

Inspection of Peel Brow School

Fir Street, Ramsbottom, Bury, Lancashire BL0 0BJ

Inspection dates: 28 and 29 November 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The headteacher of this school is Deborah Christiansen. This school is part of Vision Multi Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Carol McLachlan, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Laurence Goldberg.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend this friendly and welcoming school. They feel happy and well looked after by staff. Staff take care of pupils' health and well-being.

During discussions with inspectors, pupils spoke warmly about the many positive changes that the school has made to the quality of education. For example, pupils told inspectors that they value the introduction of the new behaviour system. Pupils said that the school provides helpful support to foster their confidence in learning.

Pupils try their best to live up to the school's high expectations for their achievement. Across a broad range of subjects, pupils are beginning to acquire an increasing body of subject-specific knowledge. However, some pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), continue to have gaps in their learning. This hinders their progress through the curriculum.

Pupils want to make their school the best that it can be. Pupils behave well, and they are happy to lend a helping hand to others. For example, they enjoy gaining merits as rewards for modelling the school's and trust's values. Pupils demonstrated a secure understanding of fundamental British values, including democracy and mutual respect. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Pupils appreciate the range of clubs they can attend. They also enjoy representing the school in a wide variety of events and activities.

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

The trust's effective support and guidance have begun to enable the school to make rapid improvements to the quality of the curriculum. However, this journey of improvement is ongoing. It is too early to see the effect of these improvements on pupils' learning and development.

In some subjects, pupils benefit from a well-thought-out and ambitious curriculum. In these subjects, the curriculum builds successfully on pupils' prior learning. The curriculum is well designed from the early years to the end of Year 6. Typically, pupils achieve more highly in these subjects.

In other subjects, the school is refining the most important knowledge that pupils should know and remember over time. The school's actions to improve the curriculum are beginning to support pupils to make deeper connections between earlier learning and new curriculum content. However, in these subjects, the school has not ensured that staff are clear enough about exactly what knowledge pupils must learn. Consequently, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

The school has increased the expertise of leaders and staff considerably by, for example, investing in ongoing training for new and established teachers. As a result, staff are delivering the curriculum with growing skill and confidence.

In subjects where the curriculum is designed well, staff typically make effective checks on what pupils have learned. Staff quickly identify pupils' misconceptions. They are using this information more proficiently to adapt future learning to address pupils' gaps in knowledge. However, in other subjects, where the school has not finalised the knowledge that pupils should learn, staff are hindered in how well they use assessment strategies to check what pupils know and can do. Added to this, due to weaknesses in the previous curriculum, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that remain unaddressed.

The school has prioritised the teaching of early reading. In the Nursery Year, staff share a wide range of high-quality books, stories and nursery rhymes to ignite children's interest and enthusiasm for reading. These experiences prepare children well for learning phonics when they join the Reception Year.

Pupils read books that are mostly well matched to their current phonics ability. Staff quickly spot any pupils who are not keeping up with the pace of the early reading programme. However, on occasion, some staff do not support pupils to practise their reading as well as they should. This sometimes slows pupils' progress and fluency through the phonics programme.

Pupils in key stage 2 value the incentives and rewards they receive for reading widely and often. Older pupils read with increasing fluency and understanding.

Pupils, including those with SEND, are enthusiastic learners. Staff identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Staff increasingly make suitable adaptations to the delivery of the curriculum for these pupils. However, in some subjects, pupils with SEND have similar gaps in learning to their peers.

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. This starts in the early years, where children happily join in during tidy-up time. Pupils concentrate well in lessons. They show respect towards each other. For example, they welcome pupils from different backgrounds and cultures with open arms. The school's work to improve the rates of attendance of some pupils is having a positive impact. These pupils now attend school more often and on time.

Pupils appreciate the wealth of interesting events and activities that the school provides to support their understanding of the wider world. They also value the support and guidance that they receive from the school's pastoral team. For example, pupils enjoy spending time in the 'nest', where they can relax and talk about any problems with kind and caring staff.

The trust, school and governors have worked diligently to develop a tight-knit and effective staff team. Staff appreciate the decisions that the school has taken to support their well-being and to reduce their workload while implementing the many changes to the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not support pupils to practise their reading as well as they should. This means that some early readers do not read with sufficient confidence and fluency. The school should ensure that staff provide these pupils with appropriate help so that they become successful readers by the end of key stage 1.
- In some subjects, the school is in the process of defining the key knowledge that pupils need to know and remember over time. This means that, in these subjects, teachers are not clear enough about the knowledge that pupils require for subsequent learning. The school should ensure that, as it finalises these curriculums, teachers are well equipped to support pupils to deepen their subject-specific knowledge and to build securely on what they know already.
- Due to the legacy curriculum, some pupils have considerable gaps in their learning. This means that these pupils are not as well prepared for the next stage of their education as they should be. The school should continue to build on its recent curriculum improvements so that pupils achieve consistently well.

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	148867
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10255942
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	124
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Laurence Goldberg
CEO of the trust	Carol McLachlan
Headteacher	Deborah Christiansen
Website	www.peelbrowschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Peel Brow School converted to become an academy school in March 2022. When the predecessor school, Peel Brow School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school is part of Vision Multi Academy Trust.

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.

- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the CEO and other leaders in school. An inspector met with trustees and members of the local governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and English, mathematics, and history. 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 discussed the curriculum in other subjects and spoke to some pupils about their learning in these subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils or staff.
- Inspectors spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Louise McArdle, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Trish Merritt

Ofsted Inspector

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