

Inspection of Bram Longstaffe Nursery School

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

Inspection dates: 17–18 December 2019

Overall effectiveness

Inadequate

The quality of education

Inadequate

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Inadequate

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The quality of education for children is poor. Staff's expectations of children are too low. They do not have a clear understanding of what children need to know in readiness for primary school. Staff do not give some children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) the support that they should. They fail to include some children with SEND fully in activities. This prevents these children from making the gains they should in their learning.

Children learn to understand the simple rules and routines in the nursery. These help them to behave positively most of the time. However, children sometimes behave less well in activities that staff lead. This happens when staff do not make their expectations clear for children. Staff respond well on the rare occasions that any children are unkind to others.

Parents and carers see the school as a safe place for children. Leaders have taken steps to make sure that the building is secure. They make certain that children go home only with adults authorised by their parents.

Leaders and staff give children a warm welcome. Children are happy at the school. Parents value the care that staff provide. They say that this helps their children to settle and to enjoy themselves.

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

Leaders' and governors' actions have failed to improve the school since the last inspection. In fact, the school's effectiveness has declined. Children no longer receive an acceptable quality of education.

Leaders and governors have not ensured that there is a clear and effective curriculum in place to help children to learn well. Staff do not know what they want children to know and understand by the time they move to primary school. This means that staff do not know exactly what to teach children, or when to teach it.

Governors lack understanding of their roles and responsibilities and do not check the work of leaders properly. They do too little to check the work of the school to support disadvantaged children and those with SEND.

Staff's plans for children's learning are weak. Staff do not consider carefully enough what children need to know before they introduce new activities. This prevents children from building up their knowledge and skills in a logical order across all areas of learning.

Leaders and staff select stories that they know are enjoyable for children. However, leaders have not considered the order in which they read books to children over time. This prevents children from understanding enough about books, including

about how stories work. Some of the books that staff make available to two-year-olds are inappropriate for their stage of learning.

When children are able to learn the sounds that letters make, leaders and staff are too slow to introduce them to phonics. Leaders have not made sure that staff have the knowledge and skills that they need to teach phonics effectively. In some activities, staff do not explain clearly enough to children what they want them to learn. They do not anticipate children's possible misunderstandings, then plan how best to respond. When this happens, children do not learn well.

In mathematics, staff provide children with opportunities to count and to name shapes. However, staff do not consider what children need to know to understand new learning. For example, in a baking activity, children watched staff weighing flour. Staff counted aloud in twenties as the weight in grams increased. However, when invited to join in, children counted instead in ones because counting in twenties was too advanced for them.

Staff build strong relationships with children. Children know who to ask for help or comfort. However, children get too few opportunities to listen to each other's thoughts and ideas. This is because staff dominate conversations with children. As a result, children do not learn to take account of the views of others.

Children have too few opportunities to practise using the language that they hear. Staff often ask children questions that only need short answers of one or two words, and yet the children can cope with richer conversation. Staff give children too little time to think and to explain their ideas in words. This hampers children's language development.

Leaders do not double check that staff teach children properly about different people and families. They do not take enough action to ensure that the school treats all children and adults at the school equally and fairly. Leaders have failed to make sure that staff understand the needs of children with SEND. Staff's support for these children, including two-year-olds, is poor. As a result, children with SEND do not make the gains in knowledge and skills that they should. Staff do not fully include some children with SEND in planned activities for other children.

Children enjoy the trips, visits and activities that staff provide to help them develop personally. Sometimes staff link these trips to children's learning. For example, children visited a farm when they were learning about animals. However, staff do not do enough to develop children's attitudes and views. Children are not prepared as well as they might be for their lives in Barrow and the wider world.

In general, children learn to share and to play with and alongside each other. They behave less well when staff do not make their expectations clear. For example, children shout out in activities, or do not listen attentively. Leaders do not record carefully enough the occasions when children do not behave well. They rely too heavily on informal observations of children's behaviour. This prevents them from clearly seeing any patterns in children's behaviour that might cause concern.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child. Staff who spoke with us could explain this clearly. Leaders have set up appropriate links with a range of children's services in order to help children and their families. Staff know how to seek further guidance about safeguarding where necessary. Leaders make proper checks on new staff to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. However, governors do not understand their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding well enough. They do not check properly the school's arrangements for keeping children safe. Leaders and staff understand their responsibilities and act to keep children safe, but some of their training is not up to date.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' work shows that they lack the expertise to improve the school and make sure that children learn and achieve well. The school's effectiveness has declined since the previous inspection. Leaders, including governors, rely too much on help from experts from outside of the school to improve Bram Longstaffe. Leadership capacity at all levels must be strengthened urgently, in order to resolve the many deep-rooted weaknesses in the school.
- Leaders lack clear vision for what they want children to achieve during their time at the school. Children experience learning that is disconnected and does not help them to build their knowledge in a logical way. Leaders must decide clear educational aims for children attending the school. In order for children to achieve well, leaders should set up a curriculum that organises learning for children in all areas of the early years foundation stage in a logical order.
- Leaders do not promote equality of opportunity for all children. Some children with SEND do not receive the support that they need to learn and develop at the school. Sometimes staff do too little to include children with SEND in activities. Leaders need to set out ambitious plans to address these children's needs. Leaders should make certain that all staff implement these plans consistently and effectively so that children with SEND are fully included at school and make the gains that they should in their learning.
- Leaders do not take enough action to promote children's understanding of equality and check that all children, adults and groups of people at the school are protected. Leaders should take planned, deliberate steps to make certain that all the school's work complies with these statutory duties.
- Governors do not have a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. Governors have not acted on advice from the local authority about how to improve the school. They do not ask leaders the right questions when holding them to account for the quality of education, especially about disadvantaged

children and those with SEND. Governors do not understand their responsibilities for safeguarding. Governors urgently need to develop a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities so that they can contribute properly to the school's improvement and development.

- Staff lack strong subject knowledge, especially in mathematics and phonics. This prevents them from anticipating children's misunderstandings and from planning learning that builds securely on what children already know. Governors and leaders need to ensure that staff improve their knowledge of different subjects. Teachers should arrange high-quality learning for children that supports the aims of the school's curriculum.
- Teachers and other staff do not provide children with enough opportunities to practise using language. They give children too few chances to listen to one another's thoughts and ideas. Leaders need to make sure that all staff improve their interactions with children and their questioning skills. Staff should give children more time to formulate their thoughts. They should help children to use language to express those thoughts and to listen to and respect each other's views. These actions will help children to talk and use a wide range of words as well as to listen and think.
- Leaders have not resolved issues about children's behaviour raised at the previous inspection. Teachers and other staff give children too little explanation of what they want them to do in learning activities. They do not set clear expectations for behaviour or give children clear instructions. This results in children calling out, not understanding, or not waiting for their turn. Leaders need to ensure that staff consistently make clear their expectations so that children experience success and behave well.
- Leaders do not keep adequate records of any behaviour incidents that arise at the school. This prevents them from reviewing any issues or spotting patterns that might give rise to concern. Leaders need to record incidents more consistently so that they can take any necessary steps to improve children's behaviour.
- Staff do not give children enough opportunities to learn about similarities and differences among people in their families, community and the wider world. Leaders should make certain that the school develops children's understanding of diversity in everyday life, so that they are better prepared for living in modern Britain.

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're 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	112092
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10121973
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	37
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Nicola Kell
Acting headteacher	Vicki Clarke
Website	www.bramlongstaffe.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3–4 October 2017

Information about this school

- The headteacher in post at the time of the previous inspection has since retired. Between September 2018 and August 2019, an executive headteacher appointed by the local authority oversaw the work of the school on a temporary, part-time basis. At the same time, an acting headteacher was appointed by the governing body to lead the school full-time from day-to-day. For the last half-term, the school's senior teacher has been leading the school during the absence of the acting headteacher.
- A new chair of the governing body was appointed in September 2019.
- The school has been receiving a range of support from the local authority since 2017, including for school leadership, governance and the provision of support for children with SEND.
- The governing body oversees childcare provision for children aged from three months to two years old. The provision was not part of this inspection.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

The school should not appoint newly qualified teachers.

- During the inspection, we spoke with the senior teacher, governors and staff. The lead inspector also met with one representative from the local authority and spoke with another by telephone.
- We reviewed a range of documentation, including records of the work of the governing body, children's learning journals, the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, and documentation relating to SEND and safeguarding.
- We spoke with some parents at the beginning and end of the school day and before the school's Christmas concert. We also took account of 16 responses from parents to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire.
- We took account of four responses to the staff survey and four responses to the pupils' survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading and phonics, mathematics, communication and language, and personal, social and emotional development. A deep dive focuses in detail on an area of learning. We spoke with leaders and staff, visited lessons, looked at children's learning journals and chatted to children where possible.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Lenford White

Ofsted Inspector

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