

Inspection of a good school: Bowmansgreen Primary School

Telford Road, London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 1PH

Inspection dates:

12–13 November 2019

Outcome

Bowmansgreen Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy coming to this caring, friendly school. Leaders and staff have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. As a result, pupils from a variety of social and ethnic backgrounds work and play well together. In lessons, pupils listen carefully and answer questions confidently. They work hard and present their work neatly.

The school is a safe and happy place. Pupils follow the school rules, 'Be kind, be safe, be respectful.' This helps pupils behave well in their classrooms and as they move around the school. They are polite and considerate towards others. Bullying and low-level disruption do not happen often. When they occur, staff sort them out quickly.

In Ofsted's survey of their views, almost all parents said that they would recommend the school to others. A typical comment states: 'a fantastic, nurturing school where my child flourishes'.

Many pupils take part in various school clubs. They show care and thoughtfulness when looking after the school's chickens and rabbits. Pupils talk enthusiastically of recent visits to a local business, to learn about exploration of the planet Mars. The breakfast club is well attended. It prepares pupils well for the start of their day's learning.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Staff, leaders and governors work effectively together. They want the best for every pupil at the school. The new headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely together. They are improving teaching and learning, and the progress pupils make. They give effective support and guidance to new subject leaders. Teachers and teaching assistants receive appropriate training. They ask effective questions and use relevant subject vocabulary. This ensures that pupils' work is of a good and improving quality.

The teaching of phonics is strong in the early years and key stage 1. Children learn the sounds letters make, as soon as they join Reception. They use this knowledge to help

them read. Year 1 pupils read every day to an adult as part of a structured reading programme. Reading books match pupils' ability and the phonics that they have been taught. Over time, pupils become confident, fluent readers. They gain a good understanding of what they read. Staff know how to help weaker readers. They focus on what pupils need to improve. Pupils are encouraged to read often, at home and in school.

Teachers use various ways to help pupils learn and remember more about mathematics. They check pupils' understanding throughout lessons. As a result, mistakes are corrected quickly. Occasionally, the most able mathematicians are not challenged sufficiently.

An experienced science leader ensures that teachers have secure scientific knowledge. Work is well planned throughout the school. Currently, leaders are reviewing the assessment systems within science and subjects other than English and mathematics. This is to ensure that assessment shows clearly what pupils know and understand. Pupils enjoy exciting investigations. Year 1 pupils enthusiastically discussed whether the colour or height of a candle would affect the flame. They carefully followed safety instructions, as they watched to see if their predictions were correct. They then learned about the function of a candle's wick. Pupils' work shows that they learn appropriate skills, knowledge and scientific vocabulary for their age. However, the most able pupils are not always challenged to think more deeply.

Staff cater well for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have the same high expectations for these pupils as they do for others. Leaders provide skilful guidance to meet their various needs. These pupils are fully included in the school's activities.

The school's broad curriculum effectively promotes pupils' understanding of the wider world. Pupils show good attitudes to learning. Poor behaviour does not impact on pupils' learning. Leaders ensure that pupils are well prepared for secondary school and life in modern Britain.

Staff appreciate how leaders take care of their well-being. Everyone who responded to the online staff survey stated that they are proud to work in the school and that pupils are safe.

Children make a good start to learning in Reception. They are fully engaged in their activities. These support their learning and progress well. For example, children develop their understanding of number by singing songs. Additionally, they count the number of beats, when playing percussion instruments. The children are taught to correctly pronounce the phonic sounds they are learning. They love choosing library books to share at home. Children use technology well to take photographs of school pets. Clear routines help children behave well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is a high priority throughout the school. Leaders have a good understanding

of relevant safeguarding issues. They make sure that their training, and that of staff and governors, is kept up to date. They conscientiously monitor concerns about pupils. They liaise closely with external agencies to protect pupils from harm.

Pupils learn to be safe in school and at home. Science lessons seen during the inspection help pupils to be safe around electricity. Pupils spoke knowledgeably about the previous week's learning regarding e-safety.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all pupils are fully challenged in some subjects. Leaders and teachers need to ensure that the most able pupils are sufficiently challenged across the curriculum. This will help them to make the best possible progress, to enable them to reach the higher standards.
- The leadership skills of some subject leaders who are new to their role are underdeveloped. The deputy headteacher is working closely with these new leaders to develop their leadership skills. Senior leaders should ensure that new subject leaders begin to independently improve teaching and learning in their subject areas, leading to improved standards.
- Assessment is not used well enough to check pupils' learning. Leaders have ensured that all subjects are planned well to provide a clear progression of knowledge and skills. They should now use assessment to check that pupils know more and remember more across the curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Bowmansgreen Primary School to be good on 10–11 February 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	117187
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10110276
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	358
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Penn
Headteacher	Anna Lippa
Website	www.bowmansgreen.herts.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	10–11 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- There have been many changes in teaching staff and leadership responsibilities since the previous inspection. The current headteacher joined the school in September 2016, and the deputy headteacher in September 2017.
- The proportions of pupils with SEND and those who are disadvantaged are above the national averages.
- Pupils in the school belong to a variety of ethnic groups.

Information about this inspection

- As part of this inspection, I held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and subject leaders. I also met with groups of teachers and pupils, and a group of governors.
- I looked closely at reading, mathematics and science. I spoke with subject leaders, visited lessons, evaluated work in pupils' books and met with teachers and pupils to determine the quality of education.
- I scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to curriculum planning

and development, behaviour, exclusions, the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plan and documents produced by the local authority.

- I took account of the 22 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- I took account of the 73 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 38 comments on the free-text service.
- I spoke to pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning. I also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. There were no responses to Ofsted's online pupils' survey.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, I reviewed school policies, procedures and records, including recruitment checks of adults working at the school. I met with the headteacher, as a designated safeguarding leader, and spoke with pupils and staff.

Inspection team

Julie Harrison, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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