

# Lower Fields Primary School

Fenby Avenue, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD4 8RG

## Inspection dates

13–14 March 2018

|  |                             |
|--|-----------------------------|
| <b>Overall effectiveness</b>                 | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Effectiveness of leadership and management   | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Quality of teaching, learning and assessment | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Personal development, behaviour and welfare  | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Outcomes for pupils                          | <b>Good</b>                 |
| Early years provision                        | <b>Requires improvement</b> |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | <b>Good</b>                 |

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- As a result of the highly skilled leadership and steely determination of the headteacher, coupled with strong support from senior leaders and governors, the school has significantly improved in a short period of time.
- Leaders, teachers and the whole-school community are committed to eliminating second best and creating the best possible educational experiences for all pupils. A number of changes in staffing have been managed carefully to eliminate any effect on pupils' learning.
- In key stages 1 and 2, as a result of consistently good teaching and accurate assessment, pupils learn quickly and are beginning to apply their skills across all subjects.
- The headteacher has led many significant but recent changes in teaching, which are becoming embedded and are beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' learning and achievement.
- Leaders' monitoring of the quality of provision in English and mathematics is rigorous and detailed. Subject leaders' skills across the wider curriculum still require further development.
- Between Years 1 and 6, current pupils are making strong progress from their starting points. Standards of attainment are rising quickly.
- Teachers usually match work accurately to pupils' abilities but, occasionally, the most able pupils are not stretched or challenged. Too few are working at a greater depth of understanding by the end of Years 2 and 6.
- Pupils write often and across a range of subjects. The drive to improve pupils' handwriting and presentation has not yet had the desired effect for all pupils.
- Leaders are using the pupil premium funding effectively. Disadvantaged pupils are making good progress in the school. However, differences between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally, while diminishing, are yet to be fully closed.
- Leaders' termly assessment of pupils' progress in English and mathematics is accurate and detailed. Systems to assess and track pupils' progress in other subjects are not yet in place.
- The quality of provision in the early years is not good. Although children behave well and play happily together, their progress is slow. Activities are not always matched well to children's needs. Adults do not share equally high expectations of what children can achieve.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of provision in the early years by:
  - enhancing the skills of all staff in supporting and developing children’s learning during child-initiated activities and learning through play
  - ensuring that leaders use assessment information effectively so that learning activities are closely matched to children’s needs
  - ensuring that planned activities always provide appropriate challenge in order to deepen children’s learning
  - ensuring that all adults share leaders’ high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management even further by:
  - continuing to diminish the difference between the rates of progress made by disadvantaged pupils and the standards they attain and those of other pupils nationally
  - enhancing the skills of subject leaders in monitoring their subject or area of responsibility, including developing systems to assess and track subject-specific skills.
- Improve the quality of teaching even further in key stages 1 and 2 in order to raise attainment by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 by:
  - ensuring that work in all subjects challenges pupils’ thinking and stretches their understanding, especially for the most able
  - continuing the drive to improve pupils’ skills in handwriting and presentation.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The skilled, resolute and well-respected headteacher has been unwavering in her determination to eradicate all aspects of underperformance and ensure an excellent standard of education for pupils in this school. Turbulence caused by significant changes in staffing and a decline in the school's performance have been successfully tackled head-on. In a short period of time, she has led actions which are already transforming and improving the quality of teaching across the school.
- There is a perceptible ambition and determination to improve all aspects of school life, which begin with the headteacher. Her single-mindedness in various approaches to improve teaching has been contagious, and is shared by leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and governors. As a consequence, pupils are now making increasingly rapid progress and developing a confident approach to learning.
- Systems and procedures to evaluate the quality of the school's performance through checking the quality of teaching are incisive and detailed, especially in English and mathematics. Leaders stick closely to a planned programme of monitoring, detailing findings meticulously and recording areas for further improvement, which become the focus of subsequent checks on teaching. The skills of other subject leaders across the wider curriculum are not fully developed. They do not yet rigorously monitor and evaluate the quality of provision. Systems to assess pupils' subject-specific skills and to track their progress in subjects beyond English and mathematics are also still being developed and embedded.
- The school improvement plan is rooted in accurate self-evaluation as leaders know the school inside out. It monitors rigorously the effect of planned actions on improving teaching and outcomes for pupils in their learning, as targets are clear and measurable. This allows governors to hold senior leaders to account, and provide both challenge and support.
- The school's curriculum is rich and balanced, and reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets pupils' needs and interests. Subject leaders manage their own curriculum area well, and ensure that subject content is not replicated across school. Some foundation subjects are taught in termly blocks, while others are taught weekly. Pupils speak enthusiastically about visits out of school linked to their topic work, such as to the National Media Museum as part of a topic on space, and to Eden Camp when studying the Second World War. The school provides a range of after-school clubs that further enhance pupils' access to the wider curriculum. These include film, tennis, debating, drama, gardening and a range of other sports clubs.
- Leaders are managing pupil premium spending increasingly effectively to provide targeted support for disadvantaged pupils. Leaders know the needs of their pupils well, and that different cohorts of disadvantaged pupils require varying types of support. As a result, actions are regularly evaluated for their effect on pupils' learning, and amended or changed as a result. Leaders' perceptive actions are improving progress made by current disadvantaged pupils across the school. However, there is some way to go before differences between their achievement and that of other pupils nationally with the same starting points are eliminated.

- The highly effective leadership of the special educational needs coordinator has resulted in high-quality provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. Their needs are identified early and their good progress, often in small steps, is tracked accurately. The school supports these pupils very well. This is because it conducts a forensic analysis of assessment data to inform support programmes and it uses resources well. It also deploys the school's own skilled specialist staff and works with outside agencies very effectively. Consequently, the SEN funding is used effectively by leaders.
- The innovative use of the primary school physical education and sport funding has had a significant effect on pupils' health and well-being, engagement in competitive sport and physical fitness. Pupils benefit from high-quality lessons led by the skilled specialist sports coach. Pupils engage regularly in competitive sports, as well as participating in a range of after-school clubs. The school has been proactive in ensuring that pupils access clubs and competitions, holding detailed information on how the number of pupils involved has risen significantly.
- The school has benefited from partnership working with a number of local schools, and has sourced specialist support from within an academy chain. This has been very effective in helping to drive forward improvements in school.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and participate in some monitoring activities alongside senior leaders, such as analysing work in pupils' books. Each governor is linked to a key aspect of the school, meets their associated leader regularly and completes a form to record key aspects of their visit. As the number of governors is small, governors attend all meetings. Consequently, they have a sound understanding of all aspects of the school's work. They are determined to improve their effectiveness as governors, and are working towards meeting targets in their own improvement plan.
- Governors bring a range of appropriate professional skills and experience to the school that enhance their effectiveness and impact. They share the commitment of the headteacher and senior leaders and have effectively managed changes in staffing and leadership. Governors effectively question and challenge school leaders and hold them to account for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, as well as for pupils' outcomes.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that a culture of safeguarding is embedded among all staff and they leave no stone unturned in their duty to keep pupils safe. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils are safe and that their welfare is protected and nurtured. There is an ethos of vigilance, and staff are quick to identify, report and record any concerns, no matter how small.
- The safeguarding team's roles and responsibilities have altered and grown as they seek to address and meet the needs of pupils and their families over time. Policies, procedures and records are of extremely high quality. Staff training is thorough and up

to date. This includes training to ensure that pupils are kept safe from the risk of extremism and that all recruitment procedures are watertight. All adults have a clear understanding of their responsibilities for keeping children safe.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching has significantly improved since the appointment of the current headteacher, and continues to improve. The full effect of the many actions introduced to further improve teaching is not yet apparent in pupils' outcomes by the end of Year 2 and 6, given the short time that these strategies have been in place. However, it is clear to see that, in both key stages 1 and 2, teaching is now consistently good. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is accelerating quickly and attainment is rising across the year groups as a result.
- Between Years 1 and 6, teachers have high expectations of pupils in lessons, which results in most pupils showing excellent attitudes to learning. Pupils behave well, try hard to concentrate and are keen to answer questions. They are not afraid to make a mistake and stick at a task without giving up. In the early years, however, not all staff have equally high expectations of what children can achieve.
- Teachers use their good subject knowledge to structure learning effectively. For example, pupils in Year 1 were encouraged to write a sentence to describe the appearance of the wolf from the story about the three little pigs. The teacher encouraged pupils to talk with a partner to create a six-word sentence using interesting adjectives. She then used pupils' suggestions to demonstrate how to write the sentence, emphasising the basic skills needed to punctuate the work.
- Work is usually pitched well, according to pupils' abilities, and teachers are skilled at adapting and changing plans based on ongoing daily assessments of how well pupils grasp learning. On some occasions, work does not provide sufficient challenge, especially for most-able pupils. Teachers are not yet adept at assessing subject-specific skills across all curriculum subjects, as systems are only developing and are not embedded.
- In mathematics, basic skills of number and mental calculation are taught daily and consolidated regularly, and applied in other areas of mathematics. The skilled mathematics subject leader has reinvigorated the teaching in this subject, with a new approach paying instant dividends. As a result of short daily assessments, teachers match work accurately to pupils' needs and understanding of a particular topic or concept in mathematics. Occasionally, the most able pupils are not moved on quickly to more challenging tasks.
- As a result of a new rigorous and systematic approach to the teaching of phonics, children are getting off to a faster start in their reading in key stage 1. Pupils are quickly developing a love of reading from an early age. The school has invested in an attractive and well-stocked library, and makes available large numbers of new books for pupils to purchase. A fresh approach to the teaching of reading in key stage 1 engages pupils in a shared class book and encourages them to predict what could happen and explain how a character is feeling. In Year 1, pupils eagerly discussed why 'Traction Man' in a book by Mini Grey was 'guarding the toast' on the kitchen table.

- Pupils write enthusiastically and often in English, but also in other subjects across the curriculum linked to their topic work. The school's drive to improve pupils' handwriting and presentation is beginning to have an effect, as some pupils' writing is now well formed, neat and legible. There is some way to go before all pupils' work is of this standard.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils show high levels of respect and care for each other, valuing their classmates' opinions and working cooperatively in lessons. All adults work hard to ensure that all pupils are safe and well cared for. Adults work closely with pupils and families in a supportive and sensitive manner, exemplified by the efforts of the parental involvement worker. Pupils said that they feel extremely safe in school.
- Pupils take their many roles of responsibility in the school community very seriously and are proud to be elected as school councillors or house captains. There are a myriad of opportunities to take on an important role to help the school day run smoothly, for example as digital leaders or reading buddies, helping younger pupils during break, clearing lunch plates and closing doors. Pupils' attitudes to learning are largely exemplary, and most are very keen to succeed and to produce their very best work.
- Pupils thrive in the well-ordered and positive school environment. The school's extensive grounds enable a wide range of learning outside the classroom, which the pupils cherish. Year 2 happily recreated the Great Fire of London by setting alight model houses they had made. The school works very effectively to ensure that pupils' physical and emotional well-being are valued and developed. All pupils' smart appearance in their blue uniform shows their pride in their school.
- Pupils report that they feel safe at all times, including when working online. Pupils' knowledge of keeping themselves safe outside school is very strong. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness and development are excellent. Pupils talked convincingly to an inspector about how they learned about people and their faith from other countries and cultures, such as comparing cities in Africa. They have a good understanding of British values such as the rule of law and democracy.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The strong relationships that are nurtured in school ensure that pupils usually conduct themselves well in lessons and around school. Pupils are polite and have good manners, holding doors open for adults and visitors. Playtimes are harmonious occasions where pupils play happily together in the well-equipped and extensive playgrounds, and no-one is left out. There is scope to reduce the time taken for pupils to return to class after break so that there is more time to learn.
- The relationships pupils have with adults and with each other are warm and trusting.

Consequently, pupils enjoy coming to school, as can be seen in their improving attendance. The school has worked very hard to eradicate low rates of attendance. Attendance is now just below average.

- Pupils enjoy their learning and mostly work conscientiously. Incidents of low-level disruption are rare. Behaviour systems encourage positive attitudes to learning and the few incidents of misbehaviour are swiftly and deftly addressed. Pupils were crystal clear on the perils of receiving a 'red card'.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Pupils' progress and attainment are improving quickly from the disappointing statutory assessment data in 2016 and 2017. Work in pupils' books and the school's own tracking data show clearly that, in key stages 1 and 2, current pupils are making consistently strong progress in English and mathematics. Pupils' progress has accelerated significantly this academic year as new approaches to the teaching of English and mathematics take hold.
- In 2017, the proportions of pupils who attained the expected standard or reached levels of greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 teacher assessments were below national figures. These pupils did not achieve well from their starting points in Year 1. However, as a result of much-improved teaching, pupils are now making consistently strong progress across Years 1 and 2. Pupils' achievement is rising rapidly. In phonics, for example, in 2016 and 2017, a below-average proportion of pupils met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. School data and inspection evidence show that most pupils are now working at the expected standard. Effective teaching means that pupils are now getting off to a good start in learning to read and write.
- Progress is now accelerating rapidly across key stage 2. Current pupils are making strong progress in their learning from their individual starting points in most year groups. A much larger proportion of pupils are working at standards for their age across the school. This includes a much larger proportion in Years 3, 4 and 5 compared to assessments at the end of the key stage when these pupils were in Year 2. Pupils who may have fallen behind in their learning are catching up quickly.
- In 2017, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Years 2 and 6 was below average. Since the start of the school year, in both key stages 1 and 2, the progress of the most able pupils has accelerated. This reflects teachers' higher expectations. Even so, their progress is still sometimes held back because the work they are set is not consistently challenging. Some most-able pupils are capable of extending their understanding further.
- Over time, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils has lagged some way behind that of other pupils nationally. However, as a result of the effective and strategic use of the pupil premium funding, along with good teaching and support, this difference is now diminishing. Currently, in each year group in the school, disadvantaged pupils are making similarly good progress in English and mathematics to that of their classmates. Leaders acknowledge, however, that the differences in their achievement compared to

other pupils nationally with the same starting points are yet to be eliminated.

- The school is quick to identify any pupils who are at risk of falling behind. Staff make effective provision for these pupils through activities which are well matched to their individual needs and abilities. This includes pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities. As a result, the progress made by these pupils is good from their individual starting points.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children's progress in learning is slow from their individual starting points. Since the last inspection, the proportion that has reached a good level of development by the end of Reception has declined and, for the last two years, has been below that found nationally. Although many children do make steady progress, too many children are not well prepared to begin Year 1. Their skills, knowledge and understanding have not caught up from their low starting points.
- Leaders do not have an accurate picture of the strengths and weaknesses in the early years. Some improvements have been made since the appointment of the early years leader, but these have not been rapid enough to address the weaknesses in the setting. Leaders now show higher expectations and aspirations for all children, but this is not the case for all staff.
- Adults lead small group tasks well, and match some activities closely to children's varying abilities. However, this is not the case for many activities around the setting which children access independently. These activities can lack challenge and do not move children's learning forward quickly enough or deepen their understanding. Leaders' understanding and assessment information are not always used effectively to plan such activities.
- The skills of some adults to support and develop children's learning during child-initiated activities and when learning through play are presently underdeveloped. The interactions between adults and children do not always move learning on.
- Strong and caring relationships exist between adults and children, ensuring that the children feel safe. Pupils show independence when self-registering at the start of the day. They are able to write their names and make their dinner choice quickly.
- Children's behaviour is good. Children respond quickly to instructions to help to tidy up at the end of a session. They help each other to make sure that jobs are done correctly, taking pride in their environment. They respect each other, are able to take turns and have great fun in their learning.
- The outdoor environment is used well to develop children's physical development. They enjoy climbing on the good-quality equipment provided and experimenting with water or throwing beanbags into containers. The early years leader has worked hard to improve resources within the setting, but there is still some work to be undertaken to ensure that resources are of high quality and meet children's needs.
- Safeguarding practices in the early years are highly effective. Children are taught how to manage risks from an early age and the very effective safeguarding culture that permeates the school is equally apparent in the early years. There are no material breaches of legal welfare requirements. Children are safe and well supported.



## School details

|                         |          |
|-------------------------|----------|
| Unique reference number | 132182   |
| Local authority         | Bradford |
| Inspection number       | 10037719 |

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 to 11  |
| Gender of pupils                    | Mixed  |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 469  |
| Appropriate authority               | The governing body   |
| Chair                               | Steve Allan  |
| Headteacher                         | Alex Gavin   |
| Telephone number                    | 01274 770 312  |
| Website                             | <a href="http://www.lowerfields.bradford.sch.uk">www.lowerfields.bradford.sch.uk</a>               |
| Email address                       | <a href="mailto:alex.gavin@lowerfields.bradford.sch.uk">alex.gavin@lowerfields.bradford.sch.uk</a> |
| Date of previous inspection         | 25–26 June 2014  |

## Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for support from the pupil premium and the proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are above the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.
- The school's part-time Nursery operates in the morning and afternoon. Reception children attend on a full-time basis.
- There have been 10 teachers appointed to the school since the headteacher took up

post in 2015.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, including lessons observed jointly with the headteacher. In addition, an inspector listened to some pupils from Years 1, 2 and 6 read. Inspectors reviewed a sample of pupils' work alongside senior leaders.
- Inspectors held meetings with governors, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, senior leaders and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors also met the school administrative staff and the parental involvement worker, and held meetings with a group of pupils.
- Inspectors viewed a range of documents, including information relating to pupils' achievements over time, the school's data on recent and current progress of pupils and the school's view on how well it is doing. Inspectors also reviewed the school improvement plan, documents relating to performance management and safeguarding and records of behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the 96 parental responses to the school's own questionnaire from November 2017 and the 30 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View. The school's website was also scrutinised.

## Inspection team

|                            |                  |
|----------------------------|------------------|
| Phil Scott, lead inspector | Ofsted Inspector |
| Mike Smit                  | Ofsted Inspector |
| Eve Morris                 | Ofsted Inspector |

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Raising concerns and making a complaint about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/complaints-about-ofsted). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

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. [www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings](http://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings).

You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted).

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit [www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/](http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/), write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: [psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk).

This publication is available at [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted).

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.gov.uk/ofsted](http://www.gov.uk/ofsted)

© Crown copyright 2018