

# Bowker Vale Primary School

Middleton Road, Higher Crumpsall, Manchester, Lancashire, M8 4NB

## Inspection dates

5–6 July 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Outstanding</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Inspirational leadership from the headteacher and her highly effective senior leadership team, mean that this school has made significant improvements since the previous inspection.
- Leaders have demonstrated a clear capacity to improve the school with the work they have done on raising attainment in spelling, grammar and punctuation, and in improving the progress of White British pupils' writing.
- Pupils' behaviour is excellent because of the emphasis that staff place on pupils making the right choices.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is significantly above that seen nationally, and their progress in reading and writing is also above average.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, due to the effective support they receive.
- Safeguarding in the school is a strength. It is effectively led so that pupils feel safe. Staff are vigilant and receive regular safeguarding training.
- Teachers ensure that clear assessments of pupils' prior learning inform their plans. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge enables pupils to achieve very high rates of progress in mathematics.
- Pupils in the specialist resourced provision make excellent progress in their work and personal development.
- The excellent relationships between pupils and staff are highly effective in promoting pupils' personal development. Pupils display a clear love of learning. This is an outstanding aspect of this school's work.
- Children in the early years make good progress to achieve broadly average standards, having started nursery with skills below those typical of their age. However, they are not consistently given opportunities to contribute their ideas to activities.
- The quality of pupils' handwriting varies between classes and year groups.
- Leaders' plans for improvement do not have a sharp enough focus on setting aspirational and measurable targets for pupils. Consequently, governors' awareness of how the funding for disadvantaged pupils is making a difference is not as strong as it should be.
- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, including in the early years. Although never less than good, the quality of questioning varies between classes.
- The challenge for the most able and the most able disadvantaged pupils does not stretch pupils' thinking sufficiently to enable them to achieve the high standards in reading and writing of which they would otherwise be capable.

## Full report

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

- Leaders, including governors, should build on the school's effective practice to improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - school improvement plans include clear and specific targets for improvement, so leaders can fully evaluate the effectiveness of their actions to improve the school
  - governors deepen their understanding of how effectively the use of the pupil premium funding to support disadvantaged pupils makes a positive difference to outcomes.
- Leaders, including governors, should further improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school, including in the early years, by ensuring that:
  - the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged to achieve the highest standards in reading and writing
  - the questioning of pupils in all classes matches that of the best teaching and learning in the school
  - consistently high targets are set for all pupils, for example, in the quality of pupils' handwriting
  - children in the early years are provided with time to respond to their learning and make full contributions to tasks.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- Senior leaders have created a strong learning culture in the school. They set high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils alike. Pupils, the majority of whom are from minority ethnic groups, approach their learning with enthusiasm and enjoyment. The progress they make throughout the school in reading, writing and mathematics is at least good.
- Leaders accurately identify areas for development by reviewing the information they have about pupils' performance. Their priorities include improving pupils' spelling and grammar, as well as targeting the attainment of White British pupils in writing, as this group underperformed in 2016. The positive results of their efforts to address these priorities show that leaders have demonstrated a clear capacity to bring about improvements in teaching and learning.
- Leaders' comprehensive design of the curriculum includes a clear programme of personal development. Pupils reflect well on their own learning, which positively impacts on their progress.
- Leaders motivate and engage staff through clear processes for supporting their professional development. Staff speak with passion about how they have been inspired by the examples set by school leaders. Each member of staff has a comprehensive, individualised plan of support to help them achieve clear and challenging targets. This has been the driving force in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the last inspection.
- Middle leaders have contributed well to the design of curriculum subjects for which they have responsibility. They have laid good foundations for the new curriculum. However, some subjects are at differing stages of development, and actions taken by middle leaders have yet to clearly impact on pupils' progress.
- The additional funding for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used well to help these pupils to achieve outcomes that are good or better. These outcomes are not always confined to academic achievement but include pupils' ability to communicate effectively and socialise with others.
- Leaders and governors are committed to addressing the individual needs of all pupils. This is exemplified by the excellent provision for pupils in the school's specialist unit for pupils who have behavioural, social and emotional, and mental health needs.
- The curriculum is supplemented by a number of extra-curricular activities, some of which are paid for by the school's physical education and sports funding. Other use of this funding includes pupils' participation in sporting events. The funding is successful in raising pupils' aspirations, because their successes in these competitions is building their confidence and showing them that they can achieve.
- The school ensures that pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through an awareness of other religions, while encouraging them to show respect for the views of others. Pupils come alive when talking about the debates they have in their classrooms. They understand the principles of democracy, and this also contributes to a strong

awareness of British values, which are promoted through their topic books and frequent assemblies.

- Leaders have a very good grasp of the school's performance. However, their plans for improvement do not provide enough detail for leaders and governors to fully analyse the school's effectiveness. The plans lack clear, measurable targets needed to fully hold leaders to account. Although generally high, the targets set for pupils' performance are sometimes not aspirational enough for the progress of the most able, and the most able disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the funding for disadvantaged pupils is allocated appropriately. The impact on these pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics is highly successful in supporting them to reach age-related standards. However, there are few initiatives to accelerate the progress of the most able disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest standards.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors set a clear vision for the school. They 'grow their own' middle leaders and teachers by providing strong development for staff and by having succession plans in place. Governors ensure that the management of the headteacher's performance is incisive by making the best use of external support to set ambitious targets for improvement.
- Governors support and challenge the headteacher well. They understand how well the school has done since the last inspection and have a good understanding of pupils' progress, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors are knowledgeable and communicate the ambition and aspirations for the school. However, they do not have a thorough enough knowledge about the effectiveness of the use of the funding for disadvantaged pupils. This is due to the lack of measurable targets in the plans for the use of this funding.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- There is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. The openness of staff ensures that pupils feel they can approach any member of staff to share their concerns. This ethos feeds into the way in which leaders tackle issues. Pupils are informed about events in the news, such as the recent Manchester bombing. Pupils find this ethos reassuring as it helps them to feel safe.
- Staff receive regular training and updates to make sure that they are aware of current guidelines and legislation. They feel confident about recognising any sign of distress and know how to report any concerns should they arise. Pupils know that they can approach staff with any concerns because of the excellent relationships that exist between staff and pupils in the school.
- Parents are kept well informed about how pupils are taught to keep themselves safe, so this can be reinforced at home.
- Leaders and governors have received training in the safer recruitment of staff. The

checks on all staff appointed to the school are comprehensive and well recorded.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- Leaders have demonstrated a capacity to improve the quality of teaching and learning through the consistent approach developed in the teaching of mathematics. The very best learning is facilitated by teachers' excellent subject knowledge. This provides pupils with opportunities to develop their reasoning and problem-solving skills. Progress in mathematics by the end of key stage 2 is significantly above the national average. This is also evident in pupils' books.
- Accurate assessments inform teachers' planning and allow them to offer specific support to targeted pupils at the beginning of each new piece of learning. Assessments are then repeated at the end of each topic to assess pupils' progress. These assessments show good rates of progress for current pupils in reading and writing.
- Pupils clearly exhibit a love of learning. This is fostered by the excellent relationships they have with staff. Pupils receive constant encouragement from staff who provide consistent positive reinforcement. Teachers are supported by highly effective teaching assistants who skilfully intervene in pupils' learning, to prompt them to overcome any difficulties. This support is especially effective for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The teaching of phonics is very effective. Younger pupils decode words with ease, which leads to them becoming increasingly proficient readers as they progress throughout the school.
- The most-effective learning takes place when teachers ask searching questions to challenge pupils' thinking. However, this is not consistently applied across the school in reading and writing.
- The most able pupils are not fully challenged in their written work to achieve the highest standards, because they complete similar work to other pupils, and questions do not stretch their thinking enough. When pupils are reading, texts are not matched to their interests, nor do they provide the challenge that the most able pupils require.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Outstanding**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are humorous, lively and mature. They take pride in being part of this school. They are understanding of others' views, opinions and feelings.
- Pupils' personal development is enhanced by opportunities to contribute to the school, for example, as learning ambassadors or in leading assemblies. The responsibilities that pupils in the school's specialist resourced provision unit are given effectively boost their confidence and self-worth.
- Pupils have an excellent awareness of British values and clearly express what individual liberty and the rule of law mean to them. Pupils understand the principles of equality

and explain without prompting what it means. They are well equipped for life in modern Britain because of their excellent personal development.

- Pupils who are educated in the school's specialist resourced provision talk reflectively about how the school helps them to behave appropriately. They begin to understand the source of some of their frustrations and feelings because of the sympathetic and understanding approach of staff.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils are polite, confident and eloquent when talking about their school. Relationships between pupils and staff are excellent, and this ensures that pupils' behaviour is outstanding. There is no disruption to learning and pupils' conduct round the school and at breaktimes is exemplary. Leaders promote the 'personal integrity' of pupils, which emphasises the need for the highest standards of behaviour when 'no-one is looking'.
- Leaders manage any rare instances of poor behaviour very well. Pupils agree with staff that there is no bullying in school. However, leaders do not rest on their laurels. They closely monitor pupils' conduct to reinforce the school's anti-bullying policy through regular assemblies on this topic. Pupils reported that the use of derogatory language is rare.
- Attendance is above the national average. Strategies to reduce pupils' persistent absence are effective in supporting this very small proportion of pupils.
- Pupils in the specialist unit enjoy the activities they undertake, particularly their outdoor learning experience. This provides opportunities to socialise with their peers and participate in team-building skills. These activities help them to gain confidence and self-esteem. This positive reinforcement contributes significantly to improvements in their behaviour.

## Outcomes for pupils

### Good

- The school's commitment to, and excellent provision for, pupils' personal development is best exemplified in the outcomes for pupils in the resourced provision. From their starting points, and despite the complexity of their needs, pupils make outstanding progress. These pupils are becoming self-reflective and articulate. They integrate well with their peers when opportunities arise and speak highly of the support that staff provide.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 2 in reading and writing is broadly average, with attainment in mathematics being higher. However, their progress in all three subjects is good and in mathematics is significantly above average. Effective teaching ensures that pupils achieve good outcomes relative to their starting points.
- At the end key stage 1 in 2016, a greater-than-average proportion of pupils attained the expected age-related standard in reading, writing and mathematics. However, the proportion of pupils achieving the highest standards was only broadly average.

Standards have risen during this academic year.

- In 2016, Year 1 pupils' attainment in phonics was above average, and leaders are expecting standards to be higher this year.
- Leaders and teaching staff have successfully improved pupils' spelling, grammar and punctuation, and pupils make at least good progress by the end of key stage 2 in these areas.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress in the range of subjects that they study.
- Leaders have also effectively improved the progress of White British pupils in writing. These pupils now make good progress and the school's own information shows that their attainment in writing is in line with that of other groups of pupils in the school.
- Disadvantaged pupils are well supported, through the use of the additional funding, to achieve age-related standards. They make the same good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as other pupils in the school. However, there are few strategies to support the most able disadvantaged pupils to achieve the highest standards.
- Despite the many improvements in pupils' outcomes resulting from good leadership and provision, there are less successful outcomes still in the quality of pupils' handwriting and in the attainment of the most able pupils in reading and writing.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- The early years leader has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. She has been responsible for developing the assessment and tracking of children's learning. This is comprehensive and identifies any gaps in learning at an early stage, so that appropriate interventions can be put in place. This is successful in ensuring that children make good progress towards achieving the early learning goals by the end of the Reception Year. However, the data shows that the most able children are not challenged in their learning to exceed beyond this level of achievement. This is borne out by inspection evidence.
- Outcomes at the end of the early years are good. The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is similar to that seen nationally, despite the fact that children enter the Nursery Year with skills below those typical for their age.
- Relationships between children and staff are excellent. Children exude the confidence that comes from feeling safe and secure in their environment. Children have access to a colourful and well-organised outdoor environment, in which they explore and investigate different areas of learning. Staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, which is reflected in their good level of engagement in activities.
- Teaching in the early years is good, although there is some variability in the quality of teaching between the two year groups. Children respond well to instructions and follow directions provided by staff. However, this emphasis on following instructions inhibits children from contributing their own ideas to their learning, particularly the most able children.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children is used to provide support where they need to catch up. The support of teaching assistants for children's learning is highly

effective.

- Parents contribute to the initial assessments of children’s capabilities, and they are actively involved with their child’s education from this point forwards. Staff encourage parents to be involved with their children’s education at home by providing workshops and appropriate homework. Parents are extremely positive about the early years provision and staff.
- All statutory welfare requirements in the early years are met, and the school’s safeguarding policies and practice ensure that there is consistency in the way in which staff work throughout the school.
- Children end their time in the early years ready for the challenges of Year 1 as a result of the care and attention that they have received from the staff in the Nursery and Reception classes.



## School details

Unique reference number	105397
Local authority	Manchester
Inspection number	10003158

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	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	460
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Starkey
Headteacher	Rachel Jacques
Telephone number	01617 405993
Website	<a href="http://www.bowkervale.manchester.sch.uk">www.bowkervale.manchester.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:admin@bowkervale.manchester.sch.uk">admin@bowkervale.manchester.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	23 January 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Since the last inspection, the school has established a specialist resourced provision for six pupils aged 7 to 11 who require support for behaviour and social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is much higher than average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much higher than the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below

average. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or education, health and care plan is larger than average.

- 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.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in each class, which included joint observations with the headteacher.
- Inspectors examined a range of pupils' work in mathematics, writing and from across the curriculum.
- Inspectors heard individual pupils read from key stage 1 and key stage 2, and during activities in lessons.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils formally in groups and informally around the school.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils in the specialist resourced provision about the support that they receive for their behaviour and their work.
- Inspectors took account of the views of 16 parents who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View.
- Inspectors made observations of pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtimes, lunchtimes and when pupils were moving around the school.
- Meetings were held with governors, senior leaders and middle leaders.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's evaluation of its own performance and its areas for development.
- Inspectors looked at attendance and behaviour records.
- Inspectors reviewed safeguarding documentation, considered how this related to daily practice and spoke with staff and pupils.

## Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
David Deane	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen McArthur	Ofsted Inspector
Elaine White	Ofsted Inspector

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