

Inspection of Buckstones Primary School

Delamere Avenue, Shaw, Oldham, Greater Manchester OL2 8HN

Inspection dates:	15 and 16 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Buckstones is a happy school where everyone is welcome. From the start of the Reception Year, children and pupils learn how to look after themselves and each other. Pupils enjoy authentic and respectful relationships with other pupils and staff. They feel comfortable being themselves and everyone is valued.

Pupils benefit from an exemplary focus on maintaining health and well-being. The pupil 'well-being champions' play a pivotal role in ensuring that everyone feels included.

Staff have high expectations of the learning, conduct and wider development of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils typically relish the opportunity to live up to these high hopes. They work hard and their behaviour is often very good.

Pupils are fully involved in all aspects of school life. They immerse themselves in an exceptional range of enrichment opportunities. These include musical and sporting clubs, and visits to farms, art galleries and outdoor pursuits centres. These opportunities make a significant contribution to the development of pupils' character. They also support pupils' understanding of diversity and the wider world. Pupils leave the school ready to embrace the opportunities and challenges ahead.

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

The school has successfully built its curriculum around the aim of giving pupils a 'love of life and learning'. The school's teaching of reading is high quality and central to the fulfilment of this aim. As soon as they join the school, children learn a well-planned early reading curriculum. Staff deliver this curriculum expertly. Pupils learn different letters and sounds at pace. Pupils who need it receive support that is closely matched to their needs. As a result, almost all pupils gain the knowledge to become accurate and proficient readers.

Staff in the Reception class and key stage 1 help pupils to develop their knowledge of early writing and mathematics. Pupils practise their letter formation and spelling of key words frequently. Teachers systematically build pupils' knowledge and understanding of number and counting. As a result, children in the early years and pupils in key stage 1 are exceptionally well prepared for future learning.

The school's curriculum is ambitious. The school has given thought to what pupils should learn. Deep consideration has been given to what children should learn in the Reception class as a basis for learning all subjects well throughout the school. Pupils learn a broad range of subject-specific vocabulary within each area. Teachers typically deliver the curriculum well. They select activities that are well suited to the intended learning. This helps pupils to learn well throughout the school, which is reflected in their consistently high attainment in national tests and assessments.

In a small number of subjects, the curriculum has not been designed with enough thought about how learning builds over time. Staff are less clear about how new learning links to previous learning and what the key knowledge is that pupils need to master. Sometimes, this means that checks on pupils' understanding are not helpful as they do not identify any gaps in learning. This limits teachers' ability to identify and address misconceptions that pupils might have in these subjects.

The school's work to support disadvantaged pupils is exceptional. Staff go to great lengths to meet these pupils' needs and to ensure that they are fully involved in all aspects of school life. Pupils with SEND have their needs identified quickly. The school takes its responsibility to advocate for these pupils seriously. As a result, pupils with SEND, and those who are disadvantaged, typically flourish during their time at the school.

The school has effective systems for ensuring that pupils attend regularly. Staff have the same expectations of high attendance for children in the early years as they do of all pupils. Staff do all they reasonably can to improve the attendance of those who attend less regularly. This helps most pupils to keep up with the demands of the curriculum.

Pupils benefit from an extraordinary approach to their personal development. Leaders are acutely aware that the school's population does not reflect that of their town or region. They are relentless in providing pupils with opportunities to learn and appreciate the beauty of diversity. The school's curriculum focuses on promoting inclusion and equality. This helps to equip pupils with a strong appreciation of what is right and wrong. It lays the foundations for pupils to thrive as citizens of the world.

Governors are the guardians of the school's ethos and mission. They have a forensic understanding of the school's strengths and how it can improve further. The school ensures that staff receive high-quality training to support improvements, such as those made to early reading and mathematics. Staff feel empowered to contribute to the maintenance of the school's culture of care.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a few subjects, the curriculum has not been designed to ensure that learning builds effectively over time. The key knowledge that pupils need to master at each stage of their learning is not clear to teachers. This hinders teachers from identifying and addressing any learning gaps or misconceptions that pupils may have in these subjects. The school should ensure that, in these subjects, staff are clear about the essential knowledge that pupils should learn and how this content will be assessed.

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	105671
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	10347974
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Stephen Beckley
Headteacher	Sarah Healey
Website	www.buckstones.oldham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 March 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not use alternative provision.

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 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.

- 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 headteacher and other leaders. They also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors discussed the curriculum in some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with representatives of the governing body, including its chair.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. There were no responses to the pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Will Smith, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Tracy Beaty

Ofsted Inspector

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