

Inspection of Rawtenstall Balladen Community Primary School

Linden Lea, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6DX

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected nine years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between inspections. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school. They describe their teachers as kind and helpful. Pupils appreciate the help that teachers give them. For example, pupils have time to talk with staff about any concerns or worries. This helps pupils to feel safe. Any incidents of bullying are dealt with quickly by leaders.

Leaders are ambitious to improve how well pupils achieve. This is because pupils do not achieve as well as they should, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are beginning to learn more and remember more because of leaders' recent action to improve the curriculum plans.

Pupils enjoy reading. They like the interesting books that their teachers share with them. Pupils know that reading is important to help them to be successful learners.

Pupils love spending time in the school's spacious outdoor areas. They like playing on the school field and relaxing with friends in the pavilion. Pupils are excited to visit the school's beautiful fairy garden, Twinkleton.

Most pupils behave well in school. They are keen to share their ideas in lessons. Children in the Reception class love playing and exploring together. However, some older pupils are boisterous and lack self-restraint at playtimes. They sometimes show a lack of respect to adults and pupils.

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

The newly formed leadership team has taken determined steps to improve the school's effectiveness. Leaders have reviewed and changed curriculum plans to improve pupils' learning.

The curriculum is carefully planned. Staff have identified the important knowledge that they want pupils to learn and remember in all subjects. Leaders have made sure that the curriculum plans build pupils' learning in well-ordered steps. For example, in mathematics, staff have set out how pupils will develop their calculation skills. However, in subjects other than mathematics and English, the curriculum plans have been introduced only recently. It is too soon to see the full impact of the plans in improving pupils' achievement.

Leaders have identified the important vocabulary that pupils need to know and understand in different subjects. For example, staff teach pupils about scientific words, such as 'permeable' and 'soluble'. In the Reception class, adults are skilful in helping children develop their confidence and accuracy in their spoken language.

Staff work closely with other professionals, such as the educational psychologist, to identify with accuracy any additional needs that pupils may have. Staff make a range of careful adaptations in lessons to ensure that pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as other pupils.

Leaders place a high priority on developing pupils' early reading skills. For example, in the Reception class, children enjoy re-reading and retelling favourite stories with staff. Phonics teaching starts when children join the school. Teachers make sure that pupils learn new sounds in a carefully planned order. Staff make regular checks on how well pupils are learning, in order to identify any who need extra support with their reading. Leaders make sure that these pupils read regularly with adults in school. This helps pupils to develop their fluency in reading.

Most subject leaders are new to their roles. They are developing their expertise and experience. However, some have not had training in their curriculum areas of responsibility. In mathematics and English, leaders make careful and regular checks to see how well pupils are learning. However, systems to check how well pupils are remembering the curriculum in other subjects are not in place.

Pupils understand the school's behaviour policy. Most strive to follow the school's values, such as respect and friendship. The majority of pupils concentrate well in lessons. They are keen to share their ideas. Those pupils who need extra help with their behaviour benefit from carefully planned support from staff. However, some pupils do not behave as well as they should. Leaders are reviewing the school's behaviour policy and providing training for staff to improve pupils' behaviour.

Leaders plan different and thoughtful activities to broaden pupils' experiences. For example, pupils visit other schools and meet pupils from different communities. Through a range of activities, staff help pupils to keep fit and healthy. Pupils enjoy attending different clubs, including those for dancing, running and football. They take part in a mile-a-day challenge. Leaders provide carefully tailored support for pupils' well-being.

The governing body has undergone recent changes. Some governors are new to their roles and lack expertise in providing challenge to leaders. New governors are starting to develop their experience in supporting leaders with improving the school.

Leaders and governors are mindful of staff well-being and workload when making decisions. For example, leaders have changed the school's marking policy to help staff have a better work-life balance. Most staff feel well supported by leaders. They share leaders' determination to improve how well pupils learn.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders provide regular and useful safeguarding training for staff. This ensures that all are alert to possible signs of abuse. Staff report any concerns to leaders quickly. Safeguarding leaders follow the latest government guidance when dealing with any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders work with a range of professionals to protect pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils get the support that they need to stay safe.

Pupils learn about dangers that they may face. For example, pupils find out about the harm caused by drugs and alcohol. Pupils know that they should speak to a trusted adult if the actions of others make them feel uncomfortable or unsafe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The revised curriculum plans in subjects other than English and mathematics are at an early stage of implementation. It is too soon to see the full impact that the improved plans may have in supporting how well pupils learn and remember the curriculum. Leaders should ensure that the revised curriculum is delivered as intended in order to improve pupils' learning.
- Subject leaders have not developed systems for checking how well pupils are learning in subjects other than mathematics and English. Leaders should put in place checks on how well pupils are remembering important knowledge in these subjects. Teachers should use this information to identify any pupils who need extra support.
- Some leaders and governors are new to the school. Some have limited training and experience in their roles to support school improvement. Leaders should ensure that new leaders and governors receive high-quality training that develops their expertise in carrying out their new roles.
- Some pupils show boisterous and inconsiderate behaviour to others during the times when pupils are outside of lessons. They do not meet leaders' high ambitions for behaviour. Leaders should develop the school's behaviour policy and provide training for staff, so that pupils understand how to conduct themselves appropriately around school.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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	119280
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10204537
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	185
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David McGrath
Headteacher	Daniel Hargreaves
Website	www.balladen.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	31 January and 1 February 2012, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed recently.
- There have been significant changes in staffing and governance in recent years.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and religious education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans, looked at pupils' work, spoke to some pupils and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils about school life. They held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and governors. They spoke with two representatives of the local authority.
- An inspector spoke with a headteacher from a virtual school.
- Inspectors reviewed documentation, which included the leaders' evaluation of the school's strengths and areas for improvement.
- Inspectors considered the views expressed by parents and carers in the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the free-text comments. They met with parents at the start of the school day.
- Inspectors also considered the responses to the staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding. They spoke with staff to explore their understanding of how to keep pupils safe. They reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and pupils to discuss provision for pupils' personal development and pupils' behaviour. They looked at documentation associated with these areas.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Suzanne Blay

Ofsted Inspector

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