

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Bowdon CofE Primary School

Grange Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 3EX

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 April 2025

Outcome

Bowdon CofE Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils arrive happily at school each morning. They are warmly welcomed by staff. Pupils feel well cared for in this school, where staff know them individually. As the whole school community engages in work and play, pupils actively live out the vision, 'Loving, learning and growing together'. Pupils speak with pride about their school and eagerly share all it has to offer with visitors. Pupils say that everyone is welcome here.

The school sets high expectations for its pupils, and they consistently meet them. Pupils achieve outstanding academic results and are thoroughly prepared for the challenges of secondary school. By the end of Year 6, they develop into polite, self-assured and ambitious young people. Their behaviour is exemplary, with pupils in leadership roles setting positive examples for their peers. Pupils enjoy the sense of belonging that such roles afford them.

Pupils develop their talents and acquire new skills through an exciting choice of extra-curricular activities. They enjoy participating in many clubs such as choir, cheerleading and mindful drawing. They take the many opportunities that are on offer to perform to an audience in music, reading and drama. The school also enjoys competitive success in sports, notably in lacrosse and girls' football.

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

Leaders have been effective in sustaining the performance of the school. The school has implemented an ambitious and well-structured curriculum. Pupils build on key knowledge as they progress from the Reception Year to Year 6. Staff have a strong understanding of

what pupils have already learned. They use this knowledge effectively to check pupils' understanding and support them in applying their knowledge across various contexts. The school constantly adjusts its curriculum to ensure that it is the best that it can be.

The provision in the Reception classes enables children to explore and flourish. Children develop skills through hands-on activities and interactions with their friends and staff. There is a strong emphasis on early reading, writing and mathematics. Children gain secure speaking and listening skills. This enables children to share their thoughts and ideas confidently and accurately.

Reading is prioritised throughout the school. This begins in the Reception classes, where skilled staff make sure that children quickly grasp the sounds and letters necessary to start reading. For those who find learning their sounds challenging, additional support is provided to help them catch up with their peers. By the end of Year 2, the majority of pupils are confident and accurate readers.

The additional needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified quickly. Staff make sure that learning activities are adjusted to enable pupils with SEND to learn the same curriculum as their peers. Some pupils who require specific support receive help that is specifically tailored to their needs. They benefit from the exceptional care and guidance provided by highly trained staff.

The school excels in its provision for pupils' personal development. Pupils are encouraged to show sensitivity and understanding. They become responsible and respectful citizens who contribute positively to their class, school, playground and local community. For example, pupils help the local food bank and raise funds to support young people in Africa. Pupils understand fundamental British values and how to enact these in school. They know how to keep themselves healthy and safe. Pupils show high levels of respect for other faiths. They understand what makes a healthy relationship. They know the qualities of a good friend and are sensitive to the needs of classmates who may struggle with their learning. Pupils benefit from the many enhancements to the curriculum, such as trips to the theatre, immersive experiences that bring history to life, outdoor learning and residential visits.

Pupils are highly attentive and curious learners. They have the resilience that they need to relish challenge. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly respectful. In the playground, pupils of all ages play harmoniously together. They enjoy choosing from the wide range of equipment on offer, for example to dress up, read books, try the climbing wall or create recipes in the mud kitchen.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' attendance and takes effective measures to support the few pupils who struggle to attend school as regularly as they should. As a result, attendance rates remain high.

Governors know the school very well. They are exceptionally well equipped to provide appropriate support and challenge. Staff are appreciative of all that governors and leaders

do to support workload and well-being. As a result, they feel valued and enjoy working at this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding for overall effectiveness in March 2020.

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	106338
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10377926
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	623
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amy Unwin
Headteacher	Samantha Halliwell
Website	www.bowdoncs.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	4 and 5 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Chester. The most recent section 48 inspection, for schools with a religious character, took place in November 2017. The next section 48 inspection is due in the 2025/26 academic year.
- The school offers after-school provision for children in the Reception Year.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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.
- 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 visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector also heard some pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and other leaders.
- An inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- An inspector visited the after-school provision for children in the Reception Year.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. An inspector also spoke to parents as they brought their children to school.
- Inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Alison Lawson

Ofsted Inspector

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