The headteacher involves governors in all aspects of school life. The Chair of the Governing Body is a regular attendee at senior leadership meetings as a participant, not an observer. The governing body is effective in both supporting and challenging the school and is extremely well led. A close analysis of data about pupils' achievement allows governors to know the strengths and weaknesses of the school well.
 - Governors ensure the systems to check on the performance of both the headteacher and teachers are effective. They receive information about the quality of teaching and seek assurance that any salary increases are linked to performance. Governors make sure that additional government funding for disadvantaged pupils benefits this group of pupils, as shown by their good progress. They also make sure that additional primary schools sports funding benefits the school's pupils.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils, their parents and the staff all agree that pupils behave sensibly. If incidents of inappropriate behaviour occur, they are dealt with well because pupils know that staff have their best interests at heart.
- Pupils like school and respect their teachers. They take a pride in what they do. For example, pupils are keen to demonstrate their musical skills in using percussion instruments exceptionally well and are rightly proud of their polished musical performance.
- Pupils proudly accept reward systems including 'VIP awards' that give them special privileges. The weekly 'Chowbent Champs Awards' are highly prized by the pupils who receive them.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are invariably absorbed in work in lessons and this love of learning enables them to make at least good progress.
- Behaviour around the school is of a good standard. A scrutiny of records and observations during the inspection show that behaviour over time is good.
- Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided for them to take on school responsibilities. These include being school council members or being a member of the Eco-group. The Eco-school notice board includes the telling statement, 'Rubbish that is thrown away doesn't actually go away.' Pupils understand the implications of this statement and have a good understanding of the importance of recycling.
- Attendance has improved and is now average.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils know that they are safe in school. They say that they can express any concerns that they have to teachers and other staff in the school, knowing they will be listened to and that action will be taken to help them.
- Pupils play sensibly at playtime. Record keeping and any follow-up contact with parents about safety issues, including minor bumps, are effective.
- Pupils understand about different forms of bullying, including cyber-bullying, racist name-calling or making fun of others for their choice of lifestyle. They report that bullying hardly ever happens but if it does it is sorted out quickly. Pupils know how to keep safe on the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- The headteacher and other leaders have successfully improved teaching so that it is now consistently good, with some aspects that are outstanding. Teachers work well together, share ideas and increasingly use assessment information effectively to plan work that is at the right level for pupils.
- The organisation of teaching groups in English and mathematics, based on pupils' prior attainment, is successful in promoting good learning.
- Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils and high expectations of their behaviour. Consequently, pupils enjoy learning.
- Teachers plan work that provides a sufficient level of challenge. As a result, pupils make sustained progress.
- The teaching of reading, including phonics (letters and the sounds that they make), has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to use and develop their reading skills. However, sometimes opportunities in lessons for them to use and develop their speaking skills are missed. For example, in some lessons pupils are keen to respond to teachers' questioning but only a few have the chance to do so.
- Writing is now taught effectively with a strong focus on ensuring that pupils have a good grasp of basic spelling, grammar and punctuation. However, not enough of the most able pupils achieve the higher levels in writing.
- Mathematical skills are taught well and pupils clearly enjoy doing the work they are asked to do. While there are some good examples in all age groups of pupils being challenged to use their numeracy skills well in solving mathematical problems, opportunities are missed for this to occur more regularly.
- Teaching assistants are deployed well across the school and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.
- Marking is of a good quality and pupils are given detailed information about how to improve their work. They respond well and enjoy the 'fix it' sessions that provide them with adequate time to respond to the

comments made. During the inspection, pupils in Year 2 were asked to make sure they understood what the mathematical term 'vertices' meant, coming up with one answer: 'A posh word for corners.'

The achievement of pupils is good

- School assessments and pupils' work show that different groups of pupils make good progress and achieve well. This picture of good progress is across all year groups and results from improvements in teaching, the good use made of assessment information and the consistency of approach to learning so that pupils know what to expect.
- The school's emphasis on making sure that pupils are crystal clear about the next steps they need to take to improve their learning has been very successful in ensuring that pupils achieve well.
- Younger pupils' learning about letters and sounds is secure. By the end of Year 1 in 2014, an average number of pupils reached the standard expected for their age in the national screening for phonics.
- In 2014, Year 6 pupils achieved results in mathematics that were above those nationally, and broadly in line with national averages in reading and writing. Current Year 6 pupils' attainment shows some further improvement compared with the results in 2014.
- Pupils have good reading skills and enjoy reading. They say that reading helps them to understand new words and provides them with plenty of ideas.
- The school has a clear focus on improving pupils' writing skills and this is proving to be successful in promoting improvements, especially in the use of correct spelling, sentence construction and punctuation. There are increasingly good opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills in other subjects. However, not enough pupils currently in Year 6 are writing at the higher levels.
- Pupils are developing good number skills. However, teachers do not always make sure that they have enough opportunities to use and apply their skills to solve challenging mathematical problems.
- The most-able pupils make good progress in reading and mathematics. However, not enough of them yet make good progress in writing. Although they mainly express their ideas competently, some are not yet writing with the skills needed to match higher levels.
- The 2014 national tests indicate that disadvantaged pupils were almost two terms ahead of other pupils in the school in mathematics and less than half a term behind them in reading and writing. They made more than expected progress when compared to pupils nationally in reading, mathematics and writing. These results also show that the attainment of disadvantaged pupils was approximately a year ahead of other pupils nationally in mathematics but about half a term behind in reading and writing. Records show that disadvantaged pupils currently in the school continue to make good progress and there is now no appreciable gap between what they achieve compared with other pupils in the school.
- The additional primary school sport funding is used very well. Pupils enjoy a wide range of sporting opportunities; uptake is high, with over two thirds of pupils now taking part in out-of-school sporting activities.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making the same good progress as other pupils, with some of them making outstanding progress. They are very well supported.

The early years provision is good

- The provision for Reception children is effective and is led and managed well. This has a positive impact on how well children learn.
- Teaching is of a good quality. Staff plan a good range of imaginative and interesting activities, especially inside the classroom area. However, the provision outside is not as strong and opportunities are sometimes missed to make the very best possible use of the outside area to support children's learning.
- Children enter the school from a variety of settings, with some having experienced little or no nursery education. From starting points generally below those typical, they make good progress so that by the time they enter Year 1, the majority reach the expected standards typical for their age, with some children exceeding what is expected. As such, most are ready to start the Year 1 curriculum.
- Children are very well cared for; staff ensure that they are safe and their behaviour is good. During the inspection, parents commented about how well the needs of their children are met.
- Children are keen to work together and are highly enthusiastic about the work they are asked to do. For example, the Dinosaur project provides good opportunities for writing, reading and role play, and creative work across the curriculum. For example, children marched round the room displaying signs they had

created warning others not to touch the dinosaur egg.

- Early reading skills are taught well, with highly imaginative teaching of letters and sounds to which children respond exceptionally well.
- The progress children make is checked carefully to see if any need additional support and to build on the learning from earlier lessons.
- Work seen in children’s books shows that they have moved from mark-making to forming recognisable letters, with some writing simple sentences. Also, the work they are asked to do shows a good understanding of number skills.

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	462296

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	19 June 2013
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