

Inspection of a good school: Brownlow Fold Primary School

Darley Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 3DX

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 January 2022

Outcome

Brownlow Fold Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

All pupils receive a warm welcome at Brownlow Fold Primary School, regardless of their race, gender or culture. Pupils, including children in the early years, thrive in the stimulating learning environment that leaders have created. Pupils care about each other and they make friends easily. They are proud of their school. Pupils feel safe and are happy. Leaders, governors and staff know the pupils and their families well.

Most pupils live up to the high expectations that leaders have of them. They achieve well across a range of subjects.

Pupils behave well and are respectful towards each other. They are polite, well-mannered and move around the school in an orderly manner. Pupils are confident that should bullying occur, staff would sort it out quickly.

Pupils actively contribute to the life of the school as members of the school council, eco-warriors and well-being champions. They enjoy a wide range of experiences that enhance their personal development and raise their awareness of the world around them.

Parents and carers hold the school in high regard. Typical comments include: 'It's an excellent school with kind and caring staff. They really care about the children and their educational development and well-being.'

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

The headteacher and the deputy headteacher work well together as a team. They have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and the priorities for development. Working with staff, they have designed a curriculum which meets the needs of pupils who attend the school.

Pupils access the full range of national curriculum subjects. Subjects are planned and sequenced in a logical manner. The curriculum is organised so that it outlines an overview

of the knowledge and vocabulary that pupils must learn and in what order. Leaders are not complacent. They are currently refining subject curriculums to ensure that the knowledge that pupils must learn is more clearly defined in some subjects.

Staff have accessed a wide range of subject-specific training to keep their teaching skills up to date. Leaders of some subjects frequently monitor how successfully the curriculum in their area of responsibility is helping pupils to remember essential knowledge and facts. The monitoring of some other subjects is not as well developed. This is because some aspects of monitoring were put on hold due to the restrictions of the pandemic.

In some subjects, there are comprehensive systems in place to check pupils' progress as they learn more and remember more. However, these systems are still at an early stage of development in the foundation subjects, for example in music and geography. As a result, leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well pupils are achieving in these subjects within year groups.

Reading is at the heart of the school's curriculum. Books are beautifully displayed all around the school. Pupils are proud of the Harry Potter and Alice in Wonderland themed book areas which are centrally located in the school. Each class, including in the early years, has their own book area which is well stocked with quality texts.

Well-trained staff deliver the school's phonics programme effectively. The teaching of phonics starts in the early years. Pupils read books that are matched to the sounds that they know. Those who find reading challenging benefit from the extra support they receive from staff. Leaders are keen to do more to give parents a better understanding of how their children learn to read. This will enable parents to become more involved in their children's learning.

Most teachers present new learning well. In lessons, effective use is made of assessment information to ensure that pupils have understood specific concepts before they are moved on to more complex learning.

Some pupils can recall prior learning. Pupils in key stage 1 confidently talked about the first landing on the moon by Neil Armstrong in 1969. Others are beginning to make connections between subjects. For example, pupils use their mathematical knowledge when learning about electricity. Pupils listen well in lessons.

Staff are skilled in identifying pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This ensures that pupils with SEND receive the support they need to learn successfully.

The curriculum is enhanced further through a wide range of opportunities. Pupils enjoy a varied range of clubs, many of which run at lunchtime to meet the needs of pupils. Great care is taken to ensure pupils' physical and mental health is promoted well. Pupils learn about different faiths and cultures and raise money for various charities.

Governors are knowledgeable about the school. They hold leaders to account for all aspects of the school's work, including the quality of education.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They appreciate all that leaders do to support their well-being and help them to manage their workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff understand that everyone is responsible for ensuring that pupils are kept safe. Staff are well trained and have a secure understanding of what to do should they be concerned about a pupil's welfare. They can identify subtle changes in pupils' behaviour which may indicate that the pupil needs help. Leaders and staff work well with outside agencies to ensure that vulnerable families receive the help and support they need.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. They are taught how to use the internet safely. They understand the importance of not disclosing personal information or downloading apps that are not appropriate for their age. Pupils know what makes a good friend.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Due to the pandemic, some subject leaders have not made detailed checks to ensure that their subjects are being delivered effectively. As a result, they do not have a secure understanding of how well their subject areas of responsibility are being implemented in practice. Leaders need to ensure that the monitoring arrangements for these subjects are of the same high quality as is evident in other areas of the curriculum.
- Systems to check the progress that pupils make as they move from year to year are at an early stage of development in the foundation subjects. This means that leaders do not have an accurate overview of how well pupils are achieving in different year groups. Leaders should develop these systems so that they give them an accurate understanding of how well pupils are achieving in all the foundation subjects as they move through the school.
- Leaders have identified that more could be done to give some parents, particularly those who are harder to reach, an understanding of how their children learn to read. Leaders need to consider ways of working more closely with parents to increase their knowledge of how their children learn to read. This will enable parents to support their children's reading skills.

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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in November 2011.

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	105149
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10210996
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Kehoe
Headteacher	Julie Cheung
Website	www.brownlow-fold.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 November 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed.
- There have been a significant number of changes to the teaching staff since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and members of staff.
- The inspector met with three governors and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those relating to safeguarding. The inspector also spoke to staff about safeguarding.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in class and in the outdoor play areas. She also spoke with staff about their well-being and workload.
- The inspector talked with parents as they dropped their children off at school. She also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and to the online staff and pupil questionnaires.
- The inspector conducted deep dives into early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, she spoke with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. She observed pupils' reading with a familiar adult. The inspector also looked at the curriculums and spoke to leaders about some other subjects.

Inspection team

Sheila Iwaskow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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