

Inspection of Bowerhill Primary School

Halifax Road, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 6YH

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 February 2022

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils know how the school values of resilience, responsibility, respect, curiosity, compassion and trust help them to make the right choices. They are proud to attend Bowerhill Primary School. Pupils enjoy learning. Parents said that their children are happy at school.

The school is a calm and purposeful learning environment. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. This begins in the early years. Pupils behave well. They are polite and well mannered. Pupils show respect for each other and adults. They listen carefully when learning, and play well together.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know and understand the difference between bullying and falling out. Pupils said that bullying does not happen. They are caring and kind. Pupils believe it is 'what is inside a person that counts, not what they look like on the outside'.

Leaders are ambitious for pupils. Nonetheless, leaders' ambitions are not being realised. Pupils have gaps in their subject knowledge. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not achieve as well as they could. This is because the curriculum is not adapted appropriately to meet their needs.

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

Leaders have developed a well-sequenced curriculum in English and mathematics from Reception Year through to Year 6. They have identified the essential knowledge that they want pupils to know and remember. Teachers in the Reception class carefully plan learning activities in the classroom and outdoor spaces. They use high-quality talk and play to develop children's skills and knowledge well.

However, this is not the case for all subjects. Some curriculum content is not well sequenced. Where the curriculum content is not as well thought out, teachers do not know what essential knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, some of the planned content is not suitable. Activities do not always enable pupils to achieve the curriculum intentions. Consequently, pupils do not know more and remember more. This leads to gaps in their knowledge.

Where the curriculum is clear about what pupils need to learn and when, teachers plan and deliver effective learning. For example, in phonics lessons, each session follows a well-thought-out structure. Teachers' secure subject knowledge helps pupils to develop their phonic knowledge well. Pupils enjoy reading. Staff encourage pupils to develop a love of reading. Teachers share their favourite children's books and read to pupils regularly. There is a wide selection of books for pupils to choose from. Pupils enjoy these books.

Teachers quickly spot when pupils need additional help. Extra sessions for phonics, reading and mathematics provide pupils with effective additional support. However, where pupils do have gaps in their learning, leaders do not know what they are. As a result, pupils' misconceptions increase. For example, pupils in Year 4 are unable to recall physical features in the local area or localities studied in geography. This is because they do not have a secure knowledge of what a physical feature is.

Pupils with SEND are not supported well enough. This is because learning activities are not adapted effectively. In addition, these pupils rely too heavily on additional adult support. This all contributes to pupils with SEND not achieving as well as they could.

Staff develop positive relationships and clear routines to help children settle into school life. As a result, pupils can learn and play independently. Pupils know how to be physically and mentally healthy. Leaders work well with parents to help overcome any issues that are stopping pupils from attending school regularly.

Leaders have introduced several changes in recent months in order to bring about improvements. The local governing body recognises the need for further development of the curriculum. Staff feel supported to make the necessary changes to improve the quality of education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Appropriate safeguarding checks are in place before staff begin to work at the school. Staff attend regular safeguarding training and receive appropriate updates from leaders. They know how to spot and report concerns. Leaders of safeguarding follow up on any concerns in a timely manner. They work well with external agencies to seek advice and support for pupils and families in need.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe. For example, they know not to share personal information online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, the curriculum is not clear about what pupils need to learn and when. It does not help teachers to sequence the essential knowledge pupils must know and remember. Pupils' learning does not always match the intended expectation. Leaders need to help teachers to know how to organise and deliver the curriculum.
- Teachers do not know where there are gaps in pupils' knowledge in some foundation subjects. This leads to pupils being unable to build on their prior knowledge. As a result, pupils develop misconceptions. Leaders need to establish

assessment systems for foundation subjects and use assessment information to support teachers to adapt the curriculum.

- The curriculum is not sufficiently adapted to meet the needs of some pupils with SEND. This means that pupils with SEND do not learn as well as they could. Leaders need to support teachers to know how to adapt the curriculum appropriately to meet the needs of all pupils with SEND.

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	146343
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10207203
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ninna Gibson
Principal	Anna Willcox
Website	www.bowerhill.wilts.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Bowerhill Primary School is part of The White Horse Federation multi-academy trust.
- The interim principal started working at the school in November 2021.
- The special educational needs coordinator was appointed in January 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.

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 received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the principal, the executive director of education, the chief executive officer, staff, pupils and governors, including the chair of the local governing board.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1, 2, 3 and 6.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English, mathematics, geography and music. For each deep dive, the 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.
- Inspectors reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' safety and welfare. The inspectors spoke to pupils, staff, trustees and governors about safeguarding practices.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View. They also took into consideration the responses to the surveys of staff and pupils.

Inspection team

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