

# Bram Longstaffe Nursery School

Farm Street, Barrow-in-Furness, Cumbria LA14 2RX

## Inspection dates

3–4 October 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
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders' and governors' actions have not been strong enough to maintain the previous high standards of teaching and children's outcomes.
- Teaching of three- and four-year-olds over time is not good enough. Some most-able children are not challenged to enable them to master the skills and knowledge they need.
- Children's achievement is patchy across the school.
- Children's attendance is not good enough. At times, children's behaviour deteriorates.
- Too many responsibilities rest on the shoulders of the headteacher. Other leaders' roles are underdeveloped.
- One of the two indoor classrooms is unenticing and poorly organised. It is not an attractive place for learning.
- Leaders and governors do not always lead and check the work of the school with enough precision. Some plans and targets for improvement are unclear. Some reviews of the school's work are over-generous.

### The school has the following strengths

- Staff organise the outdoor play areas well. Children, including two-year-olds, benefit a lot from their learning outdoors and make good progress.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has improved how staff share children's learning with parents. Many parents talk positively about the school's records of their child.
- Staff give children helpful support for their personal development and welfare.
- Staff give individual children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities support which makes a positive difference to their learning.
- Leaders and staff link regularly with other schools and organisations to share information and to improve their own learning about education.
- Two-year-old children gain a good start to their learning at school. This is because of skilled teaching as well as the careful work of senior classroom staff.

## Full report

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

- Improve the impact of leaders and governors by:
  - sharpening analysis of the progress and attendance of different groups of children, so actions are focused precisely on children's needs
  - developing the skills of governors to review information they receive about the quality of education at the school
  - developing the role of middle leaders to support the improvement of the school
  - making sure all classroom resources and furniture are of good quality, maintained properly and used effectively to support children's learning indoors
  - making sure plans and reviews of the school and targets set for the work of individual staff show clearly how improvements, including in teaching and learning, will be assured.
- Improve the quality of teaching and children's achievement by:
  - developing staff skills to pose questions, help children to think and to sustain children's involvement in their learning
  - increasing the challenge given to the most able children so they master the skills and knowledge they need across the areas of learning
  - supporting all staff to analyse children's progress carefully and identify children's next steps clearly
  - working closely with parents to improve children's attendance and punctuality at the school
  - giving children better support to manage their own feelings and behaviour so that they benefit more from activities.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- At a time of great change in staffing arrangements in the school, too many responsibilities have rested on the headteacher. This has made it difficult to implement actions to sustain previous strengths of the school.
- Middle leaders do not play a full part in helping review aspects of the school's work. This has hampered the school keeping ahead of change since the last inspection. Even so, staff are strongly committed to the school and morale is good.
- Leaders' reviews of teaching, learning, children's attendance and outcomes are too general and imprecise to help them maintain all the previous strengths of the school. Some of their evaluation is overly generous. Leaders cannot bring about all the necessary changes in full because plans for improvement are not specific enough.
- Advice to leaders from senior officers in the local authority has been precise and accurate. The local authority acted quickly when it spotted signs of decline in the school. Its recent review of the school provides leaders with a sound basis on which to improve further. However, leaders do not compare the work of the school reliably against other schools.
- Staff and leaders know the progress of individual children. Yet their overview of the progress made by groups of children is far less clear. This weakens the ability of staff and leaders to be sure about the impact they have on children's learning. It is too soon to judge the impact of the school's new approach to summarising children's abilities.
- Leaders and staff focus adequately on supporting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children are learning to understand modern Britain and the meaning of values such as democracy.
- Staff make good use of planned activities to help two- and three-year-olds learn outdoors. Staff give children an adequate range of opportunities to meet visitors and to go on school trips. Children attend breakfast, after-school and holiday club provision. These extra activities improve their confidence and their ability to learn. Leaders review and develop the curriculum adequately.
- Skilled leadership of the two-year-olds class is a strength of the school. There is strong teamwork, clarity of purpose and good teaching and outcomes for children.
- Leaders spend early years pupil premium funding appropriately. The extra help for children's social skills helps them to settle quickly during their short time at the school.
- Leaders spend funding carefully on extra help for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. This support makes a positive difference to children's learning and the school's work to support parents.
- Staff have appropriate opportunities for training. Overall, teaching of two-year-olds has improved well, particularly because of the involvement of staff in a national project about young children's learning.

## Governance of the school

- Governors' oversight of the school is not always detailed enough to give strong challenge to leaders about the school's work to maintain the highest standards of teaching and learning. The governing body has a number of vacancies, which holds it back from acting with even more success to support and challenge the school.
- Governors keep an adequate check on the school's finances. They are determined to reduce the current budget deficit. They have worked successfully with relevant parties to reduce expenditure and support the school through a significant restructure of staffing.
- Governors are increasingly visiting the school to learn more about its work and to ask questions of staff and leaders. Governors recognise the need to improve teaching resources and furniture in one classroom.
- The link governor for safeguarding is trained well in safeguarding. She checks the quality of the school's work regularly with leaders.
- Governors have clear plans for the improvement of governance, for example by introducing a planned link role and monitoring cycle for more governors.

## Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders make sure there is frequent and open communication with parents about child and family needs. Relationships between the school and local families are very positive. Parents are confident to talk to staff about personal matters.
- Links with other services and agencies to support families are well established. For example, close work with the on-site children's centre and private nursery means that a range of family support services are helpfully available in one location.
- Referrals of child and family welfare matters to the local authority are prompt and followed up properly. Leaders keep adequate records of relevant information.
- Leaders improve staff knowledge of child protection well through regular access to training, information updates and discussion. Staff know how to respond if they have any concerns about the behaviour of children or adults.
- The premises are secure and all visitors checked carefully. Clear information about safeguarding is displayed clearly throughout the school.

### Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

### Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching over time for three- and four-year olds is inconsistent. At times, staff do not help children to think or sustain children's involvement in their learning. Next steps in learning for children, including the most able children, are not always precise enough to move children's skills and knowledge forward. However, the quality of teaching is starting to improve. Staff are beginning to make better use of information about children's learning to help plan learning opportunities.
- Staff do not always talk to children carefully enough or adapt their language well to the

needs of different children. Some staff do not pose questions that provoke children to think, nor do they always give children time to consider and comment.

- Teaching, when children choose activities for themselves, is not always helpful enough. In contrast, teaching is more successful when children join a group activity planned by staff. For example, a member of staff supported children playing a board game to match different plastic bears. The adult used mathematical language such as big, medium and small to accurately describe the toys. This helped children develop better understanding and use of these words in the game.
- The indoor classroom for three- and four-year olds is poorly arranged. The worn classroom resources and furniture are in need of replacement and better care and do not enhance children’s learning well. However, staff organise and use the two-year-olds classroom carefully to support children’s learning. Staff make good use of the outdoor areas, including the dedicated space for two-year-olds, to teach children successfully about themselves and the wider world.
- Teaching for children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is sensitive, patient and supportive. Recent training for staff is making a positive difference to the quality of the school’s work with these children.
- Staff check carefully and regularly on the personal, physical and communication skills of two-year-old children. Staff record and review information thoughtfully and share details well with parents. Plans for teaching make good use of the information gathered by staff and parents.
- Staff share significant aspects of children’s development and learning well with parents. Staff gather photographs and captions in attractive individual records. Parents view these records regularly. Some parents told the inspector confidently about the links between their child’s records and the government’s framework for the early years foundation stage.
- Teaching assistants play a key role in the work of the school. Their knowledge of teaching and of child development is improving quickly. This is most evident in the successful teaching in the two-year-olds classroom.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school’s work to promote children’s personal development and welfare is good.
- Two-year-old children often start at school with low levels of confidence. Staff make it a key priority to encourage and support children as much as possible. Staff give children sensitive guidance and encourage them to participate confidently in group activities. Staff support children to share and to accept the choices and actions of other children.
- This guidance helps children throughout the school to feel good about themselves and their lives. Most enjoy coming to school. They learn the importance of learning by experimenting, watching and talking.
- Children develop much self-confidence at Nursery by accessing the extensive

opportunities to learn outdoors. They know how to use a range of gardening tools safely. They understand how to use a sharp knife sensibly when cutting pieces of fruit.

- Staff develop positive relationships with children throughout the school. Children learn to ask adults for help when they feel hurt or upset by other children or events. They learn to recognise that staff, police officers and other people can help them.
- School arrangements to keep children safe are well developed. There is no bullying. All parents who made their views known during the inspection said that their child is safe and happy at Bram Longstaffe.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of children requires improvement. This means that their overall personal development, behaviour and welfare are judged to require improvement.
- On occasion, older children do not behave well. This affects their concentration and perseverance and holds their learning back. In contrast, children’s learning in the two-year-olds’ classroom is calm and not disrupted. The youngest children show consistently good behaviour as they learn to adapt to school expectations for the first time.
- Children benefit from the careful organisation, resources and layout of the outdoor areas. They use the outdoor toys and equipment with care. The two-year-olds classroom is well-arranged to meet children’s needs. Yet, the indoor classroom for older children is not organised or presented well. This means it is harder for three- and four-year-olds to develop their learning in depth in some activities.
- Leaders are prompt in contacting families about absences from school. Some families in the greatest need benefit from the extra help staff provide to support children’s attendance at nursery. Persistent absence is low, but not all parents make sure children attend school as much as they should. This, and the fact that some children arrive late for lessons, means that children and parents are not helped enough to be ready for the requirements they will meet when they move to primary school.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Weaknesses in teaching over time mean that not all children benefit fully from school activities. Some of the most able children do not always make good progress in their learning because staff do not challenge them in enough depth. Learning is stronger for younger children and they make good progress.
- Some children make at least the progress expected of them. However, school information suggests that not all children do as well as they should. Staff and leaders do not review enough information to support their assertions that children achieve highly from their starting points. Weaknesses in the way the school works make it very difficult to identify outcomes for different groups of children over time. School information highlights that, in 2016, boys did better than girls in learning about number and in developing their self-confidence. Despite the many learning opportunities for all children, girls did much better than boys in developing their physical skills.
- Throughout their time at the school, children learn particularly well in their social and

emotional skills.

- Children throughout the school learn to count and sort and name shapes. They are beginning to look at fiction and non-fiction books with interest and enthusiasm. Some children are developing well in their early reading skills by the time they leave. Some children are becoming confident to write their own names unaided.
- When starting school in the two-year-olds class, children's skills and knowledge are typically below those identified for their age. They make good progress during their first year at Nursery. They become confident in parting from their parents for the first time. They learn quickly to listen, talk and to pay attention to their own toileting needs. They become confident learners.
- The very small number of children eligible for extra support through the early years pupil premium progress well. They develop much new confidence and positive feelings about themselves and their learning.
- Children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities progress well from their starting points. This is because of good individual support for their learning.
- Children are prepared adequately for primary school. Most learn the importance of listening and following instructions. They work happily with others.

## School details

Unique reference number	112092
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10002609

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	Nursery
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 4
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	42
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lee Roberts
Headteacher	Jacqueline Drake
Telephone number	01229 814900
Website	<a href="http://www.bramlongstaffe.cumbria.sch.uk">www.bramlongstaffe.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@bramlongstaffe.cumbria.sch.uk">head@bramlongstaffe.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	22–23 January 2013

## Information about this school

- Bram Longstaffe is smaller than the average-sized nursery school and provides education and care for children from age two to five years.
- Most children are of White British heritage.
- The school has identified 10% of children as having special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The school offers a breakfast club, after-school club and holiday club.
- There are 6% of children attending the school who are eligible for pupil premium funding.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum.



## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning and teaching in classrooms and outdoors and considered examples of children's work. Several observations were made jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector spoke with parents as they brought their children to school. There were too few responses from parents to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, to analyse.
- The inspector reviewed information about the school's work to protect and care for children.
- Meetings were held with several staff and leaders. The inspector spoke by telephone to a representative of Cumbria local authority.
- The inspector met with three governors, including the chair.
- The inspector considered a range of school documents. These included reviews of how well the school is doing, plans for the future and information about the progress of children.

## Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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