

Inspection of Bowburn Primary School

Crowtrees Lane, Bowburn, County Durham DH6 5FP

Inspection dates: 23 and 24 January 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending Bowburn Primary School. They are safe and cared for well. Pupils value the opportunity to contribute to how the school develops. There is a positive sense of community between pupils and staff.

The school has high expectations for pupils' academic achievement. Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of pupils well. Teaching takes account of children's individual starting points in the early years. This helps to ensure that children are ready to move on to Year 1. Older pupils enjoy a curriculum that is broad and balanced. Overall, they achieve well at the end of key stage 2.

Staff promote pupils' positive behaviour well. Pupils move around the school in a calm and orderly manner. They show respect for others. The school's behaviour policies are clear and fair. Pupils understand the school's expectations and take pride in reaching them. Pupils live out the school's 'curriculum drivers', which set out important character traits. Pupils embrace and celebrate difference. They are kind to one another. The school and pupils ensure that bullying is not tolerated.

The school places very high value on pupils' personal development. Pupils across the school benefit from regular educational trips and visiting speakers. Visitors include authors, the police and representatives from a range of careers. Pupils listen attentively to speakers linked to the curriculum. For example, they learned a great deal about Victorian history from a member of staff from a local museum.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has made significant improvements to the curriculum. Pupils benefit from learning that is well planned and adapted to their needs. Staff have excellent subject knowledge because of focused professional development. Assessment and intervention strategies in English and mathematics are having a positive impact. However, the ways in which the school checks pupils' understanding in the foundation subjects, such as history and physical education, is not as well developed. Leaders are aware of this and have plans in place to address the issue.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) access the same ambitious curriculum as their peers. The school identifies and supports the needs of pupils with SEND well. This begins in early years and continues throughout the school. However, the pupils who are eligible to receive pupil premium funding do not benefit as effectively. Their needs are not precisely identified. This limits the quality of education they receive. They do not achieve as well as their peers in some areas of the curriculum.

Children in early years benefit from skilful modelling of language use by adults. This helps them develop their social skills. They enjoy talking to visitors and introducing their friends. The school prioritises early reading. Leaders establish the foundations

for learning to read in Nursery. This helps children get off to a positive start when they begin formal phonics lessons in Reception. Well-trained staff support pupils who fall behind in reading to catch up. The school encourages a love of reading. Pupils are keen to talk about their books and benefit from regular visits to the school library. Story time is a daily event in all year groups. Reading aloud is modelled extremely well by staff. Pupils strive to match staff's enthusiasm when reading aloud themselves. Older pupils enjoy structured discussions about texts in their whole-class reading lessons.

Bowburn Primary School pupils attend school regularly. The school works closely with parents, carers and external agencies to remove any barriers to regular attendance. Pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They value the school's rewards policy. Pupils earn and wear their 'respect' stickers with pride. Pupils behave well in lessons. They do not behave as well during breaktimes and lunchtimes. Leaders are aware of this. Recently, they have taken steps to introduce more structure to social times. Pupils enjoy working alongside staff to plan improvements to the outside areas.

The school ensures that pupils benefit from an effective personal development curriculum. Pupils learn how to stay safe in a wide range of scenarios. They enjoy leadership opportunities which include being part of the school council. Pupils also contribute to their community. They raise funds for local charities and visit a nearby nursing home. The school is developing opportunities to help pupils discover new interests. For example, pupils have relished trying out different sports such as curling.

Parents, pupils and staff are positive about recent changes in the school. Parents are well informed about their child's learning. Parents appreciate improvements made to communication between school and home. Staff are proud of their school. Leaders listen to staff's views and opinions. Governors understand the school's priorities. They fulfil their statutory duties well. Governors also take care to check on the workload and well-being of staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not check consistently well on pupils' learning in the foundation subjects. This means that staff are not clear about the progress pupils are making throughout the curriculum. The school should implement a school-wide approach to assessment.
- The school does not precisely identify the needs of pupils in receipt of the government's additional pupil premium funding. This means that the curriculum

does not help these pupils to achieve as well as their peers. The school should continue its work to improve quality first teaching and outcomes for these pupils.

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 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	114087
Local authority	Durham
Inspection number	10297274
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	366
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stewart Davidson
Headteacher	Natalie Maughan
Website	www.bowburnprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	17 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2023.
- The school uses one unregistered provider of alternative provision.

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 met with the headteacher and other senior leaders over the course of the inspection. The lead inspector also met a representative from the local authority.

- The lead inspector held a meeting with the chair of the governing body and three governing body members. They reviewed documentation relating to governance, including minutes from governing body meetings.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, science, history and physical education. 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.
- The lead inspector discussed how writing is taught in the school.
- An inspector met with the special educational needs coordinator and considered the support given to pupils with SEND during lesson visits.
- 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 met with the leaders responsible for personal development.
- Inspectors met with groups of pupils formally throughout the inspection and spoke with them informally at social times and in lessons.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of pupils, parents and staff gathered through Ofsted's questionnaires, including Ofsted Parent View. Inspectors also spoke to parents during pupils' arrival to and departure from school.

Inspection team

Hannah Millett, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Andrew Johnson	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Ashcroft	Ofsted Inspector

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