

Inspection of Walmsley CofE Primary School

Blackburn Road, Egerton, Bolton, Lancashire BL7 9SA

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 February 2024

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 16 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, including children in the early years, are happy and feel safe in school. They said that they can speak to trusted adults who help them to resolve any worries that they may have. Pupils told inspectors that they value the well-being 'check in' provided by caring staff every morning.

The school is ambitious for its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to succeed academically. However, some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. This is because there are weaknesses in the delivery of the curriculum. Some pupils have gaps in their knowledge as a result.

The majority of pupils behave well in lessons. They are polite and well-mannered. There is a calm feeling when pupils move around the school. However, a minority of pupils do not behave as well as they should during lessons. Sometimes, the behaviour of these pupils disrupts the learning of their peers.

Pupils enjoy the trips and experiences that the school provides. They talked enthusiastically about going to London and how this helped them to prepare for their end of year show. Older pupils appreciate the new range of responsibilities open to them and they strive to support younger pupils and other members of the school community.

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

The school has successfully prioritised the teaching of reading. Well-trained staff teach the phonics programme confidently. The school provides prompt support for pupils who find reading difficult. This helps them to catch up quickly. Pupils read books which closely match the sounds that they have learned. Pupils, including children in the early years, are surrounded by books which capture their interests and encourage them to develop a love of reading.

Older pupils enjoy the range of high-quality texts that they read. These pupils understand the importance of reading for enjoyment as well as how it helps them to improve their writing. Most pupils become confident and fluent readers.

The school has recently made considerable changes to the curriculum. There is now an improved curriculum structure. In most subjects, the school has clearly identified the knowledge that pupils should learn. This knowledge builds well from the early years to Year 6. However, in some subjects there are weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge. This sometimes leads to teachers selecting activities that do not help pupils to learn curriculum content effectively. In addition, the school has not checked sufficiently well that teachers deliver the curriculum as intended from the early years to Year 6.

Teachers routinely check on pupils' learning. This helps to ensure that pupils understand important concepts before learning new knowledge. In some subjects,

pupils have gaps in their learning due to the weaknesses in the previous curriculum. The school is developing systems to ensure that these gaps in pupils' knowledge are closed rapidly. However, this is at an early stage which means gaps in pupils' learning persist.

Children in the early years benefit from the strengths in the reading curriculum. However, these children also experience the same weaknesses in curriculum delivery as their older peers. Furthermore, there is little emphasis on helping children to develop their independence. As a result, some children rely heavily on adults. They are not as well prepared for the key stage 1 curriculum as they should be.

The school uses effective systems to identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND swiftly. It uses further specialist support when necessary. However, there is variability in how well teachers adapt the delivery of the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils. This slows some pupils' learning.

A new behaviour policy has recently been introduced which establishes high expectations for pupils. Where staff use the new approach, pupils behave well. However, some staff do not follow the updated strategies. This means that low-level disruption sometimes interrupts pupils' learning.

The school has recently introduced a programme to develop pupils' learning beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils learn how to keep physically healthy. They understand that they can get help in school if they feel upset. However, pupils have a limited understanding of fundamental British values and how to support their own mental health and well-being.

The governing body offers suitable support and challenge to the school. It has a very clear view of the school's current priorities. Governors monitor actions regularly and work with leaders to prioritise further appropriate improvements.

Staff recognise that there have been many required changes to the quality of education that pupils receive and that this has increased their workload. However, staff were appreciative of the school's efforts to consider their workload when making important decisions about the curriculum. Most staff feel well supported and reported that the school is considerate of their well-being.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, staff have not received sufficient training to deliver the curriculum effectively. This hinders pupils, and children in the early years, from

learning as well as they should. The school should ensure that staff are supported to deliver the curriculum consistently well.

- At times, teachers do not choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn the curriculum. Furthermore, some teachers do not adapt their teaching well enough to meet pupils' additional needs. This means that pupils, including those with SEND, do not progress through the curriculum as well as they should. The school should ensure that teachers are fully equipped to deliver the curriculum effectively, including for pupils with SEND.
- In some subjects, the school does not check how well teachers deliver the curriculum. This slows pupils' learning as some staff do not deliver the curriculum as intended. The school should develop a stronger oversight of how well the curriculum is delivered to help ensure that teachers help pupils to learn what they should.
- Some staff do not apply the agreed behaviour policy consistently well. Therefore, a minority of pupils, including some children in the early years, demonstrate behaviour which disrupts the learning of others. The school should ensure that staff follow the behaviour policy as expected so that pupils behave 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	105232
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10242285
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Russell Dyson
Headteacher	Joanna Atherton
Website	www.walmsley.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2008, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The last section 48 inspection took place in May 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place in the next academic year.

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 that 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors met with some governors, a representative of the local authority and the diocese. An inspector held a telephone conversation with the school improvement partner.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics, history and art and design. 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 other subject areas.
- Inspectors observed pupils read to a trusted adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- 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 considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They considered the responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. Inspectors met with parents and carers to gather their views and opinions about the school.

Inspection team

Sarah Barraclough, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Schelene Ferris	Ofsted Inspector
Rebecca Gough	Ofsted Inspector

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