

Inspection of Banks Lane Infant School

Hempshaw Lane, Offerton, Stockport, Cheshire SK1 4PR

Inspection dates: 15 and 16 November 2023

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

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 14 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, and children in the early years, enjoy attending Banks Lane Infant School. They benefit from the warm and nurturing relationships that staff have with them. Pupils are caring and kind towards one another.

Pupils consistently meet the high expectations that the school sets for their achievement. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, pupils achieve well across a range of subjects.

Pupils are attentive in class and work hard. Their positive attitudes mean that there is very little disruption to lessons. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school.

The quality of pupils' personal development is striking. Pupils learn in depth about values such as collaboration and excellence through the animal characters that are woven throughout the curriculum. Pupils try exceptionally hard to display such qualities and values in their everyday work and play.

Children learn to appreciate people's differences while in the early years. This excellent grounding allows a friendly and respectful culture to pervade the school throughout Years 1 and 2. Pupils spoke with pride about the roles of responsibility that they have been entrusted with, such as becoming play leaders and school councillors.

Pupils benefit from the wide range of high-quality enrichment experiences on offer. The school carefully designs and schedules trips, visits and outdoor learning activities to enhance the curriculum. These opportunities add considerable value to pupils' learning and development.

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

The school has ensured that pupils benefit from a broad, balanced and ambitious curriculum. Typically, from the Nursery Year to Year 2, the school has identified the important knowledge that it wants children and pupils to learn and by when. In the main, this subject content is delivered by skilled staff in a logical order. As a result of the well-designed curriculum, children in the early years are suitably prepared for Year 1. By the end of Year 2, pupils are ready for the challenges of the key stage 2 curriculum.

Despite the overall strengths in the curriculum, in one or two subjects the school has not finalised the curriculum content in full. In these subjects, new knowledge and information are sometimes not delivered in the best possible order. This means that, on occasion, teachers are sometimes not clear on exactly what knowledge they need to teach to pupils and when. From time to time, this prevents some pupils from learning all that they could in these subjects.

The school has prioritised the development of teachers' subject knowledge. Staff successfully deliver the curriculum using appropriate activities that support most pupils to build their knowledge over time.

The school identifies the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff work closely with parents and carers, the local authority and other external agencies to secure appropriate support for pupils. Staff are skilled at adapting the delivery of the curriculum so that pupils with SEND can learn well. For example, staff routinely check that pupils with SEND have secured earlier learning before moving on to new concepts. Typically, this helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school has successfully cultivated a love of reading. This begins in the Nursery Year, where children are introduced to a range of suitable texts. This successfully helps to develop children's knowledge of language and vocabulary.

Overall, staff are well trained to teach phonics in the Reception Year and beyond. They quickly identify any pupil who is struggling to learn to read. Staff provide suitable additional support to help pupils to catch up with the phonics programme, should they fall behind.

Most pupils practise their reading using books that match their phonics knowledge. As a result, most pupils learn to read confidently by the end of Year 2. Occasionally, however, staff do not ensure that some of the books that pupils read are closely matched to their phonics knowledge. This hinders a few pupils' progress in learning to read.

Pupils quickly learn what behaviours are expected of them and respond positively. They are cheerful and well-mannered. The vast majority of pupils attend school daily. The school has well-developed systems to monitor and support any pupils who are repeatedly absent. These strategies have been effective in making sure that more pupils are in school every day.

The school has created an excellent programme to promote pupils' personal development. Pupils talked to inspectors with maturity and a secure depth of knowledge about democracy and the rule of law. Pupils also participate regularly in local and national events to help them to understand about equalities.

Pupils flourish in the wide array of high-quality enrichment activities that the school offers. For example, pupils are keen to attend dance and karate clubs. The school is careful to ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from attending clubs. Pupils learn about mental health and enjoy accessing the calm spaces in the school. The school's programme of wider personal development enables pupils to foster their talents and interests far beyond the academic curriculum.

Governors understand their statutory duties and fulfil their responsibilities effectively. They routinely challenge and hold the leadership team to account for the quality of

education that pupils receive. They hold an accurate view of the school's strengths and priorities for further improvement.

Staff are very positive about the support that they receive from leaders to manage their workload and to protect their well-being. For example, they feel that leaders consider their views and feelings when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, pupils do not practise their reading using books that closely match their phonics knowledge. This means that a few pupils do not learn to read with fluency and accuracy as quickly as they should. The school should ensure that all staff have the expertise to select appropriate books for pupils to practise reading.
- In one or two subjects, the curriculum is not as well designed and ordered as it could be. This means that, in these subjects, some teachers are not as clear as they could be on exactly what knowledge they need to teach to pupils and by when. The school should make sure that it identifies the specific knowledge to be taught and when to teach it.

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

Unique reference number	106027
Local authority	Stockport
Inspection number	10256005
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Lynda Chadbourne
Headteacher	Elizabeth Newson
Website	www.bankslaneinfants.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 October 2009, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of alternative provision for pupils.
- The governing body manages a breakfast club.

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 education 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.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with the headteacher, other senior leaders and staff. The lead inspector also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including the school improvement plan and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, physical education, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- 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.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their experiences of school.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of parents while pupils were arriving at school.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Ruth Moran, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Suzanne Blay	Ofsted Inspector
Lisa Hesmondhalgh	Ofsted Inspector

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