

# Inspection of The Valley Community Primary School

Hibbert Street, Off Blackburn Road, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 8JG

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Inspection dates: 17 and 18 October 2023

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 15 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 graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. 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 graded inspection.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils take full advantage of the vast array of opportunities on offer at this school. They told inspectors that it is a privilege to attend such an exceptional place. Pupils are very proud of their school and their many accomplishments.

Pupils enjoy being at school because they value learning. The school's well-established routines and procedures ensure that pupils feel well cared for and safe.

Children settle quickly in the early years. They develop positive relationships with others. Older pupils strive to uphold the school's values. They develop exemplary behaviour and attitudes towards their learning and each other.

Leaders and staff at all levels have extremely high expectations of all pupils. A highly effective curriculum and well-thought-out support enable them to achieve remarkably well across the whole curriculum. This is especially true for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Pupils respond eagerly when they are invited to contribute to the smooth running of the school. They are keen to take up the many leadership roles that are available. For example, they support others at breaktimes or help with reading. Pupils also play a key role in keeping leaders and governors informed about the effectiveness of the school.

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

The school has skilfully crafted a curriculum across Years 1 to 6 that supports all pupils to develop an impressive body of knowledge. Pupils achieve exceptionally well as a result.

The school ensures that teachers introduce key knowledge in a logical order so that pupils recap on earlier learning and build on what they know. Teachers are adept at checking that pupils have a secure understanding of their learning. They are alert to any misconceptions and make sure that these are tackled before pupils begin to learn something new. This makes future learning more accessible. This success fosters pupils' enthusiasm for learning and motivates them to want to find out more.

In the early years, most children learn what they need to know in readiness for the move into key stage 1. However, the curriculum is not as clear in some areas of learning as it is in others. This means that, in some aspects of the curriculum, staff are less sure about what children should know and be able to do by the end of the Reception Year. At times, staff miss opportunities to check for and then address gaps in children's knowledge.

The reading curriculum is highly effective. This starts as soon as children enter the early years with a strong focus on communication and language development. For

example, children in the two-year-old provision and in the Nursery Year listen with fascination to the stories and rhymes that their teachers share with them. Older pupils regularly access high-quality texts that support and enhance their understanding of language. As a result, pupils develop an impressive range of vocabulary. This helps them to make sense of new learning and to communicate with confidence.

The phonics programme is expertly delivered by skilled staff. Children begin to link sounds and letters as soon as they enter the Reception Year. In key stage 1, pupils build on this strong start so that they practise, extend and embed their reading knowledge over time. Pupils read fluently and accurately. Staff make sure that any pupils who have gaps or misconceptions receive the support that they need to catch up. For example, some older pupils who speak English as an additional language benefit from additional phonics support. This helps them to build their phonics knowledge securely. These pupils, like others in the school, become confident and accomplished readers.

Staff are expertly trained to quickly identify pupils' additional needs. Pupils with SEND receive highly effective and well-matched support to enable them to access the curriculum. This ensures that they grow in confidence and take a full part in all aspects of school life. Their achievement is exceptional as a result.

Pupils' extremely positive attitudes to learning enable them to acquire new knowledge quickly and securely. Pupils' behaviour rarely requires checking by staff. They are self-motivated and keen to learn. Lessons proceed without disruption. Pupils told inspectors how important it is to try their best at all times.

The school makes sure that pupils access exceptionally high quality activities to support their personal development. Pupils are deeply respectful of those who may be different to themselves. They learn to recognise and foster their own talents through hard work and perseverance. In addition, pupils are quick to celebrate the strengths and achievements of others. Pupils are extremely well prepared to make a positive contribution to society in later life. They leave Year 6 as well-rounded, confident and articulate youngsters ready to make the most of all that is on offer in the secondary phase of their education.

The school regularly seeks out the views of staff, pupils, parents and carers. As a result, governors have an excellent oversight of the quality of education that pupils receive. Staff are well supported in their workload. Their well-being is considered carefully when changes are introduced. Governors work closely with staff and pupils at the school to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can.

Pupils, parents and staff alike value the support that they receive from the school. Parents make effective use of the guidance that they receive from the school to enhance their children's learning at home.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum for some areas of learning in the early years lacks clarity. This makes it difficult for staff to know what children should know and be able to do by the end of the Reception Year. The school should finalise its curriculum thinking in the early years so that children are fully prepared for the demands of the Year 1 curriculum in all aspects of learning.

## 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.

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	133980
<b>Local authority</b>	Bolton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10242309
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	2 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	504
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Alyson Cullen
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kevan Naughton
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.thevalley.bolton.sch.uk">www.thevalley.bolton.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	26 November 2008 under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Many pupils in the school speak English as an additional language. Some of these pupils have lived in other countries before attending this school.
- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. There have also been other changes to leadership posts during this time.
- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school increased its age range to admit two-year-olds in 2017.
- The school operates a breakfast club for pupils before school begins.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

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

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's educational provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other leaders in the school. An inspector also spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- An inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history, computing and physical education. They spoke with the leaders of these areas of the curriculum. Inspectors also visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work, held discussions with teachers and talked with pupils.
- Inspectors also visited lessons and spoke with pupils about their learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders' records of pupils' behaviour.
- An inspector visited the school's breakfast club.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.

### **Inspection team**

Claire Cropper, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Julie Cole	Ofsted Inspector
Emily Morris	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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