

Woodbank Primary School

Brandlesholme Road, Bury, Lancashire, BL8 1AX

Inspection dates

19–20 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough pupils are making consistently good progress from their starting points. As a result, standards by the end of Year 6 are not as high as they should be, particularly in writing.
- Teaching over time has varied too much across school, especially in Key Stage 2. Work planned for pupils is not always challenging enough, particularly for the most able. This slows their progress and hinders them from achieving as well as they can.
- Marking does not always show pupils how to improve their work. Pupils do not always understand the targets they are given or how to achieve them.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and improve their writing skills in other subjects.
- The instability caused by the changes in senior leadership has held back the effectiveness of the school and the efforts to improve the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- Plans to improve teaching and pupils' achievement do not always help leaders judge whether pupils' progress is good enough.
- Senior and particularly middle leaders are not all fully involved in checking on the quality of teaching and how well pupils are learning.
- Teachers are not yet held fully to account for ensuring pupils make good progress.

The school has the following strengths

- The interim headteacher has an excellent understanding of what the school needs to do to improve and is steering the school in the right direction. As a result, teaching is improving and achievement is rising.
- Governors are extremely well led, know the school well and are successfully supporting and challenging the school to improve.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress and those supported through the pupil premium are now achieving well.
- Pupils have very positive relationships with the staff. They behave well in lessons and around school and feel secure and safe.
- Strong relationships exist with parents and the local community.
- The school works very well with the local authority and other schools to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Efforts to raise expectations are proving successful.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, including one observed jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also checked closely on pupils' work in books, in lessons and on display around school and listened to them read.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, members of the school staff and groups of pupils. Discussions were held with governors and with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors observed the school's work, including the school's checks on how well it is doing, pupil progress data and the school improvement plan. They checked documents relating to safeguarding and child protection, records of the attendance and behaviour of pupils, minutes of governing body meetings and the school website. Inspectors also reviewed reports on the school by the local authority.
- Inspectors considered 24 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the school's own surveys of the views of parents. Inspectors also took account of the views of staff through discussions with them and through the seven voluntary questionnaires that were completed.

Inspection team

Chris Maloney, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Terry Bond	Additional Inspector
Sheila Loughlin	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. (The pupil premium is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, children looked after by the local authority and children from service families.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There have been significant changes in senior leadership and the governing body since the last inspection, including the headteacher and the Chair of the Governing Body. The current interim headteacher, who is a local leader in education, was seconded from St Mary's Church of England Primary School in Hawkshaw, Bury on a part-time basis from February 2013 and then full time from Easter of that year. A new permanent full-time headteacher has been appointed from Easter 2014.
- The school works closely with other schools in the Bury Primary Learning Collaborative. The school has the Woodbank with Elton Children's Centre on site and also provides a breakfast and after-school club which are inspected separately. Inspection reports on these settings can be found at www.ofsted.gov.uk

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that pupils achieve well and reach higher standards, particularly in Key Stage 2, and in writing, by ensuring that:
 - lesson tasks are set at the right level so that pupils, including the most able, can make at least good progress
 - precise targets and marking of work clearly show pupils how to improve their work and they are given the chance to respond to the advice given and their understanding is checked
 - teaching assistants are used effectively throughout the whole lesson in supporting and extending pupils' learning
 - more opportunities are provided for pupils to use and extend their writing skills in a range of subjects.
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - actions planned by leaders at all levels to improve the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are clear and measurable, particularly in their impact on pupils' progress
 - more opportunities are provided for senior and middle leaders to check on the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils so that they can take precise actions to bring about necessary improvements
 - teachers are more rigorously held to account for pupils making good progress.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- The achievement of pupils between Years 1 and 6 requires improvement. Pupils' progress from their different starting points is too variable and pupils have not been reaching the standards of which they are capable, particularly in Key Stage 2.
- Children generally start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills that are below, and sometimes well below, those typically expected for their age, especially in their personal development, reading and writing. However, due to good teaching most children make good and sometimes outstanding progress from their different starting points.
- Standards have generally been above average overall by the end of Year 2. However, in 2013, not enough pupils reached the higher levels of attainment in writing or mathematics.
- Standards by the end of Year 6 have been generally well below average. In 2013, although standards rose in mathematics, standards in reading and writing were significantly below average. Despite the proportions of pupils making the progress expected of them being similar to those seen nationally, not enough pupils made the good progress of which they were capable or reached the higher Level 5 in writing.
- Checks on the work of current pupils in school and records of how well pupils are learning show that the progress of pupils is improving on that seen last year and standards are beginning to rise, particularly in Key Stage 1. However, these improvements are not consistent in all classes, particularly in Key Stage 2. Pupils, particularly the most able, are not always given work that is demanding of them or stretches their thinking and this is hindering the progress they make.
- Pupils enjoy reading in school and at home and enthusiastically told inspectors about their favourite authors like David Walliams. Standards in reading are rising because of improved teaching of reading and the success of targeted support for groups and individuals. In 2013, the proportion of pupils in Year 1 that reached the expected standard in a screening check of their understanding of the sounds that letters make was close to the national average.
- Pupils' writing is improving because of determined work by senior leaders to ensure skills are built on progressively. More of the most able pupils are on track to achieve the higher levels than in previous years. However, this is still too patchy. The written work of some of the most able pupils lacks the content and structure expected for their ability.
- Improvements in pupils' basic number and calculation skills are now becoming more secure as is their ability to apply their skills in solving problems.
- Disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who speak English as an additional language make similar and sometimes better progress than others in school due to the good-quality extra help they receive.
- In Year 6 in 2013, the standards reached by pupils supported by the pupil premium, including those known to be eligible for free school meals were approximately two school terms behind similar pupils nationally. In school, these pupils were about two years behind other pupils in reading, and one-and-a-half years behind in writing and mathematics. School data and the standard of work seen by inspectors show that gaps are closing rapidly and these pupils are now achieving well.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because, over time, not enough has been good or better, particularly in Key Stage 2. As a result, too many pupils have been making expected rather than good progress in English and mathematics.
- Not enough use is made of the knowledge about how well pupils are learning to plan work that is sufficiently demanding of pupils of different abilities within the class. This hinders the progress pupils make. Sometimes, the most able pupils in particular complete tasks that are too easy for them and do not stretch their thinking.

- Although work is marked regularly giving praise and encouragement, comments do not always give enough precise guidance on how pupils should improve their work. In addition, pupils are not always given the time to respond to the marking. Pupils are provided with targets to aim for but they are not always helped to fully understand what they mean.
- Skilled teaching assistants are not always used well in supporting and extending pupils' learning throughout the whole lesson. As a result, some pupils do not always make the best possible progress.
- There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils and this leads to much mutual respect. Pupils are very complimentary about the way teachers and teaching assistants care about the pupils and know them well as individuals. A typical pupil comment during the inspection was, 'They really like us and praise us for things we do at home as well as in school.'
- The quality of teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and staff pride themselves on capturing children's interests in a secure and stimulating environment.
- The quality of teaching is now improving across school. When learning is good and occasionally outstanding, pupils are inspired and motivated to do their best and aim high. Pupils' grasp of concepts is checked regularly and they are moved on quickly to more demanding work that really stretches their thinking and deepens their understanding. Knowledgeable and probing questions are asked that make pupils think hard.
- In mathematics in Year 4/5, high expectations of learning and behaviour were demonstrated and tasks stretched pupils of all abilities. Most able pupils, in particular, relished the challenging and probing questioning when converting Roman numerals to our number system and the opportunities they were given to discuss and collaborate with other pupils.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are eager to learn and enjoy school and this is reflected in their above average attendance. Pupils are respectful of staff and benefit from positive relationships with them. A typical pupil comment was, 'Teachers are nice and help us when we are struggling.'
- Pupils get on well with each other in class and during break times and show respect for other cultures and faiths. A typical pupil comment was, 'Everyone has the right to believe in different things and you learn a lot from meeting people from different faiths.'
- Pupils are polite and give a warm welcome to visitors as reflected in the number of pupils who asked inspectors whether they were having a 'nice day' and enjoying their visit to school. However, they were keen to tell inspectors how they do not like doing work that is too easy for them.
- Pupils really enjoy the many opportunities they have to take on responsibility such as being a school councillor or eco councillor. Pupils also enjoy joining in the many clubs and after-school activities provided, such as cross country and the residential trip in Shropshire which helps to boost their self-confidence and teamwork.
- In lessons, behaviour is good and occasionally outstanding. However, when tasks are too easy or too hard for them, some pupils lose interest and become distracted. This slows the progress pupils make.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel safe and understand a lot about how to stay safe and healthy. All pupils know about the dangers posed by strangers and older pupils are taught how to stay safe on the internet. A typical pupil comment was, 'This is a safe and friendly school. I would recommend parents to send their children here.'
- Pupils show a good understanding of the different forms of bullying, such as bullying as a result of prejudice and cyber-bullying. They are confident that on the rare occasions it happens it is dealt with fairly by staff.
- Evidence from the school's own surveys and from the online Parent View show parents hold positive views on the standard of behaviour and safety in school.

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because, until the appointment of the interim headteacher, the instability in senior leadership since the last inspection had stalled progress in addressing the weaknesses in the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.
- The interim headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher, has high expectations and a clear and accurate view of the steps the school needs to take to improve. She has worked very successfully with the Chair of the Governing Body in galvanising staff and governors in sharing their vision for making the school the best it can be. This has given a much needed boost to staff morale. A typical teacher comment was, 'The headteacher has brought a greater focus and pinpointed what we need to improve. She has brought in people to help us and we are now getting to grips with things.'
- The school's plans are focused on precisely the right things that need to improve and the actions to be taken. However, they are not always clear enough in identifying how leaders are going to judge whether actions have resulted in improved teaching and progress for pupils.
- Regular checks are made on the quality of teaching so that underperformance can be tackled quickly. However, not all senior and middle leaders are as yet involved in checking on the impact of improvements being made to the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. This results in them not having the full range of evidence to help them make rapid improvements in their particular areas of responsibility, especially in improving the achievement of pupils.
- The school works very closely with the Bury Primary Learning Collaborative of Schools and the local authority. These strong partnerships have successfully helped to bring about improvements to leadership and management, to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Improvements have been made to make the checking on the progress of pupils much more regular and rigorous. Pupils are tracked as individuals and as groups reflecting the school's commitment to giving every pupil an equal opportunity to learn.
- The range of subjects is creatively planned and enriched by some high-quality art work in the style of famous artists like Picasso, and learning French. The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well, especially through multi-faith days. Although sufficient curriculum time is allocated to English and mathematics, not enough opportunities are planned for pupils to practise and extend their writing skills in other subjects.
- Good links exist with parents and the local community who are positive in their support for the school. Strong links with Woodbank with Elton Children's Centre supports families and their children well. The local authority has provided very well-targeted support that has helped the school overcome some difficult times and steer it in the right direction.
- Good use has been made of primary school sports funding to improve the quality of sports coaching. Pupils' participation is increasing in the wide range of clubs and this is impacting positively on their well-being.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is good. The excellent Chair of the Governing Body has very successfully led governors in reviewing their practice and improving the rigour in which they hold the school to account. Governors, including those new to role, know the school well and are fully signed up in sharing the vision for improvement. They have a clear and accurate view of the school's performance and know its strengths and weaknesses well. They ensure that teachers' pay rewards are linked with the progress pupils make but are yet to ensure that leaders hold them to account for pupils making good progress rather than expected progress.
 - Governors monitor the school's budget carefully and have ensured that the pupil premium funding is now helping eligible pupils to make better progress throughout school. They have also used extra sports funding well but are yet to fully measure its impact on pupils. Governors ensure that arrangements to safeguard pupils meet requirements.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	105292
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	426081

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Fitton
Headteacher	Geraldine Woodward
Date of previous school inspection	21 September 2011
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