

Inspection of Gaskell Community Primary School

Thomas Holden Street, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 2QG

Inspection dates:	14 and 15 January 2025
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Gaskell Community Primary School is an extremely warm and caring school. Pupils support each other. They are fully committed to the school's ethos of 'kind hands, kind words, kind hearts and be kind to yourself'. Pupils behave well. They are polite and well-mannered. They move around the school in an orderly way. This results in a calm and purposeful atmosphere for learning. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They are aware of whom they can talk to if they have a concern.

The school has high aspirations for its pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils strive to meet these expectations. They have positive attitudes to learning and achieve well.

The school provides pupils with well-considered experiences that broaden their understanding of the world. Pupils take part in after-school clubs, such as crafts, tag rugby and chess. They benefit from going on a wide variety of trips and residential visits. Pupils are proud of the way that they contribute to the school. For example, the play leaders support other pupils during breaktimes.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has taken quick and decisive action to review and revise its curriculum. The curriculum clearly identifies the essential knowledge that pupils need to learn from the early years to Year 6. Teachers have clarity in knowing what to teach and when this should be taught across the range of curriculum subjects. They have strong subject knowledge. This helps them to deliver the curriculum effectively. Their careful choice of learning activities enables pupils to become more knowledgeable, resilient and confident learners as they move through each year group.

In most subjects, staff regularly check pupils' learning and use the information that they gather to adapt future teaching. However, in a few subjects, the school does not make sure that staff check effectively what pupils know and remember of its curriculum. In these subjects, teachers do not address the gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively.

Pupils develop a love of reading. The school has ensured that the time pupils spend reading at school is enjoyable and purposeful. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start in the Reception Year. Those who have attended the Nursery class are well prepared to start their reading journey. Throughout their time in school, pupils read a wide variety of texts, including fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Pupils read books that match the sounds they know and have learned. The phonics programme is well organised, and staff who deliver phonics are well trained. However, some pupils who struggle to read do not consistently receive the support they need to catch up. This hinders their progress to become fluent readers.

Pupils' behaviour in class and around the school is respectful. The school's rewards system motivates pupils to do their best. Children are taught the importance of good behaviour from the moment they start in the Nursery or Reception classes. They quickly

settle and learn to follow routines, develop their independence and become a good friend. Pupils cooperate and play together harmoniously at social times. Pupils' attendance is a high priority for the school. As a result of the school's highly effective work, pupils' attendance is strong, and rates of persistent absence have declined significantly.

The school works effectively with a range of agencies to identify pupils with SEND. Leaders provide guidance to staff on how best to support these pupils so that they can access the curriculum successfully. This results in pupils with SEND achieving well.

The school's personal, social, health and economic education curriculum ensures that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils know how to nurture healthy relationships based on respect and trust. Pupils embrace difference and diversity in society. They challenge any prejudice and discrimination. Pupils are kind, open-minded and caring.

Staff really appreciate the high-quality support that they receive. This helps them to implement most areas of the curriculum well. They are proud to work at the school and know that their well-being and workload are considered carefully when decisions are made by leaders. Parents and carers are pleased with the education their children receive.

The governing body has undergone significant changes since the school was last inspected. It now provides a range of support and holds the school to account effectively. Governors know the work of the school well.

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, teachers do not check what pupils have learned well enough. This means that teachers are not able to identify and address gaps in pupils' knowledge. The school should ensure that teachers check pupils' understanding and remedy any misconceptions so that they build their learning securely over time.
- Some pupils do not keep pace with the phonics programme. The support that they receive does not help them to catch up quickly enough to leave key stage 1 with secure phonics knowledge. The school should ensure that those pupils who find reading difficult receive the support that they need to catch up quickly.

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	105155
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10377904
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	467
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Joanne Booth
Headteacher	Sarah Barlow
Website	www.gaskell.bolton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	15 and 16 November 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new chair of the governing body has been appointed.
- There is a breakfast and after-school club available for pupils.
- The school does not make use of 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.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, design and technology and geography. For each deep dive, they had discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with subject leaders and with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector observed pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the local governing body and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- 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 spoke with pupils about their experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents relating to pupils' welfare and education. They also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day. They also took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Andy Hunt, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Patrick Rayner	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Barraclough	Ofsted Inspector

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