

Inspection of Bickershaw CofE Primary School

Bickershaw Lane, Bickershaw, Wigan, Lancashire WN2 4AE

Inspection dates: 26–27 February 2020

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The previous 'outstanding' judgement reflected the school's overall effectiveness in January 2007 under the relevant inspection framework at that time.

The new judgement of 'good' reflects the current inspection framework as well as any changes at the school since the last inspection.

The school has not been inspected for 13 years, which is longer than the five-year maximum interval between inspections. Changes in school effectiveness may have happened at any point in that period. The long time between inspections is because the law changed in 2011; it made outstanding schools exempt from routine inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, staff and governors are proud to be members of this school. The school is a harmonious community where everyone is valued and respected. Staff have high expectations for all pupils. Pupils want to please their teachers. Pupils are excited to learn and try hard in lessons.

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They share warm and caring relationships with staff. Pupils that spoke to us said that they have many friends. One pupil commented that, 'You are never alone on the playground. We all play together and have fun.'

Pupils behave well and understand the importance of the school's rules. Around the school, pupils hold doors open for visitors and each other. They respect and value other people's opinions. Bullying is not tolerated in this school. Pupils trust staff to deal with any worries quickly.

Pupils are encouraged to think about others. They support a range of charities and the local foodbank. Pupils plan events and think of ways of how they can make their school and the world better. For example, pupils were concerned about how the use of plastic was harming animals in the ocean. They created posters and led assemblies to share ways that other pupils can help.

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

Senior leaders and governors know the school well. Governors visit the school regularly and question leaders on a range of issues. Staff enjoy working at the school. They are a strong supportive team, who enjoy learning together. Staff say that leaders consider their workload and always have time to listen to them.

Leaders have developed a well-structured curriculum that provides pupils with meaningful experiences. Pupils have opportunities to walk on a beach, toast marshmallows and make bushcraft activities in the woodland garden.

The curriculum has been planned so that it is clear what pupils should learn in each year group. It is particularly strong in mathematics, physical education and computing. In these subjects, lessons build on what pupils have learned before and what they need to know next. Pupils that spoke to inspectors said that this helped them to learn more and remember more.

Pupils all say that they enjoy learning mathematics. They are keen to learn and this is reflected in their behaviour in class. Teachers plan activities that pupils find interesting and challenging. Pupils are encouraged to take risks and learn from their mistakes. Teachers are quick to identify pupils who need more support to catch up. As a result, pupils achieve well in mathematics.

In some subjects, like geography and science, curriculum plans do not make it clear what pupils have learned previously. This means that teachers do not plan activities that build on what pupils already know. Pupils who spoke to inspectors found it difficult to remember what they had learned in the past. Leaders are currently improving these plans so that they better meet the needs of the mixed-age-group classes in key stage 2.

Leaders have made sure that reading is a high priority for improvement. They have strengthened the reading curriculum. Staff make sure that they develop pupils' vocabulary and comprehension skills. Teachers read to pupils daily. Pupils told inspectors that they love the way staff used different voices and expression. As one pupil stated, 'We don't want to stop listening to the story.' Pupils have access to a wide range of books which they enjoy reading. Leaders are determined to raise the profile of reading across the school. This is more successful in some classes than in others.

Leaders have reviewed the phonics curriculum. As a result, staff are clear about the phonics that pupils need to learn and by when. Younger pupils use their phonics knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. They read books that are matched to the sounds that they have learned. Effective support is given to pupils who are struggling with reading to ensure that they catch up. As a result, the proportion of pupils who meet the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check is similar to the national average. Nevertheless, some pupils find it difficult to apply their phonics skills in their reading and writing. This is because they do not get enough time to practise what they have been taught.

Children achieve well in the early years. The learning environment is well organised and resourced. Children are well cared for and feel safe. They make friends and enjoy their learning. Staff take every opportunity to develop children's early mathematical and language skills in fun activities.

Leaders make sure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Teachers plan clear learning steps so that these pupils have what they need to learn. Parents of pupils with SEND talk about how happy their children are and how well they achieve.

The wide range of activities on offer after school contribute well towards pupils' personal development. Pupils go on many trips and staff arrange for visitors to come to the school to bring learning to life. Pupils have the opportunity to take part in sports tournaments. They enjoy representing the school in competitions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that keeping children safe is a priority across the school. All staff and governors receive regular training and updates on safeguarding. This helps them to carry out their roles effectively. Staff know pupils and their families well.

They act quickly if they think a pupil may be at risk. Arrangements for safeguarding are checked by the school's safeguarding governor.

Leaders enjoy effective relationships with other professionals. They make sure that that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help that they need. Pupils spoken with during the inspection know how to stay safe when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The learning environment in some classrooms does not promote a love of reading. Leaders need to make sure that reading is given an even higher profile across the school. This will help to encourage pupils to take more of an interest in becoming avid readers.
- Pupils have insufficient time in lessons to apply and practise their phonics skills. As a result, pupils' achievement in phonics has shown little improvement over time. Leaders should ensure that teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to use their phonics skills so that more pupils master the skills of early reading.
- The curriculum is well planned for most subjects. However, in some subjects, such as geography and science, pupils' learning is not as well sequenced. This means that pupils struggle to remember what they have previously learned. Leaders should further develop curriculum plans in these subjects so that pupils know and remember more across the curriculum.

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 the school and 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	106470
Local authority	Wigan
Inspection number	10111081
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rev Anne Stein
Headteacher	Allison Taberner
Website	www.bickershaw.wigan.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30–31 January 2007

Information about this school

- The school has a Church of England religious character.
- The school has a breakfast club.
- The school had its most recent section 48 inspection, undertaken by the Diocese of Liverpool, in October 2017.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- We met with the headteacher and senior leaders. We spoke to four governors including the chair of the governing body.
- We completed deep dives in reading, mathematics, art and science. This included discussions with subject leaders, teachers and pupils, visits to lessons with leaders and scrutiny of pupils' work. We also looked at a range of other subjects on the second day of the inspection.

- We spoke to many pupils. We observed pupils during the school day, including lunchtimes. We spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day and considered the 13 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire.
- We checked the school’s approach to safeguarding. We met with the designated safeguarding leader and the deputy designated safeguarding leader. We also spoke with the school’s administrative staff. We scrutinised documentation, such as policies, records of recruitment and pre-employment checks. We spoke to a range of staff about safeguarding.
- We examined a range of documentation, including published information about the school’s performance in national assessments, the school’s self-evaluation and development plan, information related to pupils’ behaviour and attendance and the information published on the school’s website.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Elizabeth Clarke

Ofsted Inspector

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