

Inspection of Sunning Hill Primary School

Goldsmith Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 6TR

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| Inspection dates: | 22 and 23 October 2024 |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Good |
| Leadership and management | Good |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since November 2013.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are very happy at this nurturing school. They are very proud of their respective religions and traditions, while understanding and valuing those which are different from their own. Pupils have a strong grasp of fundamental British values and explain well their relevance within and beyond school.

Pupils rise to the school's high expectations of achievement. When learning activities challenge them they show resilience. Children in the early years achieve highly and are exceptionally well prepared for key stage 1.

Pupils, and children in the early years, behave exceptionally well. From entering the school, sometimes as two-year-olds, children learn to behave in ways which enable them to thrive as learners. They listen with rapt attention and follow instructions immediately. This very positive behaviour continues through to the end of Year 6. Pupils are unfailingly polite, cheerful and helpful, both in lessons and at social times.

Pupils attend a wide range of activities, which the school provides. These include music and debating. They learn about their responsibility for protecting the environment. Pupils help to improve their community, for example by making bird feeders. They raise money for local and global charities. Some pupils in key stage 2 take on leadership positions.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum from the early years to Year 6. In all subjects, the curriculum details what pupils should learn and in which order they should learn it.

Teachers undertake training which helps them to develop strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They choose learning activities and resources which motivate pupils and help them to achieve well. Most pupils make very strong progress through the curriculum in most subjects. Children in the early years make exceptional progress, whatever their starting points.

Teachers regularly check pupils' learning and use this information well to adapt teaching. In the early years, highly trained staff expertly identify and address gaps in children's communication and language skills during activities which precisely match learning needs.

In most subjects in key stages 1 and 2, teachers help pupils to remember what they have learned. However, in some subjects, they do not revisit previous learning frequently enough. As a result, some pupils cannot remember aspects of essential knowledge which they need before starting a new topic.

Throughout the school, teachers read to pupils frequently, sharing their own enthusiasm for books and authors. They encourage pupils to read for pleasure at home as well as in school.

Children in the early years, including two-year-olds, listen with wonder to stories, songs and rhymes in an environment which is exceptionally rich in language. These enjoyable experiences of language and books enable them to make a flying start to the Reception Year. Staff expertly teach early reading. They ensure that pupils who find reading difficult have the help that they need. By the end of key stage 1, almost all pupils are fluent and accurate readers.

In 2024, there was a slight decline in pupils' achievement in reading at key stage 2. As a result, the school made changes to the curriculum to address some weaknesses in accuracy, self-correction and understanding of more difficult vocabulary. It is too early for these changes to have had a significant impact on achievement.

The school rapidly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils have all the help that they need to learn the ambitious curriculum alongside their classmates.

The school has exceptionally high expectations of behaviour. From the early years, staff help children to develop self-control and curiosity. Pupils appreciate opportunities to meditate and empty their minds of everything but the learning ahead. Pupils share staff's infectious enthusiasm for the subjects that they are learning. Classrooms are full of smiles and laughter. At all times, pupils, and children in the early years, conduct themselves with a maturity beyond their years.

The school provides experiences that prepare pupils for life beyond the classroom. Pupils understand how to keep themselves physically and emotionally healthy. With understanding appropriate for their age, pupils learn about issues such as healthy relationships.

Leaders have developed a clear vision which incorporates pupils achieving well and making a strong contribution as citizens of modern Britain. Governors have exceptional professional experience. They have had a significant impact on the development of the school.

The school has developed very strong relationships with its families. Parents appreciate the efforts that the school makes to involve them in their children's learning.

Staff are proud to work at this school. They know that their hard work is valued. They appreciate that the school's policies and procedures take into account their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The reading skills of some pupils in key stage 2 are not sufficiently well developed in relation to accuracy, self-correction and the understanding of more sophisticated vocabulary. The school should build on recent changes to the curriculum to enable pupils in key stage 2 to reach their full potential in reading.
- In a small number of subjects, some pupils struggle to recall some of the key concepts and related vocabulary that they have learned in previous years. As a result, sometimes they cannot build on essential prior learning when introduced to something new. The school should ensure that teachers revisit essential knowledge sufficiently frequently to enable pupils to know and remember more.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105163 |
| Local authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 10347938 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 540 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Farook Ismail Atcha |
| Headteacher | Claire Whalley |
| Website | http://sunninghillprimary.net |
| Dates of previous inspection | 6 and 7 November 2013, under section 5 of the Education Act 2015 |

Information about this school

- The school provides early education and care for two-year-olds.
- The school does not use alternative provision for any 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 provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation of the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the school's first routine inspection 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, 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 had discussions with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team.
- An inspector had a discussion with governors, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector had a discussion with two representatives of Bolton Local Authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, English, mathematics, history and music. 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. An inspector listened to pupils' reading to a familiar adult.
- For some other subject areas, inspectors scrutinised the curriculum and pupils' work in books.
- An inspector had a discussion with the special educational needs coordinator to help evaluate provision and practice for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors had discussions with groups of pupils about their experience of school. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys. They spoke to a cross section of staff about their experience of working in the school, including their workload and well-being.

Inspection team

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|---------------------------|------------------|
| Liz Kelly, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Gaynor Rennie | Ofsted Inspector |
| Louise McArdle | Ofsted Inspector |

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