

Inspection of Bowdon CofE Primary School

Grange Road, Bowdon, Altrincham, Cheshire WA14 3EX

Inspection dates: 4–5 March 2020

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

What is it like to attend this school?

Bowdon CofE Primary School is a wonderfully vibrant place for pupils to learn and thrive. Everyone is welcomed with open arms into this highly successful school.

The school's Christian ethos shines through all that it does. Pupils embody the school's 'golden values' of being ready, respectful, kind and safe. They recognise adults in the school as excellent role models. Pupils' personal development is exceptional.

Staff have extremely high expectations of all pupils. The expertise of staff ensures that pupils achieve exceptionally well in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils are well equipped to become curious, self-motivated individuals who believe that they can achieve all they want to. They flourish. Pupils leave the school extremely well prepared for the future.

Pupils of all ages are absorbed in their learning. Their behaviour in lessons and around the school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, well-mannered and greet everyone with a smile.

Parents and carers said that they are highly impressed with the school and the array of opportunities that it gives to their children. Pupils benefit from nurturing leaders and passionate staff. Pupils and parents said that this school is amazing.

Pupils feel very safe. Although bullying is rare, pupils are adamant that staff would deal with it without hesitation should it happen.

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

Leaders are continually reviewing their curriculum to ensure that it remains exemplary. The curriculum gives pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding to be confident and motivated learners in all of their subjects. Leaders have thought exactly about what they want to teach pupils and the order that lessons should be taught. This is a school where pupils have a thirst for learning.

Teachers are passionate and very knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They use this to inspire pupils every day. Teachers explain things with precision and clarity to pupils. They help pupils to remember important information and make connections between different concepts and topics. For example, pupils in Year 5 recalled examples of the corruption of power in history over time. This ranged from the greed of the Mongols in the siege of Baghdad, to Henry VIII changing laws so that he could divorce his wife.

Reading is extremely important in the school. Children learn letters and sounds as soon as they start in the Reception class. Most pupils reach the expected standard in

the Year 1 phonics screening check. By the end of early years and key stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading is excellent.

The school has a rich and varied supply of books. Pupils told me they get lost in the books that they read. They relish the stories that teachers read to them. Teachers encourage children from the Reception class onwards to understand and explain what they are reading. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils' ability to draw on their knowledge of a range of stories and texts, to make comparisons and to think critically is exceptional.

Writing is a significant strength of the school. Most children in Reception can write several sentences by the time they leave for Year 1. Older pupils draw on their vast knowledge and understanding of books and texts to add richness and colour to their writing. Teachers' expertise at teaching grammar, punctuation and spelling ensures that pupils achieve exceptionally well by the time they leave Year 6.

Teachers ensure that pupils learn mathematical concepts thoroughly and in the right order. This is evident throughout the school. In the early years, we saw children thinking carefully about how they used directional language to find hidden treasure. This love of and self-assurance in mathematics continues through the school. As pupils get older, they can confidently use what they already know and can do to solve increasingly complex problems. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is superb.

Leaders have very high expectations of the pupils in this school. They enable everyone to achieve their very best, not just academically, but creatively and physically. Leaders make sure that there are no limits to what pupils can do.

Across the school, disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND) are highly successful. Staff in the early years prepare children extremely well for when they move up to Year 1. Pupils achieve exceptionally well in a wide range of subjects at the end of all key stages.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout school. Pupils are highly motivated learners who relish contributing to their own learning. Although this is a large school, pupils show high levels of respect and responsibility for each other. When describing this, pupils said: 'We are a big school, but we are like a small family'.

Pupils of all ages enjoy extensive extra-curricular opportunities. The take-up for clubs is extraordinary. Many pupils go on to win a variety of competitions and awards, some to a national level. Past pupils write to the headteacher to explain their achievements. Some have gone on to play with the Hallé Orchestra, to represent schools nationally at netball and to be members of the Olympic squad in athletics.

The leadership team is inspirational. Governors are equally knowledgeable and dedicated. Staff are extremely proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong caring and nurturing ethos in the school. The protection of pupils is extremely important to all staff. Leaders make sure that all policies and procedures are in place and that everyone knows them in detail.

Leaders are confident to act if they are concerned about a pupil. They work well with professionals outside the school to keep pupils safe. Leaders are strong advocates for families and pupils.

The pastoral care in the school is a significant strength. Staff ensure that pupils and their families are well looked after and supported.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	106338
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10122155
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	597
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Glenys Lambie
Headteacher	Sharon Hudson
Website	www.bowdoncs.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 November 2006

Information about this school

- This Church of England school is voluntary aided. It last received a religious education inspection carried out under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in November 2017.
- In 2015, Bowdon CE Primary School moved into a new purpose-built school on the same site as the original.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life.
- We spoke with the headteacher, the two deputy headteachers, the lead for early years and the faith and family support officer. We also discussed the provision for SEND. In addition, we held discussions with staff, which focused on safeguarding.
- We spoke with five members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- We reviewed a range of documentation, including that relating to school improvement, safeguarding and the checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day and we considered the 138 responses to Ofsted’s online survey Parent View.
- We also gathered the views of staff during the inspection.
- We talked with pupils about the books that they like to read.
- We looked in detail at reading, writing, mathematics, science and history. For each of these subjects, we held discussions with subject leaders and teachers, visited lessons, looked at samples of pupils’ work and talked with pupils. We also considered other subjects across the curriculum.

Inspection team

Sue Eastwood, lead inspector	Her Majesty’s Inspector
Stephen Rigby	Ofsted Inspector
Kathleen McArthur	Ofsted Inspector
Kathy Nichol	Ofsted Inspector

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