

# Bowerham Community Primary School

Bowerham Road, Lancaster, Lancashire, LA1 4BS

**Inspection dates** 4–5 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Achievement has much improved in the past two years. Pupils are well prepared for the next steps in their education and most pupils leave school with attainment above average.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school. In 2012 many pupils achieved more than is expected nationally especially in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good overall with some that is outstanding. The consistent high-quality marking throughout the school makes it very clear to pupils what they need to do to improve their work and this contributes much to the achievement of all pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are outstanding. Pupils are polite and show respect for each other and adults. They feel safe and have a clear understanding of the school rules.
- The headteacher is relentless in her pursuit for the best teaching and learning for all pupils at the school. She is very well supported by the governing body. The school has in place very effective methods for raising the performance of all staff. The school has improved since the last inspection.
- The curriculum is rich, varied and relevant making a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not yet enough outstanding teaching throughout the school. Teachers do not use all of the information they have about pupils to set work at the correct level.
- Although the school has put a new handwriting policy in place this term it has not yet brought about improvements in the presentation of pupils' work, which is often not good enough.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons taught by 13 teachers. A joint observation was undertaken with the headteacher. They also observed an assembly and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with members of the governing body, a representative of the local authority, senior leaders, subject leaders, the learning mentor and other staff and pupils.
- Inspectors looked at the school’s documents including those checking on how well the school is performing, safeguarding information, the school’s development plan, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, pupils’ books and displays around the school.
- Inspectors looked at ways in which the school checks the progress of individual pupils and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors analysed 52 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire). The inspectors spoke to parents informally and checked the staff questionnaires.

## Inspection team

Desmond Stubbs, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jane Holmes

Additional Inspector

Sonya Williamson

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is a larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion of pupils supported through school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional government funding provided for children in local authority care, those from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals) is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The school has a new headteacher since the last inspection; she took up post in January 2010.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - using information about pupils' progress to ensure that work is neither too hard or too easy
  - implementing the new handwriting and presentation policy consistently and taking every opportunity to remind pupils of the need to produce neat work.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They enter school at levels expected for this age, settle quickly and soon become very confident learners. Letters and sounds are taught well and children use these skills successfully in their early attempts at reading and writing.
- The success of teaching pupils their letters and sounds is reflected in the results of the national test in Year 1 which were above the national average.
- Progress from Year 1 to Year 6 is good. Achievement in lessons is generally good and at times outstanding but in some lessons activities are not at the correct level for the ability of the pupil and then progress is not as good. Nevertheless, attainment is rising and at the end of Year 6 is above average and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Achievement in English and mathematics is strong. Pupils are confident readers. Although writing is above average pupils' handwriting and presentation is not good enough. Many books include untidy work that is not set out well and there are too many scribbles and crossings out.
- At Key Stage 2, pupils are organised by ability across Years 3 to 6 for the teaching of mathematics. This has done much to improve achievement in this subject. The number of pupils exceeding the expected progress in mathematics in 2012 was high compared to schools nationally. Pupils are confident carrying out calculations and enjoy their opportunities to solve problems.
- The school allocates the pupil-premium funding effectively, in particular to providing additional small group work. This enables these pupils to make good progress.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress. The school is very quick to recognise when these pupils need additional support and this ensures these pupils do not fall behind.
- Parents are very positive about the progress their children make.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is good overall and much is outstanding in particular in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Years 5 and 6. Teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and achievement.
- The quality of teachers' marking is consistently of a high standard. It makes it very clear for the pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are given time to look at the comments made and they have a good understanding of their next steps in learning.
- Teachers gather a lot of information about the pupils in their class during lessons and as part of their marking. However, this information is not used as well as it should be when planning lessons and some activities are too easy for some pupils and are too hard for others.
- In the Nursery and Reception classes teaching is outstanding. Activities are carefully planned to build on children's interests. The outdoor area is organised very well with good resources. Children worked collaboratively to make Jack Frost's den whilst others were looking at the properties of ice. Relationships are a real strength. Adults interact respectfully and fairly with children and there is a positive atmosphere in all learning areas.
- Expectations of behaviour are high. Relationships are a strong part of school life and pupils behave well in lessons. Teachers do not always demand enough of pupils' handwriting, which is not always neat.
- The teaching of mathematics is exceedingly strong. It is most effective where pupils are given real-life problems to solve which have more than one possible outcome. This was seen in a Year 6 lesson where pupils used menus from a local restaurant to work out which meal was the best

value. Pupils thoroughly enjoyed the task and work was accurate.

- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards reading. Letters and sounds are taught effectively in the Early Years Foundation Stage and younger pupils show resilience and persistence when reading difficult words.
- The school has a number of teachers new to the profession and they have very successfully been introduced to the school's teaching and learning policies and their teaching is already good and some is outstanding.
- Parents are very positive about the quality of teaching across the school.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Good teaching ensures pupils are very keen to learn and improve their work.
- Children are very kind and considerate in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They play well together and learn what is acceptable behaviour from the excellent adult role models.
- Behaviour overall is outstanding. Pupils' conduct around school and in the playground is exemplary. Prefects make excellent role models for the younger pupils and are good ambassadors for the school. Pupils are polite and courteous to each other and to adults, they will always step aside and open the door for you. They have a good understanding of the school rules.
- Pupils feel safe in school. They say that school prefects and their 'staff buddy' are there to look after them. Pupils have a thorough understanding of all types of bullying. They recognise that bullying is very unkind and say incidents are rare and dealt with most effectively so they do not occur again. Pupils understand how to keep safe. They are taught about dangers and risks and know how to avoid them. Older pupils are very knowledgeable about issues such as internet safety.
- Behaviour records are well kept and the school manages behaviour effectively. Parents agree that the school looks after their children very well.
- Attendance is above average and punctuality is not a problem.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Since the previous inspection the headteacher has been uncompromising in her efforts to improve the performance of her staff and the standards reached by all pupils. As a result the school has improved since the last inspection and is clearly able to sustain this improvement.
- The school now has very effective methods for checking teaching. The few weaknesses that remain are being addressed by training, support from the local authority and the sharing of outstanding practice. As a result teaching is better than it was at the time of the last inspection.
- The systems for checking the progress of individual pupils is rigorous. This information is used effectively to identify pupils who need additional support. It is not always used effectively by teachers to set work that is at the correct level but it does enable the school to set overall challenging targets for pupils. It makes sure that everyone has the same chances in the school.
- This information about pupils' progress is used well by leaders to discuss with teachers the progress pupils in their class make. As a result teachers are more responsible for the progress pupils make. The setting of targets for teachers to improve their work is based on pupils' progress. Whilst this process is effective overall, targets are not always sharp enough to measure teachers' success.
- The curriculum is rich and varied. The pupils talk about the 'amazing trips': the educational visit to France; a pantomime; music and sports clubs. These all contribute greatly to the pupils' understanding of their own and other cultures.
- Parents who responded to the online questionnaire are very positive about all aspects of school

life and in particular how happy their children are at school. One parent wrote that her child, 'had gained so much confidence to take her on in her school life' and this was typical of the views of many parents.

■ The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet statutory requirements.

■ The school receives a high level of support from the local authority.

■ **The governance of the school:**

– The governing body is very effective. Governors are very knowledgeable about all aspects of school life. The sub-committee with responsibility for standards and effectiveness understand the school's data about pupil achievement and the curriculum and this means they are well placed to make effective decisions. The budget is well managed. Governors know how the pupil-premium allocation should be used and what impact this has on these pupils' outcomes. They know the strengths and weaknesses in teaching as a result of their involvement in the performance management of teachers and the areas in which the school is striving to improve. The minutes of meetings show that the headteacher is challenged and held to account by governors. Governors are very well placed to make informed decisions which will give the school leaders a high level of support.

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## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119129
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401813

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	347
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alan Wills
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Longworth
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 December 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01524 63999
<b>Fax number</b>	01524 63999
<b>Email address</b>	head@bowerham.lancs.sch.uk



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