

Bowerhill Primary School

Halifax Road, Bowerhill, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 6YH

Inspection dates

25–26 April 2017

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Requires improvement
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Requires improvement
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders, including governors, do not check rigorously that pupils across the school make at least good progress from their different starting points.
- Senior leaders do not provide clear and detailed feedback to teachers that helps them to improve their pupils' progress.
- The trust and governors do not have precise information about the progress pupils make. This restricts the level of challenge they are able to provide to senior leaders in order to ensure that standards are high enough.
- Although many parents and carers are positive about the school, some would like more information about their child's progress. This is particularly the case for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The quality of teaching is not yet good. Some teachers do not adapt activities well enough to ensure that they are matched to pupils' needs. During these lessons, pupils' progress slows and restless behaviour is sometimes seen.
- Although pupils learn a wide range of basic skills in writing and mathematics, they are not challenged sufficiently to apply these skills in solving challenging problems in order to deepen their understanding.
- The system for developing pupils' reading comprehension skills is new and not yet fully embedded across classes.
- Staff in the early years classes do not make the best use of information about children's progress to plan learning activities that closely meet their needs and interests.
- Attendance is below the national average and remains stubbornly low for disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- Subject leaders have strong subject knowledge and a clear understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the subjects they lead.
- Phonics outcomes in Years 1 and 2 are very strong and well above the national average.
- Pupils are polite towards adults and they are proud of their school. They feel safe and well cared for. Bullying is rare and pupils show respect and tolerance towards each other.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In order to ensure that pupils make at least good progress from their different starting points, senior leaders should:
 - more rigorously check pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding, using information from pupils' books, progress seen during lessons, and the assessments that teachers make to identify where pupils' progress is less than good
 - ensure that teachers use the information about what pupils know and understand to provide activities so that pupils are appropriately challenged and do not repeat work they can already do
 - ensure that the trust, governors, senior leaders and subject leaders make effective use of information about the progress pupils make from their individual starting points so that they can monitor the effectiveness of improvement planning and raise achievement.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, including in the early years, so that it is at least good across the school by ensuring that teachers:
 - receive feedback from leaders that helps them to improve the quality of teaching and learning and, therefore, the progress that their pupils make
 - are able and confident to adapt their teaching in order to match the learning needs of their pupils
 - have the support they need to use the agreed behaviour systems so that pupils' attitudes to learning are consistently good.
- Improve outcomes for pupils by ensuring that:
 - pupils are able to use their reading, writing and mathematics skills in subjects across the curriculum and to solve problems, in order to deepen their understanding
 - parents receive high-quality information about the progress their children are making, particularly for those who have a special educational need and/or disability.
- Improve rates of attendance so that overall attendance rises to at least national levels and the attendance of disadvantaged pupils improves.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- The headteacher, supported by the deputy headteacher, knows the school community well. He has introduced a new set of aims, which are clearly displayed: 'experience success and build aspiration'. He understands the strengths and weaknesses of the school and works hard to secure additional teaching resources and external professional development for staff. Leaders are not, however, rigorous in assessing the impact of the school's provision on pupils' outcomes.
- The headteacher has recently introduced a new assessment system across the school, which assesses pupils' outcomes throughout the year. This system is in the early stages of development. It does not provide a detailed picture of the progress pupils are making from their individual starting points, making it more difficult to establish whether pupils are achieving as well as they should.
- Performance management is in place for teachers, although due to changes in the assessment system teachers are not fully held to account for the progress that pupils make.
- Subject leaders for English, mathematics and science have a sound understanding of their subject areas and provide useful advice and support for staff. Subject leaders check pupils' books and observe learning across the school. They check that teachers are using the agreed systems and strategies, and they do this well. However, they do not check on the impact these new systems and strategies are having on the progress that pupils make.
- Pupil premium funding is used to provide additional teaching time for disadvantaged pupils who need to catch up on aspects of their learning. Additional teachers work alongside the class teacher to provide this extra support. The impact of this is uneven across the school. Some disadvantaged pupils, including those who are most able, do particularly well and have caught up with their peers. However, this does not apply to all; some disadvantaged pupils still need to catch up.
- Extra funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used appropriately to provide additional adults to support pupils in their learning. This support is evaluated well by the special educational needs coordinator, although the progress pupils make from their individual starting points is not rigorously analysed. Some parents report that they are unhappy with the information they receive and say that they would appreciate receiving more information about the impact of the additional support for their child.
- New teachers, including those who are new to the teaching profession, are positive about the support they receive. They are ambitious for their futures, feel valued by leaders and enjoy teaching at the school.
- Pupils are well prepared for their future lives through a broad curriculum that has an emphasis on developing a wide understanding of the world and securing strong social and moral development. Learning is planned around themes and questions such as, 'How mighty is the Mississippi?' or in science, 'Does Earth move?' Pupils have opportunities to consider the questions they would like answers to, and this forms the

basis of the learning. Much emphasis is on first-hand experiences through visits and visitors. This helps to bring learning alive, and most pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. Leaders ensure that pupils have the skills to use a range of information technology in order to research information about the world.

- The physical education (PE) and sport premium has been used effectively by leaders to provide additional coaching for pupils and teachers, with a focus on gymnastics and dance. Teachers are now more confident in their teaching of these aspects of physical education. Pupils enjoy additional after-school clubs in these areas along with opportunities to participate in football and multi-sport clubs. Sports coaches have also developed Year 6 pupils to become 'young leaders'. These pupils lead games with younger pupils and this promotes positive playtimes for pupils.
- The school works as part of a group of schools within a multi-academy trust. The headteachers of the other schools in the trust work together to evaluate their schools and decide on the levels of support needed. However, the external advice and support has not helped to ensure that the school improves pupils' outcomes.

Governance of the school

- Although governors bring a wide range of skills to the school, they have not been rigorous in holding leaders to account for the effectiveness of plans and actions taken to address weaknesses and raise pupils' attainment and progress.
- Governors do have an understanding of how the pupil premium, primary physical education and sport premium funding is spent. They are less secure about the impact of this spending on improving outcomes for pupils.
- Governors know the school community well and bring a range of knowledge and skills from their professional roles.
- The trust does not provide robust challenge to ensure that school leaders are held to account for the school's performance.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are vigilant and aware of the process for reporting any concerns they may have. The designated leader for safeguarding ensures that staff development is kept up to date regarding a wide range of safeguarding issues, including awareness of issues around protecting pupils from radicalisation and extremism. Appropriate action is taken to work with parents and outside agencies to ensure pupils are kept safe.
- Leaders, staff and pupils do not tolerate prejudiced behaviour and there is a positive, open culture where everyone is valued.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Across a range of subjects, teachers do not use assessment information about what pupils know, can do and understand well to move their learning forward rapidly. Teachers do not make enough use of assessments of pupils' starting points to provide

activities that help pupils to catch up or move to higher levels. This makes it difficult for teachers to know whether a pupil is making good progress or not.

- Most teachers adapt newly acquired planning resources effectively in order to match the needs of their pupils. However, some staff are over-reliant on them and therefore little adaptation is made to teaching. On these occasions, pupils' progress slows and they can lose interest in their learning.
- Pupils are often set a variety of challenges to choose from in order to promote independent learning, in line with the school's policy. Sometimes, teachers do not guide pupils effectively in their choices, which means that pupils complete activities that are too easy for them and some continue to attempt activities that are too difficult. This does not support pupils in making good progress.
- Leaders have introduced a system of responding to teachers' questions by discussing possible answers with a partner. In the main this works well, with pupils talking to one another about the questions posed by staff in a way that helps to move their thinking forward. However, there are occasions where pupils call out answers rather than talk to their partners and this disrupts learning.
- Leaders have ensured that there is a good range of high-quality books for pupils to read and pupils generally enjoy their reading. However, the strategy used to teach reading comprehension skills is new and currently is inconsistent in its effectiveness. Sometimes, pupils are not taught the skills they need in order for them to make good progress in reading, for example by developing inference skills.
- The teaching, learning and assessment of phonics is well structured, carefully assessed and well supported. Extra professional development is provided to teachers and teaching assistants. This supports their subject knowledge and confidence to provide high-quality teaching of phonics.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Requires improvement

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils generally have positive attitudes towards their learning and most appreciate choosing from the range of learning challenges provided. For example, pupils enjoy working towards receiving a golden pen once their handwriting is at a good standard. They value the feedback that teachers give them in their books, about the next steps they need to take.
- Pupils talk confidently about the support for their well-being provided by the school. They know who to go to if they need advice or help. Pupils report that bullying is rare and, when it happens, staff deal with it swiftly.
- Pupils are polite around the school; for example, pupils will often hold doors open for others. The school is calm and well-ordered and there is a high expectation that pupils are tolerant and respectful of each other. Pupils rise to this expectation.
- Pupils are encouraged to consider the needs of others beyond the school community. The school council has supported several community charity projects. Being involved with these projects supports the empathy pupils have towards each other and for

others further afield.

- The curriculum includes regular learning about how to keep healthy and fit. Pupils learn about other cultures, although their understanding is not fully embedded.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement. Although pupils conduct themselves well around the school and during playtimes, some behaviour during lessons is not good. Too often, pupils call out and generally show little interest in the activity. This often occurs when the learning does not match the needs of pupils.
- Pupils' attendance overall is below the national average and has been so for some time. Although there are some individual cases where the school has worked closely with families and attendance has improved, too many still miss school on a persistent basis. In particular, the lower attendance of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities slows their progress.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Outcomes for pupils in Year 6 in 2016 were lower than national averages and progress in reading and mathematics was particularly low. Too few of the most able pupils achieved higher standards and disadvantaged pupils did not achieve as well as they should have done. Middle-ability pupils made slow progress from their starting points. Weaker teaching in previous years affected the progress pupils made and although they made better progress over this academic year, it was not sufficient to fully catch up.
- In order to improve progress in mathematics, the school's focus on improving pupils' number facts and calculations can be seen widely in current pupils' books. However, books also show little application of these basic skills to support reasoning or problem solving either in mathematics or across subjects. This is slowing progress for pupils, including the most able pupils, as they are not challenged to use and broaden the skills they have learned.
- Leaders have introduced additional reading sessions, which involve all pupils reading their own books with the teacher providing support to individuals. Pupils generally appreciate this time, and a typical comment from pupils was, 'It's good to lose yourself in a book.' However, leaders have not yet evaluated the impact on pupils' reading progress to ensure that this approach is having a positive effect on outcomes.
- Pupils' books show improvements in progress in writing, but this is not consistent across the school. The school's own data shows that there are weaknesses in achievement in some classes. Leaders have put in place a number of strategies to improve the quality of English teaching including comprehensive resources to support planning of spelling, writing and handwriting. There has been an investment in professional development for staff. This is recent and it is too soon to see the impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Pupils' handwriting skills are variable. Too often pupils scribble out their work and do not take a great pride in what they produce.

- Pupil premium funding is used across the school to provide additional teaching time for disadvantaged pupils and any others who need to catch up. The impact of this is uneven. In some year groups, disadvantaged pupils including the most able disadvantaged pupils do well. However, there is also evidence in books that some pupils, including the most able, are making poorer progress.
- Progress for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is, again, inconsistent. Books show that some pupils do gain skills and rapidly improve their work. Some pupils, particularly those who also have weak attendance, do not make strong enough progress.
- Outcomes for phonics in Years 1 and 2 are consistently above national averages. Pupils benefit from a recently introduced structured teaching of phonics that closely matches their learning needs. Pupils are frequently assessed and learning in phonics sessions is adapted to ensure they move forward rapidly in their understanding and skills.
- Pupils enjoy their reading and there is a wealth of reading material provided. However, expectations for reading at home are not clear to pupils and there is inconsistency around whether pupils are expected to read widely or not.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- Leaders encourage a collaborative team approach to teaching in the Reception classes and this supports children's learning and development. However, leaders are not clear about the areas that need to be developed in order to address comparatively weaker areas of development for key groups of children across the early years classes. They are not rigorous in checking for gaps in children's achievement.
- Teachers do not use information about what children know, can do and understand to provide activities that will broaden and extend the progress children make. Children arrive at the school with skills that are broadly typical for their age. Some have weaker skills in reading, writing and mathematics. On leaving the Reception classes, most children are at the levels expected for their age and ready to start in Year 1. However, children could achieve even more across a wider range of areas of learning.
- Parents are overwhelmingly happy with the arrangements for starting school and say they receive good information about how to support their children with their learning at home. Staff draw on other professional agencies in order to ensure pupils receive any additional support when needed.
- Staff ensure that children are settled and enthusiastic about their learning. For example, when answering the question, 'how many seas are there?' children were keen to look at and share books to explore information about the oceans around the world.
- Children work happily alongside each other; they show tolerance and respect for one another and for adults. Behaviour is good and safe routines are well established.

School details

Unique reference number	141893
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10033990

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	377
Appropriate authority	Academy trust
Chair	Nigel Webster
Headteacher	Andrew Matthews
Telephone number	01225 700964
Website	www.bowerhill.wilts.sch.uk
Email address	admin@bowerhill.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Academy Trust of Melksham (ATOM). The trust was formed in April 2015 and its work is overseen by a board of trustees. The trust is responsible for seven primary schools and one secondary school.
- When its predecessor school, of the same name, was last inspected by Ofsted in March 2013, it was judged to be a good school.
- The headteacher provides school improvement support to the other schools in the trust.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school complies with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish.

- Bowerhill Primary is larger than most primary schools.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The percentage of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average for primary schools.
- The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is also below the national figure.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading writing and mathematics.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, several meetings took place with the headteacher and other leaders and teachers. Learning was observed in all classes during learning walks, which often took place with the headteacher or subject leaders. Inspectors also talked with pupils and observed breaktimes.
- Inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' books, alongside the headteacher and other senior and subject leaders. Inspectors also listened to some pupils read.
- Key information and documents were scrutinised including a recent report from the local authority, the school's self-evaluation, the development plan and information the school uses to assess the achievement of pupils. A wide range of documents relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance were also taken into account. Inspectors looked at the systems used to manage the performance of staff and minutes of the governing body.
- A meeting was held with three governors, which included the chair of governors and a member of the trust board.
- Pupils' views were gathered throughout the inspection. A meeting was held with the school council.
- Parents' views were gathered throughout the inspection and the 74 responses to the online survey, Parent View, were taken into account. Inspectors also considered the responses made through the Ofsted free-text service.

Inspection team

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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