

Inspection of Lowercroft Primary School

Ashington Drive, Bury, Lancashire BL8 2TS

Inspection dates: 8–9 January 2020

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Lowercroft Primary has a friendly, welcoming atmosphere. Pupils are happy at this school. They said that teachers make learning fun. There are a range of extra activities for pupils to take part in, such as sports clubs or learning to play a musical instrument. Pupils are enthusiastic about all aspects of their school life. Many of the parents and carers that we spoke to told us that their children cannot wait to get to school in the morning.

Staff have a caring and nurturing approach. This helps pupils to feel safe and secure at school. There are excellent relationships between pupils, staff and parents. Teachers use their knowledge of each pupil to set high expectations of their learning. This is particularly true for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils are supported well to achieve their individual challenging targets.

Pupils behave well. Their conduct ensures that lessons are highly productive. There are few incidents of poor behaviour because leaders promote respect for others effectively. The school's anti-bullying strategy has been effective in making sure that that bullying rarely happens. Staff address any small disagreements between pupils quickly so that they do not become a problem.

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

Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They are ambitious in their aims for all pupils to succeed. Leaders have ensured that there is a strong curriculum in place. They are in the process of reviewing this to make it even more meaningful. Governors question leaders well about the quality of education in the school. Staff feel valued and motivated because of the steps senior leaders and governors take to reduce teachers' workload.

Pupils achieve well because teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. At the end of the early years and at the end of key stage 1, attainment is similar to that seen nationally. By the time that pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6, their attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is often well above that of other pupils nationally. Pupils with SEND achieve as well as other pupils of the same ability in the school. This is because leaders have created curriculums and a culture that includes everyone.

Leaders prioritise reading well. Children in the Reception class learn phonics right from the start of their education. Staff have developed clear aims for children's phonics development for each half-term. This develops children's learning well in an ordered and logical way. Pupils continue to develop their reading skills well throughout key stage 1. If staff spot pupils who are at risk of falling behind, high-quality support is put in place to make sure that pupils use their phonics skills to read with increasing accuracy. The books that pupils read reinforce the sounds that

they learn well. By the end of Year 1, the majority of pupils meet the expected standard in the phonics screening check. As pupils move through the school, they become increasingly fluent and competent readers who read for enjoyment.

In mathematics, the school has a clear expectations for pupils' learning in place. This means that pupils' learning is structured well, so that by the end of key stage 2 pupils achieve standards that are above those achieved by other pupils nationally.

In the early years, staff ensure that there is a clearly structured curriculum that builds well on children's prior learning. Staff ensure that children have a strong awareness of what they need to achieve in each activity. In key stage 1 and key stage 2, subject leaders have considered where they would like pupils to be at the end of each year in subjects such as music, geography and science. Leaders' targets match the national curriculum well. However, subject leaders have been less specific in defining the steps that pupils need to take in their learning to reach the planned goals in each topic. Although pupils generally recall their prior learning well, some essential knowledge is not remembered as well as it could be. For example, pupils recall their work on the human body in detail, but their understanding in other areas of science is not as strong.

The curriculum ensures that pupils have a good understanding of different faiths and the beliefs of others. Leaders choose themes for pupils' personal development carefully, such as their present focus on independence. Pupils' awareness of British values ensures that they are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Pupils have a very positive attitude towards their education. They value their education. Pupils' attendance at school is well above the national average.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff are well trained and receive regular updates on safeguarding matters. The positive relationships that they have with pupils means that they are approachable, and pupils feel that staff listen well to their opinions and concerns. Staff are alert and keep pupils safe from harm.

Governors receive appropriate training for their role, including training for the recruitment of staff. They make sure that appropriate checks are carried out on new members of staff.

Pupils say that they feel safe. They know how to stay safe when online and in a range of other situations.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Subject leaders have a broad overview of the subjects that they have responsibility for. However, they do not define the steps in learning that pupils need to take for each topic in enough detail. This leads to some lack of coherence between year groups in pupils' recall of their prior learning. Subject leaders should define a clearer sequence that builds towards the end points in learning in different topics and different subjects. Senior leaders should check to make sure that pupils know more readily the essential knowledge that will enable pupils' future learning.

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	105295
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10110518
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	244
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Richard Ainsworth
Headteacher	Mrs Tessa Farr
Website	www.lowercroft.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 September 2007

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and a new senior leadership team has been established.

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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher and subject leaders. We also spoke with a representative from Bury local authority.
- We met with groups of pupils from across the school to ask them about safeguarding. We also met with the headteacher, governors, teachers and teaching assistants. We reviewed documentation which included the school's safeguarding policy, register of the checks carried out on new employees and safeguarding records.
- We observed pupils' behaviour at breaktimes and discussed behaviour and bullying with pupils, parents, teachers and senior leaders.
- We spoke with parents at the start of the school day about the school's provision.

- We considered reading, writing and geography and music deeply as part of this inspection. For these subjects, we spoke with the headteacher, met with curriculum leaders, teachers and pupils, undertook an analysis of pupils' work and visited lessons. We heard pupils read. We also looked at pupils' work in subjects across the curriculum and met with other subject leaders.

Inspection team

Steve Bentham, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Kathleen McArthur

Ofsted Inspector

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