

# Inspection of Rawtenstall Balladen Community Primary School

Linden Lea, Rawtenstall, Rossendale, Lancashire BB4 6DX

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Inspection dates:	8 and 9 October 2024
The quality of education	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

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

The school has high aspirations for all pupils. Caring staff are developing their expertise in providing additional support for pupils who need it. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Pupils benefit from the school's focus on their wider development. Children in the early years develop confidence and independence. Older pupils are involved in making decisions about the school through its parliament system. Some pupils are trained to be play leaders and mental health champions. They look forward to carrying out these roles across the school.

Pupils get on well together at social times. At breaktimes, most pupils are keen to access the outdoor space, where they take part in a range of physical activities. Pupils are polite and respectful as they move around the school.

During lesson time, pupils' behaviour is more variable. At times, the school does not ensure that pupils maintain the highest standards of behaviour. It does not support pupils who struggle to manage their emotions consistently well.

Most pupils enjoy school. Their achievement is improving slowly. However, some pupils continue to struggle because they have gaps in their knowledge, including in reading. This makes it harder for them to learn new information.

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

The school has continued to work on the areas that were identified as needing to improve in previous inspections. Incidents of pupils' poor behaviour disturbing learning time or breaktimes have become less frequent. Rates of attendance have improved for most pupils. These, and other developments at the school, are helping pupils to benefit more from the school's new and ambitious curriculum.

The governing body provides effective challenge and support to the school. It has checked that planned new initiatives are manageable and do not cause staff to feel overwhelmed.

The school is firmly focused on increasing pupils' achievement. However, unavoidable staffing changes have continued to thwart the implementation of some of its plans. High rates of pupil absence in recent years have impacted on pupils' ability to learn and recall key knowledge. Pupils' achievement remains stubbornly low in some subjects, including in English and mathematics.

The new curriculum is still being embedded. In Years 1 to 6, teachers know what to focus on in each subject. The key knowledge and the order that learning should occur is set out clearly for them. In the early years, a change to the way that the class is organised means that curriculum improvements are at an earlier stage.

Many curriculum leaders are new to their role. They are still familiarising themselves with what pupils should know and be able to do in each year group, particularly in the early years. This makes it difficult to find out where additional support is needed for pupils or teachers.

The school has raised the priority of reading in the curriculum. Most pupils enjoy reading and listening to their teacher share high-quality texts.

The phonics programme is delivered well because the school has made sure that staff are well trained and supported. This new programme is having a positive impact on pupils' early reading knowledge. Children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 are developing the secure phonics knowledge that they need to become confident, fluent readers.

The delivery of several aspects of the curriculum is not as effective as it could be, including in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because gaps in pupils' knowledge are not always identified or addressed. As a result, some pupils find their learning too hard at times. This is often because pupils struggle to read with fluency or accuracy. Occasionally, this leads to a small number of pupils becoming uncooperative and disruptive.

The school's strategies for managing behaviour successfully are mostly followed. However, in some classes, intervention is not quick enough when pupils begin to lose their focus. Moreover, the school does not ensure that some children in the early years develop their ability quickly enough to focus on learning or follow adults' instructions. This hinders their preparation for Year 1.

The school provides support for teachers to help them to accurately identify and meet the varying additional needs of pupils with SEND. It also supports staff to understand why some pupils struggle to remain focused or manage their emotions. This work is ongoing and is not fully embedded. The achievement of pupils with SEND is variable as a result.

Pupils' personal development is a high priority for the school. Pupils appreciate the opportunities that the school provides to participate in sporting activities. They especially enjoy competing against other schools. Pupils know that being physically active contributes to their mental well-being and ability to focus during lessons. They also learn about 'stranger danger', including when online. The attitudes and knowledge that pupils acquire at school help them to develop safe and healthy lifestyles in the future.

## **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 consider the gaps that pupils have in their knowledge carefully enough when designing the curriculum for each class. This is particularly true for some pupils with SEND. This means that, at times, pupils do not have the fluency in reading, writing and mathematics that they need to access the rest of the curriculum with ease. The school should ensure that teachers make effective use of what they know about pupils to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and well.
- There is inconsistency in the implementation of the school's agreed policy for managing pupils' behaviour. At times, the school does not provide the support that some pupils need to remain in control of their emotions. As a result, pupils' focus and attention varies during lessons. This impacts on how well they learn. The school should make sure that staff receive the support that they need to manage pupils' behaviour consistently well.
- In some areas of learning, the school has not defined what it expects children to know or be able to do by the end of the Reception Year. This impacts on how well children are prepared for key stage 1. The school should ensure that curriculum leaders receive the support that they need to understand how learning should build from the early years in their subject.

## 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>	119280
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10314002
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	150
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Susan Allison
<b>Headteacher</b>	Daniel Hargreaves
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.balladen.org.uk">www.balladen.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	3 November 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- A new chair of governors has been appointed since the previous inspection.
- There have been a number of changes to staffing since the time of the last inspection, including leadership posts.
- The school has reorganised some of its classes. There is now a mixed-aged class of Year 1 pupils and Reception children.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not currently 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. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school’s educational provision.
- This was the second routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the continuing 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 a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- An inspector spoke with representatives of the local authority.
- 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 observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 reading to a familiar adult. They also listened to other pupils reading from Year 5 and 6.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading, mathematics and history. 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 spoke with pupils about their learning in other areas of the curriculum. They also looked at examples of pupils’ work in these subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils’ behaviour at breaktimes and lunchtimes and when they moved around the school. An inspector scrutinised leaders’ records of pupils’ behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and carers as they dropped their children off at school. They also considered responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, and parents’ free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted’s online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school.

### **Inspection team**

Claire Cropper, lead inspector

His Majesty’s Inspector

Nicky Corfield

Ofsted Inspector

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