

Bowness Primary School

Church Street, Little Lever, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 1BT

Inspection dates

2–3 October 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	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Since her appointment in 2016, the headteacher has worked successfully with staff and governors to transform the quality of education at the school. Current pupils benefit from a broad and balanced curriculum and make good progress across a wide range of subjects.
- This is a happy school. Staff enjoy working at Bowness Primary, and pupils love learning. Personal development and welfare are outstanding. Pupils have excellent attitudes to learning and show great care and respect for each other and the adults who teach them.
- Attainment in reading, writing and mathematics has been too low across the school in recent years. However, current pupils are making good progress and achieving well. Provisional results, at the end of each key stage, were much improved in 2018.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. Teachers plan lessons that engage children's interests and help them to make good progress in their learning.
- Despite recent improvements, attendance remains below the national average and too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- Staff share the headteacher's ambition to improve the school still further. They are constantly looking for ways to improve their teaching. They have regular opportunities to attend training and visit other schools to learn from, and share, best practice.
- Children get off to a flying start in the early years. Staff provide a highly stimulating and well-structured learning environment and ensure that children develop good learning behaviours.
- The work set by some teachers does not regularly challenge the most able to make strong progress.
- Many subject leaders are new to their role. Their enthusiasm and knowledge of different subject areas has already had a positive impact on pupils' learning. However, processes for checking and improving standards in the wider curriculum have not been fully established.
- An exciting range of activities is provided for pupils to enrich their learning. Pupils benefit from educational trips, residential visits and have access to a large number of after-school clubs.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve leadership and management by further developing the role of middle leaders in monitoring and improving their subject areas so that pupils achieve well.
- Improve outcomes across the school, including in the early years, by ensuring that a greater proportion of the most able are challenged to achieve higher standards.
- Increase overall attendance and reduce the proportion of pupils who are persistently absent from school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- School leaders, including governors, are ambitious for the school and promote improvement well. Over the past two years, they have overseen significant changes at the school. There has been a major building programme and most of the current teaching staff joined the school in September 2017. Despite these challenges, leaders have secured significant improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and assessment during this period. These are reflected in the provisional results for 2018, which show that attainment has improved at the end of all key stages.
- Since her appointment in 2016, the headteacher has worked effectively, with other school leaders, to create a happy, safe and nurturing school. Staff enjoy working at the school and pupils say that they love learning and that they are well looked after. The positive relationships between leaders, staff and pupils support the progress and development of all pupils.
- The school's broad and balanced curriculum provides regular opportunities for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world. Pupils enjoy art, music and physical education lessons. They have regular opportunities to develop their writing, and to use their mathematical knowledge and skills in subjects such as science and geography. This supports pupils' good progress and helps to ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education when they leave Year 6.
- Staff are fully supportive of the school's leadership team. All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted survey said that they feel valued by school leaders and are proud to work at the school. Teachers value the many opportunities that they have for professional development, which they say is having a positive impact on their teaching and pupils' learning.
- Leaders have a good understanding of the quality of education. They have used accurate monitoring and evaluation to identify and spread good practice, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics. Although there are many strengths in the wider curriculum, leadership of other subjects is not as well developed. Senior leaders have plans to support and develop teachers who have recently taken on subject leadership.
- Systems to support pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities are effective, and additional funding is used well. Leaders ensure that pupils are appropriately supported from the moment they join the school. Their progress is tracked carefully at an individual level, and the impact of any additional support is carefully evaluated.
- Parents are extremely supportive of the school's leadership and particularly value the support and guidance that staff provide for pupils. One parent wrote on Parent View, 'My child has grown hugely in confidence since attending Bowness. Just being shown respect and care from all of the teachers has enhanced her self-worth.'
- The curriculum contributes well to pupils' behaviour and welfare, including their physical and mental well-being. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also well supported through carefully planned assemblies and lessons. Pupils learn to respect each other, and celebrate differences, through a range of activities that teach

them about people in the wider world. British values are woven through the curriculum and staff teach pupils how to apply principles such as tolerance and equality into their everyday lives.

- Sports funding is used effectively to provide additional resources to support physical education teaching. It has also been used to provide additional opportunities for pupils to participate in a wide range of inter-school sports activities. Sports coaches also regularly work alongside teachers in lessons to develop teachers' expertise.

Governance of the school

- The governing body works closely and effectively with the other leaders in the Prestolee multi-academy trust to provide a good level of support and challenge to school leaders. Governors know the school's strengths and its areas for improvement. Through a detailed analysis of pupils' achievement, by the headteacher, they have a good view of how well the school is performing compared to other schools nationally.
- Governance has been highly effective during a period of significant change at the school. Senior leaders in the trust worked effectively with governors and school leaders to secure significant improvements at the school over the past two years. They have been closely involved with the new headteacher in her efforts to raise attainment and improve standards.
- The governing body is committed to the school, and its members bring a range of relevant skills and experience. Governors fulfil their statutory duties effectively. They visit regularly, undertake regular training and oversee the school's work to keep pupils safe.

Safeguarding

- There is a strong culture of safeguarding at Bowness. Leaders, staff and governors ensure that pupils are safe and happy in school.
- Staff are vigilant in safeguarding matters. They are meticulous in recording any concerns that they might have about a pupil's welfare or safety. Detailed records show that any recorded concerns are quickly followed up. Where necessary, the school works closely with outside agencies to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Safer recruitment and vetting procedures are robust. Appropriate checks are made on all adults who work in the school, including volunteers.
- Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They fully understand their roles in relation to child protection.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. They plan interesting lessons, and actively engage pupils in their learning. Teachers make good use of time in lessons. They use questioning skilfully to find out what pupils know, and to challenge them to think hard and further develop their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.

- Significant improvements have been made to the teaching of reading over the past two years. Staff teach phonics well and ensure that teaching builds systematically on what pupils know. They monitor pupils' progress closely and ensure that anybody who is falling behind receives good support. The school provides a broad range of resources to encourage pupils to read, both at home and at school.
- There has been a recent focus on developing pupils' ability to use and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills to investigate and solve problems. Pupils are increasingly confident in their use of number, and many are developing good reasoning skills and making strong progress. However, for some pupils, progress is slower because of previous gaps in their learning.
- Teaching assistants are highly skilled and effectively deployed in supporting teaching. They work effectively with small groups and individual pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, these pupils are able to access the learning and make good progress from their starting points.
- Teachers follow well-planned programmes of study for science, history and geography. Most pupils make strong progress in developing their knowledge, skills and understanding in these subjects. Teachers also provide regular opportunities for pupils to use and develop their reading, writing and mathematics skills in the wider curriculum.
- Work is mostly well matched to pupils' needs and supports their good progress. However, in some classes, the most able pupils are not regularly provided with sufficiently challenging work. This means that they do not have enough opportunities to develop and extend their learning and move on to higher levels.
- All of the parents spoken to during this inspection, and almost all of those who responded to Parent View, were positive about the quality of teaching in the school and the progress that their children are making. Parents appreciate the many opportunities that they are given to visit school and learn about how different aspects of the curriculum, such as phonics, are taught.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Children in the early years quickly learn school routines and develop into confident learners due to the excellent care, guidance and support that staff provide. The school's successful focus on pupils' mental and physical health helps pupils to develop resilience and positive attitudes to learning as they move through the school.
- Pupils' excellent attitudes to learning have a strong and positive impact on their progress. They take pride in their work and enjoy contributing their ideas during discussions in lessons.
- Older pupils talked with great enthusiasm about life at Bowness Primary. They are proud of their school and their achievements. They particularly enjoy the enrichment activities, such as the school choir and after-school clubs, and the many trips and visits

which support their learning.

- The pupils who met with the inspector demonstrated an excellent understanding of how to stay safe when working online. They said that they receive regular reminders, in lessons and during assemblies, about the potential dangers of internet use. They know not to share personal information while online, and said that they would tell a trusted adult if they have any concerns.
- These pupils also told the inspector that bullying was not a problem at the school. They said that it did not happen, but that they would know to speak to a member of staff if they were concerned about somebody's behaviour towards them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The school provides a calm and orderly place for pupils to learn. Pupils work hard in lessons. Disruption of any kind is extremely rare because pupils respect each other and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils' conduct around school is exemplary. High standards of behaviour are expected of pupils and they rarely fail to meet this standard. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and friendly towards each other and the adults who teach them.
- Pupils' attendance remains below the national average despite improvements last year. However, too many pupils are persistently absent from school.
- All members of staff who responded to the Ofsted questionnaire said that they were well supported by senior leaders in managing pupils' behaviour.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2 has been well below national averages in recent years. However, current pupils are making good progress across the school. The quality of work seen in pupils' books and the two-year upward trend in outcomes at the end of each key stage reflect the improvements that leaders have secured to the quality of teaching. Provisional results, for 2018, show that the proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, in writing and in mathematics increased significantly.
- Outcomes in reading are improving. The proportion of Year 1 pupils who have passed the phonics check has been around the national average for the past two years, and the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in reading, at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, increased significantly in 2018. Pupils in key stage 1 and key stage 2 study a different author each half term, and many older pupils read widely and often.
- There have been significant improvements to standards in writing across the school. The work seen in pupils' English books shows that they have many opportunities to write for different purposes and different audiences. Pupils also develop their writing skills well in subjects such as science and history. For example, pupils in key stage 2 are becoming more skilled in writing reports in science and developing their ability to

analyse and evaluate.

- There was evidence in pupils' books to show that they are increasingly able to use and apply their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. However, some pupils struggle to explain their thinking as there are gaps in their mathematical knowledge and understanding. Improved teaching is helping to close these gaps
- The improvements to teaching have had an impact on standards in the wider curriculum. Pupils across almost all year groups are now making consistently strong progress in a wide range of subjects. They are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects such as science, geography and history.
- Although there have been significant improvements in outcomes over the past two years, only a small proportion of pupils are reaching higher standards in reading, writing or mathematics. School leaders are aware and have plans to strengthen the progress made by the most able pupils.
- The progress made by disadvantaged pupils is improving. These pupils have benefited from improvements in teaching. School leaders have also made more precise and effective use of the additional funding for these pupils. As a result, the gap in attainment between these pupils and other pupils nationally is diminishing.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities make good progress because they receive effective and timely support. The good management of this provision ensures that teachers and support staff plan and provide the right interventions for these pupils. As a result, these pupils make strong progress from their various starting points.
- Many pupils start at the school at different points during the school year. Some have limited English and have difficulty accessing the curriculum. School leaders ensure that these pupils are given good levels of support. The 'New Child Leader' carries out a detailed assessment of each pupil soon after they start at the school, liaising closely with parents and other professionals where necessary. She ensures that new pupils receive any additional support that they require to help them settle into school life. School records show that these pupils settle in extremely well and often make strong progress in their learning.

Early years provision

Good

- Many children start in the early years with skills and abilities which are below those typically found. Staff form excellent relationships with children and their parents, and this ensures that children quickly settle into school life and learn the school's rules and routines. Children make good progress in their learning and the proportion of children reaching a good level of development has increased significantly over the past two years.
- Children's behaviour is good and shows that they feel safe. During their time in the early years children develop very good attitudes to learning. They listen carefully to adults and other children during 'circle time'. They also show good levels of concentration when working with their friends or choosing from the broad range of activities available each day.
- Staff in the early years have high expectations of children, irrespective of their starting points. They monitor children's progress carefully and ensure that additional support is

provided where necessary. The quality of teaching is good. As a result, children, including those who have SEN and/or disabilities, generally make good progress. However, sometimes staff do not provide enough challenge for the most able children. This prevents these children from moving on more rapidly in their learning.

- School leaders have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. They have worked successfully with staff to improve provision by providing high-quality training and support. The improvements can be seen in the good quality of teaching, the progress that current children are making and in the improved outcomes at the end of the Reception year in 2018.
- The curriculum in the early years is broad and balanced. Staff have developed a high-quality learning environment, and they provide a wide range of activities each day that challenge children and help them make progress towards the early learning goals. Children regularly demonstrate good levels of interest in their work and become keen and successful learners.
- Staff develop strong relationships with parents and keep them informed about the progress that their children are making. Parents are encouraged to support their children's learning and development at home.
- Safeguarding is effective. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children are safe and secure in school. They ensure that the school's child protection policies and procedures are implemented consistently.

School details

Unique reference number	142030
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10053422

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Andrew Gallimore
Headteacher	Victoria Unsworth
Telephone number	01204 333 140
Website	www.bowness.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	bowness@prestoleetrust.org
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school opened in December 2015. It is sponsored by the Prestolee multi-academy trust and managed by a local governing body to whom the trust delegates some powers.
- The headteacher took up post in September 2016.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is more than twice the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school at times other than the usual transition points is above the national average.

- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average.
- There is one Reception class and all children attend full time. At the time of this inspection there were also five children in the Nursery, all of whom attended full time.
- The school is part of the Prestolee multi-academy trust.
- The school operates a before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes. Some of the observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector scrutinised pupils' written work in subjects across the curriculum.
- The inspector looked at documentation, including school improvement plans, the school's self-evaluation document, minutes of governing body meetings, attendance and behaviour information, and safeguarding records.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the assistant headteacher and several middle leaders. He also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, a representative of the local authority and the CEO of the Prestolee Trust.
- The inspector observed pupils' conduct during breaktimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspector met with groups of pupils to listen to them read and discuss behaviour and other aspects of school life. He also spoke with many other pupils informally.
- The inspector spoke with parents in the playground before school. He also took account of the 38 responses to Parent View and the 11 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Paul Tomkow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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