

Buckstones Primary School

Delamere Avenue, Shaw, Oldham, Greater Manchester, OL2 8HN

Inspection dates 27–28 March 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Outstanding	1
Achievement of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school.

- Achievement is outstanding in this happy school. Pupils' love of learning and eagerness to succeed shine through. All groups of pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is outstanding and enables pupils to make rapid gains in learning. Pupils are challenged to think and expected to do their very best. They show high levels of interest in all that they do. Classrooms are vibrant places where learning is exciting and relevant to pupils' needs.
- Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils are friendly, polite and always keen to be helpful. They are exceptionally proud of their school and work and play together in harmony.
- Leadership and management are outstanding. Leaders at all levels are highly effective in enabling pupils to reach high standards. They promote pupils' personal development exceedingly well. The impact of this excellent leadership is seen in the improvements made since the last inspection. Teaching is now outstanding and achievement has risen.
- The headteacher's outstanding leadership displays an unflagging ambition for all pupils to succeed. She is ably assisted by an excellent deputy headteacher and a committed and effective leadership team. Everybody on the staff pulls together for the sake of the pupils.
- Methods for checking on the quality of teaching and the progress of pupils are excellent. Consequently, leaders, teachers and governors know the school exceptionally well and continuously aspire to improve. For example, leaders have correctly spotted the opportunities to make even more use of pupils' computer skills.
- Highly effective governors provide support and challenge and have an excellent grasp of the school's performance.
- Leaders, governors and staff make learning exciting and meaningful for pupils. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well across a range of subjects such as music, art and sport.
- Parents are highly supportive and one summed it up by saying 'they go the extra mile here.'

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed significant parts of 14 lessons. Two of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. Altogether, eight teachers were observed and teaching was seen in all classes. Inspectors looked at pupils' books to gain evidence about the quality of teaching and pupils' progress over time and some of this was carried out with the headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them about their progress in reading and what they like about it.
- Meetings were held with five governors, the headteacher, middle and senior school leaders, two representatives of the local authority and with teachers. Informal meetings were held with groups of pupils.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentary evidence, including records of pupils' progress, the school development plan and records of governing body meetings. Inspectors also considered a number of policies, including those for child protection and behaviour.
- Inspectors looked at 39 responses to the Ofsted on-line questionnaire for parents (Parent View). They spoke to a number of parents as they brought their children to school and looked at parents' responses to a questionnaire the school had issued.

Inspection team

David Law, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Elaine Maloney

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Buckstones is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, as is the proportion of pupils whose first language is not English.
- A below-average proportion of pupils is supported at school action because they are disabled or have special educational needs, although an above average proportion has a statement of special educational needs or is supported at school action plus.
- The proportion of pupils supported through the pupil premium is below average. The pupil premium is funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the current government's floor standard, which is the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Widen pupils' learning opportunities for using information and communication technology (ICT) so that they can practise their skills, gain further knowledge and understanding and share their experiences with others.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

is outstanding

- Children make outstanding progress in the Reception class, particularly in their personal and social development. Children most often start the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills, knowledge and understanding below those typical at this age, although there is variation year on year and some cohorts begin broadly in line with what is expected for this age. Children showed great co-operation when building 'Ratty's' outdoor home, announcing proudly 'we camouflaged it so he will be safe!'
- Pupils continue to make outstanding progress across the school and this is seen in pupils' books and the school's data tracking their progress. By the time they leave Year 6, overall standards of attainment are well above average. High attainment has been sustained since the last inspection and reached its highest levels ever in reading and mathematics in 2013.
- At Key Stage 1, pupils make outstanding progress in learning to read and write. They adroitly use letters and sounds to help them to read and write increasingly more interesting pieces. In Year 2, pupils skilfully wrote letters thanking the visitor who had brought his fossil collection – one pupil wrote 'I was amazed at T Rex's footprint because it was bigger than my head.'
- Key Stage 1 pupils thoroughly enjoy mathematics and make rapid progress in acquiring number skills. In Year 1, they responded enthusiastically to a challenging activity about money and cheered when they solved the problem, one pupil said 'I could spend all day doing this.'
- Outstanding progress in reading and writing is seen across Key Stage 2. Pupils are extremely productive, they read frequently, become absorbed in books and write at length. Spelling, punctuation, grammar and handwriting skills are quickly and progressively acquired.
- Outstanding progress in mathematics is founded on pupils' excellent ability to use skills and knowledge to solve challenging problems. For example, Year 3 pupils made outstanding progress in solving the problem of the 'poisonous pizzas' because they reasoned carefully and found mathematical patterns in the data they had.
- All groups of pupils make outstanding progress. The most able succeed exceptionally well because they are fully challenged in their learning. In 2013, the proportion reaching the higher Level 5 in reading and Level 6 in mathematics by the end of Year 6 was well above the national average.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make outstanding progress because they receive excellent support from teachers and teaching assistants. Year 6 pupils with special educational needs made rapid progress when planning their trip to London. Pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is not their first language also make outstanding progress.
- Pupils known to be eligible for free school meals make the same outstanding progress as those who are not eligible. In reading, writing and mathematics, the attainment of eligible pupils is well above that of similar pupils nationally, being about two years ahead in 2013. In the school, the attainment gap between eligible pupils and those who are not has narrowed consistently.
- School leaders and all staff foster good relations, tackle discrimination and provide an equal opportunity for all groups of pupils to learn exceptionally well.
- Pupils make outstanding progress across a range of subjects and are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. They are proud to be members of the school brass band, participate keenly and successfully in number of sports and enjoy their art work.

The quality of teaching

is outstanding

- Outstanding teaching promotes pupils' excellent progress across the school. Pupils are fully challenged and become extremely productive because the very best is expected of them. Work in pupils' books shows that progress in learning is outstanding over time.
- Pupils say teachers are patient, helpful and make learning fun. One pupil said 'they help us to think and learn more quickly.' In the Early Years Foundation Stage relationships are extremely

positive and children learn to co-operate, take turns and consider others, so social development is promoted exceedingly well.

- Pupils show exceptionally positive attitudes to learning and a love of learning. Pupils become confident learners who are eager to do their best and persistent when faced with a challenge. Pupils' concentration is frequently very good as they listen carefully, solve problems and use the knowledge and skills they have been taught.
- Pupils learn to read and write exceedingly well. Rapid progress in reading, particularly at Key Stage 1, is secured through the effective teaching of letters and sounds (phonics). Pupils at both Key Stages 1 and 2 acquire confidence as writers because there are opportunities for them to write in a range of styles for different purposes, often in ways that are interesting and highly motivating.
- Pupils have valuable opportunities to learn important mathematical skills and are expected to use these to solve increasingly complex problems. Pupils recall key number facts confidently. In Year 5, for example, pupils had to remember a series of number facts and did so quickly by recognising key patterns skilfully presented to them on the interactive whiteboard.
- Careful planning ensures that pupils' different needs are met exceedingly well. The most able are challenged by work pitched at a suitably demanding level and pupils who are disabled or who have special educational needs make brisk progress, because their needs are recognised and catered for through the highly effective deployment of teaching assistants.
- The quality of marking is excellent and pupils say this helps them to improve their work. Pupils respond very well to the expectation that they must present their work carefully, for example, pupils take great pride in their handwriting.
- Excellent knowledge in a number of subjects is shared with pupils, for example, specialist provision in music enables pupils to play brass instruments and they are delighted to perform at different venues in the locality. Pupils are keen to use computers and other technology, for example, Year 6 used computers to record a play they had written. School leaders have plans to promote the use of ICT even further so that pupils can practise and apply their skills and share their skills with each other. Relevant homework activities take place regularly.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. The school is a harmonious community. There have been no exclusions. There are high levels of care provided. Pupils show great pride in what they do and invariably do their very best with a will to succeed and they are enthusiastic learners.
- In classrooms, pupils are highly motivated and display great interest by listening intently, following instructions carefully and organising themselves. Consequently, time and effort is highly focussed on learning and this helps pupils to make brisk progress.
- Around the school, pupils are polite, friendly and keen to take responsibility. They are eager to become school councillors, and in this role developed a playground charter about how pupils should behave towards each other. Older pupils are proud to be sports leaders so they can help younger pupils in the playground. For example, two older pupils were engrossed in helping Year 1 with their skipping, even when the weather turned nasty and large hailstones fell.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Pupils feel entirely safe in school and parents are fully confident that their children are kept safe.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep safe. The school has an excellent programme to teach them about this, as seen for example, during e-safety week. Bullying is extremely rare and pupils are free from harassment. Outstanding provision for personal and social education helps pupils to understand different types of bullying and how to deal with it. As one pupil said 'adults watch over us and playtimes are fun.'
- Attendance is well above average. Pupils are keen to get into school in the morning and into lessons after break-time. There are highly effective methods to encourage good attendance.

The leadership and management are outstanding

- The headteacher's excellent leadership is clearly focussed on driving forward improvements to teaching and learning so that all groups of pupils can succeed. She has gained the support of staff, parents and pupils. The deputy headteacher, other senior leaders and middle leaders provide outstanding support, for example, in leading provision for special educational needs. Staff work together with a common desire to do the best they can for pupils.
- The impact of this outstanding leadership is seen in the improvements made since the last inspection. For example, pupils' attainment has not only been sustained at a high level, but achievement has also risen further in key aspects, such as writing. Teaching has improved and is now outstanding in all key stages.
- The appraisal of teachers is excellent. Leaders and governors implement this robustly to ensure that high quality teaching is sustained. They make sure that pay awards are merited. Relevant training, for example, in the teaching of letters and sounds, enhances pupils' progress.
- Methods for checking on the quality of teaching and pupils' progress are outstanding. Leaders carefully weigh evidence from their visits to classrooms against that seen in pupils' books and ensure that pupils' progress is carefully tracked and regularly reviewed. Consequently, any pupils at risk of falling behind are quickly spotted and given support.
- Leaders, governors and staff agree on the school's priorities for improvement and relevant actions are clearly expressed in the development plan. For example, leaders are keen to extend opportunities for pupils to learn at home through the use of computers and other technology. All staff are highly motivated in working towards such common goals.
- Leaders and governors successfully ensure that pupils have an exciting and enjoyable education which equips them for future learning. Visits to places of interest and visitors to the school stimulate pupils' learning. Year 6 pupils were enthused about going to London. Year 2 pupils said their class was 'awesome' because they visited the mosque and the local war memorial.
- Pupil premium funding is used extremely well to close the gap between this group and ineligible pupils, for example, by providing additional support from teaching assistants. The primary school sport funding is used effectively to increase pupils' participation, for example, by employing specialist coaches and supporting further training for teachers at the school.
- Leaders and governors are grateful for the support of the local authority, particularly through the school adviser. They feel this has contributed to the school's success, for example, by challenging leaders' view of the school's performance and helping to develop links with other schools.
- Leaders and governors are highly committed to ensuring that pupils develop well personally and make the best possible progress they can. They fulfil this ambition, because pupils receive an excellent education that helps them to become well-rounded individuals who make rapid progress in learning and get on with others in a happy school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Highly effective governors ensure that school leaders are supported. They provide challenge by asking relevant questions about performance, based on their good knowledge of comparative data. Governors are exceptionally well informed about the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils, because they have a strategy to check things out for themselves and they meet regularly with school leaders to keep up to date. Consequently, governors ensure that appraisal, including the appraisal of the headteacher, is effective and that pay awards are merited. Governors manage the budget carefully, for example, by using pupil premium funding well, and secure good value for money. They ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.

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

Unique reference number	105671
Local authority	Oldham
Inspection number	439531

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steven Beckley
Headteacher	Sarah Healey
Date of previous school inspection	27 January 2009
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