

Avondale Primary School

Durham Road, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 1NN

Inspection dates

5–6 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- Leaders have used training opportunities within the school and in partnership with local schools to improve the quality of teaching and leadership.
- Leaders have created a school where everyone feels valued and respected. Pupils' safety and well-being has a high priority.
- Governors' checks to ensure that the school has carried out its statutory duties in relation to safeguarding are comprehensive.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and this shows in their good attendance. Leaders work effectively to reduce the proportion of persistent absenteeism.
- Pupils' attitudes to school are positive. They respond well to the school's heightened expectations of their learning and their behaviour.
- The curriculum contributes to the good progress that pupils make in a range of subjects, including science, computing, music and physical education (PE). It promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well.
- Children make strong progress in their Reception Year. An increasing proportion of children are ready for Year 1.
- Throughout the school, almost all pupils make good progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils and middle-attaining pupils are making good progress in reading. Although their progress is improving, the difference in their progress compared with other pupils nationally is too great.
- Good-quality teaching is helping pupils across Year 5 and Year 6 to catch up from a legacy of poor achievement. Their progress is improving, but many are working below the standards expected for their age.
- New subject leaders are developing their skills of monitoring progress and attainment. However, they do not have secure knowledge of pupils' progress and attainment in their subjects.
- Teachers' expectations of presentation, especially in pupils' topic books, show a lack of consistency.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning across the school so that:
 - middle-attaining pupils and disadvantaged pupils make similar progress to other pupils nationally in reading
 - pupils in Year 5 and 6 continue to make accelerated progress to reach the standards expected for their age
 - teachers share consistently high expectations of pupils' presentation in their work.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
 - developing further the role of new subject leaders to improve their understanding of pupils' attainment and progress in the subjects that they lead.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has managed the many changes in staffing and governance exceptionally well. She has provided effective training to ensure that leaders and teachers have improved their practice since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school. Self-evaluation is accurate and leaders have ensured that the school development plan has a clear focus on the school's priorities. Leaders link the school priorities with the targets for improved performance that they agree with staff. As a result, performance management processes are effective in improving the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Senior and middle leaders have taken decisive actions to improve the performance of disadvantaged and middle-attaining pupils in reading. Leaders' actions are supporting pupils to develop an essential knowledge of vocabulary and improving their understanding across a wide range of texts. Pupils' current progress is good and improving. However, pupils' attainment and progress at the end of key stage 2 does not match that of pupils nationally in reading.
- Leaders have employed additional teachers to support pupils in Year 5 and 6. Previous weak teaching has had a negative impact on the progress of these pupils from their starting points at the end of key stage 1. Disrupted teaching caused by a high turnover of staff following the previous inspection has slowed pupils' progress further. Effective leadership from the headteacher has tackled the weakest teaching and put in place comprehensive training for staff. Teaching is now good and improving. This has resulted in pupils making accelerated progress. Pupils' attainment does not match national expectations for Year 6 pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants value the support of their colleagues. Teaching staff have developed effective questioning skills by sharing good practice. The subject leader for mathematics has put in place training and support for staff. This has resulted in teaching that effectively deepens pupils' mathematical understanding through reasoning and explanation.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have reviewed the school's curriculum. It meets statutory requirements and provides many enrichment activities, an example being the science workshops for pupils throughout the school.
- Most subject leaders are effective in using what they know of pupils' attainment and progress to improve learning further in the subjects that they lead. In computing, pupils make good progress and attain standards similar to other pupils nationally. New leaders of subjects such as history and geography are in the early stages of developing their leadership roles. Their knowledge of pupils' progress is not secure.
- Leaders have a clear vision for the pupil premium funding to support pupils in school and to provide opportunities that pupils might not otherwise experience. Pupils' improving progress shows the positive impact of leaders' actions.
- The school uses funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities well. The special educational needs coordinators are experienced and

effective leaders. They tailor a comprehensive programme of teaching to the specific needs of pupils throughout the school. Staff work closely with external agencies to meet pupils' specific needs. Leaders regularly and systematically assess the effectiveness and impact of the school's provision. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress.

- Leaders make effective use of the primary school physical education and sport premium to develop pupils' participation in a wide variety of competitive sports and to develop pupils' sports skills. The school holds the 'Gold Active Mark'. During the inspection, the girls' cricket team competed successfully in a tournament organised with other local schools. Pupils have achieved successes at local and regional levels across a variety of sports, including football, athletics, cricket and swimming. Leaders promote inclusion effectively through sports such as boccia and events such as paralympic athletic competitions.
- Parents are highly positive about the school and the improvements since the previous inspection. They are pleased with the progress that their children make and the support they receive. Parents say that this is a 'happy and nurturing school' where their children know the importance of learning.
- Support from the local authority, and that of external consultants, was effective following leaders' disappointment with the inspection outcome in 2015. This support has continued to develop leaders' skills and has brought about improvements in teaching and learning.

Governance of the school

- The governing body has been refreshed through the appointment of new members. Governors provide a wide range of expertise and good representation of parents and the community.
- Governors now have stronger processes and procedures in place which give them a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This is a result of the external reviews of governance and the use of the pupil premium undertaken in response to the previous inspection.
- Governors know their statutory duties in relation to safeguarding and carry these out. They have received appropriate training and have processes in place to check that safeguarding practice is effective. They monitor carefully the additional funds for pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities and pupils who are disadvantaged. Financial support is targeted appropriately. Governors check carefully that the use of this additional funding has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- Governors provide appropriate challenge to ensure that leaders make the improvements identified and agreed in the school development plan. They use their standards and effectiveness committee successfully as a means of holding leaders accountable for pupils' progress and attainment. Governors frequently visit the school. They use information from their visits alongside the information provided by the headteacher and other leaders to inform their decisions and actions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The culture of safeguarding is evident in the way that pupils feel safe and in their understanding of how to respond to possible dangers. For example, younger pupils are able to explain how to use the internet safely.
- Staff know and follow the school's procedures for safeguarding. They have a secure understanding of how policies work in practice. Leaders provide regular safeguarding updates.
- Leaders have effective systems in place to ensure that the school carries out the appropriate checks on adults before they work with children.
- Responses from the questionnaires from parents and staff indicate that they are happy with safeguarding arrangements.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve teaching since the previous inspection. With the support of colleagues from other local schools, teaching and attainment in mathematics has improved. Pupils are becoming more confident in explaining their thinking and reasoning mathematically. They are also becoming more skilled in accurately completing problem-solving activities.
- Teachers' raised expectations have helped to ensure that pupils make good progress. This includes most middle-attaining pupils and the most able pupils in classes throughout the school.
- The teaching of phonics is effective across Reception and Year 1. Pupils use their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words, supporting them in developing fluency in reading.
- Pupils were keen to share their enjoyment of reading. They shared their books, and talked of the books they read at home. Pupils say that the '100 reading book challenge' is helping them to become familiar with a wide variety of books and authors. They are broadening their vocabulary and their ability to read with good understanding. Teachers extend pupils' understanding and use of vocabulary through guided reading sessions. Adults are skilful in supporting pupils who need extra help in checking and clarifying the meaning of unfamiliar words. Pupils who read with inspectors read fluently and with good understanding. Pupils are developing the skills of retrieving and using evidence from a text to answer comprehension questions precisely and accurately.
- Displays around school and work in pupils' exercise books capture good-quality outcomes in writing. Daily lessons in grammar and punctuation and well-planned opportunities to check and practise spellings are helping pupils to develop accuracy in their writing. Teaching across subjects helps pupils to deepen and apply their knowledge of vocabulary. Frequent opportunities for pupils to share their ideas with adults and other pupils helps them to organise and improve their writing.
- A strength of the teaching at the school is the use of questioning. Teachers use questioning to encourage pupils to explain their ideas, to offer their opinions and to check their knowledge and understanding. Pupils ask frequent questions, for example

when clarifying the meaning of a word in an unfamiliar context. Other examples include asking what might happen in a science investigation or checking what they will need to remember from previous learning to complete a task. Effective questioning is helping pupils to become independent and confident in their learning.

- Teachers and teaching assistants work in collaborative teams across the school. Teaching staff work effectively to support pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. They give pupils work that matches their learning needs. As a result, they make good progress.
- Teachers have an improving level of subject knowledge and assessment across curriculum subjects. Leaders new to role, for example in geography and history, are developing their skills of monitoring progress and attainment. Checks show that they are less aware of variable expectations of pupils' work. Some topic books show that pupils have taken less care in the presentation of their work, for example in the accuracy of their spelling and in the quality of their writing. This can lead to inaccuracies and slower development of pupils' knowledge and understanding.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. This includes leaders' work with alternative providers. The work of the pastoral leader is effective in supporting the personal development and welfare of pupils and their families. Pupils show high levels of care and understanding for each other.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe. Pupils recognise the many different ways in which adults keep them safe. They are confident that adults are there to help with any problems that they may have. Pupils also know that there are systems for keeping them safe in school, including locking the school gates and checking attendance.
- In conversations with inspectors and in response to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, pupils and parents stated that bullying rarely happens and leaders deal with any instances swiftly and appropriately.
- Pupils value the encouragement and support that they receive from teachers and teaching assistants. In conversation, they frequently refer to themselves as 'learners' and talk of what they need to remember to complete their work successfully. However, poor presentation by some pupils suggests a lack of pride in their work.
- Pupils were highly positive about the opportunities they have to participate in clubs and visits, and the opportunities to play sport with other local schools. Pupils recognise the importance of everyone having equal opportunities to take part; they are proud of their sporting successes. These activities, along with other opportunities to learn about the local and wider communities, enhance and enrich pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are also opportunities for pupils to learn about different faiths and cultures. Pupils know that racism and discrimination are wrong. They show respect for others.
- Pupils explained how the breakfast club helps them to have a healthy, sociable and prompt start to the school day.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. In classrooms and around school, pupils are welcoming, friendly and sensible. They greet each other with smiles.
- Pupils are keen to learn, listen carefully and follow teachers' instructions. The good behaviour of pupils supports their good progress in learning. Time is well spent and pupils value their opportunities to learn.
- The school's records show that the use of alternative provision is effective in supporting pupils to manage their behaviour and to improve their progress in learning.
- Pupils play well together in the playground. They understand the school's expectations of behaviour and the importance of following these. Instances of poor behaviour are rare and staff take appropriate actions to deal with these.
- Pupils value the rewards they receive for their good behaviour and their learning. They are keen to do well.
- Attendance for all groups of pupils is in line with national averages. The proportion of persistent absences has reduced over the past year. This is because leaders have used a variety of strategies to improve pupils' attendance, including meetings with parents.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' work in books and the school's assessment information show that pupils make good progress across a range of subjects, including in reading, writing and mathematics. This is due to improvements in the quality of teaching and teachers' heightened expectations as a consequence of appropriate training and support.
- In recent years, data from the results of national assessments has been in line with the national average for pupils' progress at the end of key stage 2 in writing and mathematics. This includes for disadvantaged pupils. In 2017, leaders were surprised when pupils' progress dipped to be significantly below the national average for middle-attaining and disadvantaged pupils in reading. Leaders improved the reliability of the school's assessment information through further monitoring. They also used tests to support teachers' judgments. The school's performance information for reading shows that pupils' progress in reading has improved and is good.
- The differences in attainment and progress between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally are diminishing. Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. This is because leaders and teachers use assessment effectively to match tasks to the specific learning needs of pupils.
- Explanation and reasoning is a strength in mathematics. Work in pupils' books and school records show that most pupils make good progress. They use their mathematical knowledge well to tackle new learning, applying what they know and understand, for example to complete problem-solving activities.
- Pupils are broadening and deepening their knowledge and use of vocabulary. This is improving their understanding across reading and enriching the quality of their writing.
- Pupils achieve well in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils read with appropriate

fluency and comprehension. They are swift to check anything that they are struggling to understand. They are curious and eager to learn.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership and management of the early years is good. The early years leader knows the strengths and areas for development across the early years provision and as children continue their learning in key stage 1. Leaders ensure that transition arrangements are strong. They use assessment information and the school's tracking system to identify and address children's next steps in learning. Teaching is adapted to provide appropriate support for any children at risk of falling behind in their learning.
- Leaders and teachers successfully meet the challenge of ensuring that children make a prompt start to their learning when they join the Reception class. Most children start with skills and knowledge below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Teaching is adapted to children's specific needs and interests. Assessment is used effectively. The proportions of children making the progress to attain a good level of development at the end of Reception is increasing. Teaching prepares children well for their transition into key stage 1.
- Teaching is good. Staff training and support of colleagues has developed adults' effective teaching of language skills. Well-planned activities provide good-quality opportunities for adults to introduce new vocabulary which children then become familiar with. Visits, such as a trip to a farm, help children to develop their understanding and use of language.
- Children who receive additional funding, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged children, make good progress. Teachers match activities to the interests and specific needs of children effectively. Children show keen interest and curiosity in activities. They work with concentration across the activities provided.
- The high quality and range of activities motivates children to write for a variety of purposes. Children write in simple sentences which they can read by themselves. They use their phonics skills well to help them in their writing and their reading.
- Children demonstrate their understanding of how to stay safe through their behaviour and their discussions. They confidently explore activities indoors and outside. Children talked about keeping themselves safe from the sun. They know how to protect themselves with hats and the need to provide shade for babies if they are outside on a hot day.
- There are no breaches of the welfare requirements. Staff know and follow the safeguarding procedures and policies.
- Parents are appreciative of all that the school does for their children.

School details

Unique reference number	119294
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10046502

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	Blackburn and Darwen
Chair	Ms Chris Southworth
Headteacher	Mrs Victoria Brown
Telephone number	01254 703449
Website	www.avondaleschool.co.uk
Email address	office@avondale.blackburn.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10–11 November 2016

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there have been many changes in the school. The previous headteacher left the school and the current headteacher took up the role in September 2016. The school has appointed many new members of staff.
- The chair and deputy chair of the governing body are new to their roles. Many new governors have joined the governing body.
- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. An above-average proportion of pupils are disadvantaged and in receipt of support through the pupil premium funding.
- Most pupils are from a White British heritage and most pupils speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is above average.
- The school meets the current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.
- There is an on-site breakfast club.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning throughout the school in all classes and in a range of subjects. The headteacher carried out some observations jointly with inspectors.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work and listened to pupils read. They met with pupils, formally and informally, to listen to their views.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at the beginning of the day, at lunchtimes, during playtimes and in the classroom.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject leaders, teachers and members of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke with a representative of the local authority and a consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors examined a wide range of documents. These included records of pupils' progress, the school's checks on the quality of teaching and reviews of its own performance, development plans, records of pupils' attendance and behaviour, and safeguarding documentation. Inspectors also carried out a scrutiny of the website.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents through informal meetings on the playground. Inspectors analysed 61 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 58 text responses submitted by parents. Inspectors also read 21 responses to the pupil survey and 38 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Deana Aldred, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
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Joan Williamson	Ofsted Inspector

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