

Blackshaw Lane Primary & Nursery School

Blackshaw Lane, Heyside, Royton, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL2 6NT

Inspection dates

22–23 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Requires improvement
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Standards have declined since the last inspection. The progress of pupils after they leave the Reception class is too variable across year groups.
- Due to a legacy of poor teaching, attainment of pupils at key stage 1 has been below the national average for the last two years.
- A period of staffing instability has compromised the headteacher's plans to improve the school. Leadership across the school is in the early stages of development.
- Teachers' feedback is not consistently effective in developing pupils' learning.
- As they progress through the school, boys typically underperform in writing. They are left with too much to catch up on as they move up the school.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils is not rapid enough. Leaders do not check on their progress regularly enough.
- Teaching, although improving, is not consistently good across the school. Teachers do not give enough attention to pupils' previous learning.
- The objectives that teachers set in lessons are not always clear and precise enough to assist pupils' progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and governing body have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Their recent actions to improve attainment are already showing signs of success.
- Children get off to a good start in the early years. The teaching of early reading and phonics is good.
- Pupils are safe and happy. Relationships in the school are respectful and positive.
- The school ensures that pupils receive good care, guidance and support. This assists them in behaving well and in valuing their education.
- An increase in the number of clubs, trips and extra-curricular activities is helping to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding.
- The inclusive and caring nature of the school means that pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities achieve well.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good by ensuring that:
 - teachers pay greater attention to pupils' previous learning when planning sequences of lessons
 - teachers develop a sharper focus on the objectives they set in lessons
 - the school's feedback policy is applied more rigorously so that guidance to pupils is more specific and they know what they need to do to improve
 - the teaching of grammar and punctuation to all pupils results in greater accuracy in their writing, especially in the case of boys.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - ensuring that the monitoring of teaching and learning is much sharper, with a greater focus on how teaching can be improved
 - checking on the progress of pupils who receive the pupil premium grant so that more focused individualised plans can be drawn up and monitored regularly
 - continuing to invest in training and support for all leaders so that there is better-quality leadership at all levels
 - focusing carefully on the transition to Year 1 to ensure that the good progress in the early years is maintained throughout key stage 1.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, there has been a period of significant change that has led to inconsistent improvement and a consequent fall in overall standards. At the time of the current headteacher's appointment in January 2016, the majority of staff were not familiar with the expectations of the new national curriculum and this had left many pupils falling behind their peers nationally. Teaching was not meeting the needs of pupils.
- From this point onwards, the committed headteacher and a proactive governing body have worked together purposefully to bridge this gap but there is still too much inconsistency of practice across the school. Their desire to make the necessary improvements has also been affected by disruption to staffing.
- Leaders were disappointed with national examination results in both key stage 1 and key stage 2 in 2017. During this academic year, their actions have led to more accelerated progress so that outcomes are much improved in some areas of the school, for example girls' attainment in key stage 2. However, this is not the case for some other groups. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to address this mixed picture.
- Though leaders generally have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of teaching, their checking on teaching is not sufficiently detailed to contribute to more rapid improvement. This partly accounts for the inconsistencies in teaching across the school.
- Too much responsibility for improvement has been invested in the headteacher together with the help of some external support. It is only recently that other leaders in the school have received relevant training for them to carry out their duty to improve provision across subjects and groups of pupils.
- Leaders ensure that the plans in place to use the funding for disadvantaged pupils are targeted effectively. However, there is only a cursory check on the success of these plans and, historically, these pupils have not performed well compared with all pupils nationally. Better use of assessment information is now assisting staff to accelerate the progress of these pupils, especially of those disadvantaged pupils who also have SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school uses the primary school sports funding effectively, resulting in increased rates of participation and competition across the school. It is now normal for pupils to represent their school, for example in football or cross-country running, where previously it was very rare. Specialist sports coaches help to develop teachers' skills and knowledge in teaching a range of physical activities and sports.
- The headteacher and staff have worked hard at developing a 'Belong, Learn, Shine' curriculum for the school. It is rich in values and first-hand experience, reflecting the clear ethos that leaders espouse for their pupils. The recent appointment of a school leader to oversee its development is a step forward but it is too early to judge its impact on consistently good-quality learning across the school in some subjects.
- The school's work to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is

effective. Pupils learn about different religions and cultures and are able to speak sensibly about moral issues.

- A partnership with a local school in very different circumstances allows pupils to learn together, for example through visits to the theatre or by discussing the same novel. This enhances pupils' social skills and leads them to a good understanding of British values, assisting them in understanding the cultural diversity that lies beyond the boundaries of their immediate community.
- Parents and carers are mostly positive about the school. They are very clear that pupils are safe and well cared for and recognise some of the recent improvements at the school. They are especially pleased with the support and information received in the early years and also the friendly feel around the school.
- The school has a productive relationship with the local authority. Recent reviews of teaching and learning have assisted leaders in highlighting key areas for development and action. This honest, constructive approach has assisted in bringing about the emerging improvements since September.

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The appointment of a new headteacher at the beginning of 2016 provided the impetus for a much more rigorous acknowledgement of the school's reduced effectiveness. Since this point, the headteacher and governors have spent time reviewing systems and structures in an effort to provide a long-term vision for improvement.
- Governors know that outcomes are not as good as they would like and are clear about the reasons for this. Over recent months, they have become much more involved in finding out about the pupils' work and the progress that they are making. For example, they have successfully overseen improvements to pupils' presentation in books.
- Governors have a good understanding of the information presented to them regarding pupils' attainment and progress. However, it is only recently that they have been asking more probing questions about the effectiveness of actions. For example, while they know how the pupil premium grant is spent, they are less sure about how much of a difference this has made to the attainment and progress of this group of pupils.
- Governors are trained well and take part in staff development days, for example those regarding safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty. They are effective in ensuring that the school site is safe and well resourced.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school is rigorous in fulfilling its responsibilities to protect children from harm. Staff have a good understanding of the salient points contained in child-protection policies and procedures.
- Safeguarding training is regular and attended by all staff. Record-keeping is of a high quality. Arrangements for ensuring the safe recruitment of staff are comprehensive.

- Supervision levels at all times are high, meaning that pupils have many adults to turn to if required. A large number of staff are trained first aiders and several are also trained in paediatric first aid. This typifies how much importance the school places on making sure that pupils are well looked after.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because over time it has not led to good enough outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. While there have been improvements, especially since September 2017, these are not consistent enough across all year groups and in all subjects.
- Where teaching is good, there are clearly defined expectations of what pupils can achieve. However, this is not yet typical, and some teaching leaves pupils unsure about what is required of them. Pupils lose focus as a result and, on these occasions, do not always give of their best.
- Feedback to pupils is not always effective. In some classes, pupils repeat the same mistake, even after the teacher has drawn their attention to it. This means that progress slows for some pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils to develop their writing skills are applied inconsistently throughout the school. Teachers do not reinforce key areas such as grammatical accuracy and punctuation sufficiently well for some pupils, particularly boys.
- Teachers are enthusiastic about the new curriculum for the school, which seeks to develop pupils' learning through real-life experiences. Their skills have led to good work in art, sports and modern foreign languages this year. However, this curriculum is still in its early stages of development and teachers' expectations in some other subjects are not high enough.
- Pupils are generally keen to learn and are willing participants in classroom activities. They are well supported by teaching assistants, who encourage them to develop resilience and perseverance. Support programmes for pupils who require extra support help them to bridge gaps in their knowledge and to develop confidence.
- The teaching of reading is effective for younger pupils. Teachers have a good knowledge of how to teach phonics and children use a range of strategies to sound out and spell unfamiliar words. The teaching of more advanced reading skills such as inference and deduction is less well advanced and some activities are insufficiently challenging for the pupils' ability.
- The school has rightly targeted the teaching of mathematics as an area for improvement and effective training has resulted in a greater degree of good subject knowledge. A clear focus on problem-solving and reasoning is now evident in most year groups. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils had to prove why a number might, or might not, appear in a particular sequence and then explain this in their books.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Leaders take pupils' personal development very seriously and staff invest much time in supporting those who find learning difficult or who encounter problems in school. This is often called 'repair and reflect' time and is valued by pupils. The school's records show that it has made a positive difference to some pupils' learning over time.
- Pupils are proud of their school. Much of their work across the curriculum shows due care and sustained attention, for example the line drawings seen in both Year 1 and Year 6.
- Staff invest a lot of time in developing friendship groups and working on pupils' confidence. For example, a group of Year 5 boys regularly play board games together at lunchtimes in order to build resilience and strengthen social skills, all under the supervision of skilled staff.
- Staff work closely with other agencies to provide training and strategies for supporting pupils' welfare. This has helped to create an environment where pupils are confident that any worries will be dealt with immediately.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe online and speak maturely about the dangers of the internet, as well as its benefits. They also told inspectors that 'our school is a very healthy school', citing the daily healthy snack bar for key stage 2 pupils as a good example of this assertion. Inspectors were able to see a range of other learning opportunities for pupils which teach them about being healthy.
- Pupils share excellent relationships with each other and with adults. Increasingly, they are 'out and about' as part of their new curriculum and these experiences assist their knowledge of their communities, both near and far. For example, as part of their German lessons, they are now in communication with pupils from a German partner school.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have worked hard to ensure that the school's behaviour policy is followed consistently. The 'Belong, Learn, Shine' motto underpins the policy's ethos and pupils respond very positively to this. They are keen to learn and have pride in their appearance.
- Pupils appreciate the rewards system and look forward to the Friday assembly when they are praised for their achievements. The school also invites parents, indicating the importance that staff place on this part of school life.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school, whether lining up to go outside at breaktime or walking into assembly. Little time is wasted as a result.
- The presentation of pupils' work has improved over the course of this academic year. Much more of it now reflects the pride that pupils clearly have in their school. However, there is still some way to go for a small proportion of boys in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- Behaviour in lessons is typically good, particularly in Years 5 and 6. Here, children are

fully engaged in their learning, sharing ideas and resources freely. Pupils report low-level disruption as being rare.

- Attendance is broadly at the national average and pupils rarely arrive at school late. In 2017, there was an increase in the number of pupils who are regular absentees but, since September, effective action has begun to reverse this trend.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of most forms of prejudice-based bullying such as racism and are unanimous that this does not happen at their school. They discuss cyber bullying maturely and are very satisfied with the school's support on the isolated occasions when this has come into school life.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- National data for both 2016 and 2017 indicates that pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics were below average in both key stages 1 and 2. This was largely due to a delay in reacting to changes in assessment and the raised expectations inherent in the new curriculum. Historically, teachers' expectations of pupils were too low.
- Standards have improved since then but not consistently across year groups and subjects. For example, standards in reading are now typically in line with national averages and there are more pupils working at a higher level. However, in writing, there is still underperformance, especially for boys in Years 2, 3 and 4.
- The current progress data held by the school indicates that progress through the school is uneven, especially in writing and mathematics. Despite an improving picture of attainment for older pupils, progress for some children in some classes is variable, depending on the quality of teaching.
- When compared to national data in 2017, the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils in reading, mathematics and writing were not as good as those of other pupils nationally. While the progress of this small group is improving, there is not enough convincing evidence to suggest that this improvement is rapid enough for these pupils to catch up with the others in the school. However, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 are catching up at a much quicker rate.
- The performance of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities indicates that this group is making good progress when considering pupils' starting points. The school's coordinator for this group of pupils monitors the provision for these pupils carefully and individual support programmes ensure that their needs are met effectively.
- Good phonics teaching has ensured that the majority of Year 1 pupils have passed the national phonics screening check over the last three years.
- The standards of some pupils' grammar, punctuation and spelling are too low. Attainment at key stage 2 in 2017 was below average for the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard and those achieving a higher standard. Leaders' scrutiny of pupils' workbooks this year indicates that this is still the case, particularly when pupils are working at the higher level.
- Progress in mathematics is improving, as is indicated in the assessment information held by the school and the work in books. Teachers assess progress in mathematics

more effectively during this academic year, and this helps them to plan relevant learning experiences.

- Pupils are better prepared for their future learning than they were a year or two ago. There is more urgency in the expectations placed on pupils, though leaders are honest in their appraisal that there is still some way to go to make up for past underperformance.

Early years provision

Good

- Consistently good leadership over recent years has meant that children typically progress well during their time in the early years. They leave Reception with a level of skills and knowledge which is at least similar to the national average.
- Leaders make sure that children are kept safe at all times. Staff receive up-to-date and relevant training and they have a good understanding of how children learn.
- The early years leader maintains detailed records related to the ongoing development of the children. Staff undertake regular assessments and observations of children's learning and they share these with parents. Information is logged on an online system which records the skills that the children acquire across all the main areas of learning. Teachers are assiduous in checking these assessments with other schools and teachers to assist with the maintenance of accuracy.
- Staff are careful to analyse the progress of different groups, including those who are disadvantaged. They plan interventions when appropriate to prevent children falling behind, most notably for those children who have a delay in language acquisition.
- Historically, a majority of children gain the main skills and knowledge that are required to reach a good level of development by the time they begin Year 1. As a result, they are well prepared for the next stage in their education. Leaders could do more, however, to ensure that the transition to Year 1 is planned more effectively, as many of these children have not continued progressing well in the past.
- Children are eager learners and sustain concentration well. This is partly because teachers ensure that they are actively engaged. For example, a teacher exemplified some learning activities enthusiastically in the new 'Pirate Ship' role-play area and this led to children excitedly counting coins from their newly acquired 'treasure'.
- Teaching is good and well demonstrated by lively phonics sessions which challenge the children sufficiently. A particular strength is developing children's knowledge and understanding of the world through many practical activities, such as growing vegetables and tending flowers and plants in an attractive outdoor environment.
- Staff recognise the importance of setting up strong partnerships and links before children start in the school's Nursery class. Their productive relationships with settings in the private and voluntary sector mean that children settle quickly and develop good social skills.
- Children behave well and show a growing independence, for example in the way they follow routines or put on coats, scarves and hats in the Nursery before going outside. They move around the learning areas safely and with due consideration for their friends and staff.

- Parents are very supportive. Regular opportunities to join in the children’s learning are made available, for example a ‘Dads and Doughnuts’ morning or a ‘Marvellous Mothers’ day. Parents value the regular communication, whether through weekly letters or through the online learning journey.

School details

Unique reference number	105652
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10042465

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	236
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Mark Pearson
Headteacher	Mrs Beverley O'Neill
Telephone number	0161 770 6711
Website	www.blackshaw-lane.oldham.sch.uk/
Email address	info@blackshaw-lane.oldham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 January 2014

Information about this school

- Blackshaw Lane is an average-sized primary school. There is a Nursery class which offers both part-time and full-time places and then one class per year group from Reception through to Year 6.
- The headteacher is new to post since the last inspection. She has been in post since January 2016. There has been considerable turnover of staff since the last inspection.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The majority of the pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly above 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 learning in all classes. One observation was undertaken in conjunction with the headteacher.
- Inspectors met representatives of the school's governing body.
- Inspectors met pupils to discuss their learning and their views of the school.
- Inspectors met several members of staff to discuss their leadership roles in the school.
- Inspectors heard several pupils read and also talked to them in the hall and the playground.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of school documents, including the school's own self-evaluation, improvement plans, minutes of meetings, safeguarding records, behaviour and attendance records and a variety of policies.
- Inspectors took account of the work currently in pupils' books in a variety of subjects and for all year groups.
- Inspectors considered the school's own records of attainment and progress during this academic year.
- Inspectors spoke to a variety of parents inside and outside the school. They also considered the 51 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View.
- They also took into account 20 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

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Ofsted Inspector

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