

The Gates Primary School

Bristle Hall Way, Westhoughton, Bolton, Lancashire BL5 3QA

Inspection dates

26–27 June 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Outcomes require improvement because pupils have not made enough progress in recent years. Despite the improvements to outcomes in writing since 2016, Year 6 pupils in 2017, especially disadvantaged pupils, made progress well below that of other pupils nationally in reading and mathematics.
- Leaders know that outcomes need to improve. The decisive actions that they have taken are having an impact. The school's assessments show that current pupils are making better progress across a range of subjects. However, inconsistencies remain for some groups of pupils, particularly those in lower key stage 2.
- Differences in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are diminishing rapidly, and sometimes they do better than other pupils. This is because leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good. In most classes, teachers plan learning that meets the needs of pupils, including the most able. This enables most pupils to make strong progress.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the curriculum enables pupils to develop academically and personally. Pupils practise their reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects.
- Pupils achieve well in key stage 1 in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 1 typically perform at least as well as others nationally in the phonics screening check.
- Children make a strong start in the early years because the quality of teaching is good. Most children are well prepared for key stage 1.
- Leaders have established effective systems to track the progress of different groups of pupils in English and mathematics. This enables teachers to identify pupils at risk of falling behind. Leaders of some foundation subjects do not have a precise enough overview of standards.
- There is a very strong culture of safeguarding in the school and leaders have established clear procedures for keeping children safe from harm. Parents and carers and pupils share this view.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. They conduct themselves well around school.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes across the school by making sure that the learning that teachers plan in reading, writing and mathematics provides the right level of challenge for all pupils, particularly those in lower key stage 2.
- Ensure that the leaders of all foundation subjects have a precise overview of standards in their respective areas.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has worked tirelessly and successfully to improve the quality of education for pupils at The Gates Primary School. At the time of her appointment in autumn 2015, high levels of staff absence had already begun to have a negative impact on the progress that pupils made. The extent of the gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills was apparent in the results of the new, more stringent national tests for Year 6 pupils in 2016.
- The headteacher and governors have worked without compromise to challenge staff absences and weaknesses in teaching. This has resulted in a period of staffing turbulence which has taken its toll on the rate at which pupils' achievement has improved, especially in English and mathematics. Consequently, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 in 2017 were still much too low.
- The actions that leaders and governors have taken have resulted in improved leadership capacity, greater staffing stability and teachers' improved subject knowledge. They have succeeded in establishing a culture of ambition which has raised aspirations for pupils and staff alike. There is now clear impact on improving the progress that current pupils make. Outcomes are now improving rapidly, including for disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Despite the improvements that their actions have made to the quality of teaching and learning, they know that outcomes still require improvement. There are still some remaining inconsistencies in the progress of pupils in Years 3 and 4, where remaining staffing turbulence has continued to have an impact.
- Leaders and governors have acted upon sound, timely advice from the local authority and have sought expertise through collaborative work with other local schools. This has been sharply focused on improving teachers' subject knowledge and the accuracy of their assessments. The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved, especially in English and mathematics, and this is having a positive impact on the progress that current pupils are making.
- Leaders, including subject leaders, have developed strong systems that help them to analyse how much progress pupils make over time in reading, writing and mathematics. This enables them to hold teachers to account for the outcomes of individuals and for groups of pupils. Teachers say that this is helping them to focus their planning on the needs of particular pupils, including the most able, those who are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities.
- Leaders and governors have worked with staff to develop a broad curriculum that helps pupils to learn across subjects and in a range of ways. The lessons that teachers plan in history and geography, for example, provide opportunities for pupils to practise important reading, writing and sometimes mathematics skills. Equally, pupils learn about other subjects through their English and mathematics lessons.
- In some foundation subjects, leaders do not have a precise enough overview of standards to ensure that all groups of pupils are making good progress in their

respective areas.

- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported, because leaders have established effective procedures for identifying and meeting their needs. Although the numbers of current pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are relatively small, information from the school's assessments show that from their very varied starting points they make generally good progress.
- Alongside the curriculum, leaders have planned a range of activities aimed at enriching pupils' experiences, known as 'The Gates Great Expectations'. These activities help pupils to develop socially, morally, culturally and spiritually through experiences as diverse as sponsorship of school pupils in Africa, interacting with older people in the community, and representing their school in sport.
- Leaders develop pupils' awareness of fundamental British values. For example, pupils learn to appreciate diversity and difference in their own community through links with schools in different areas, where families are from many cultures. Work in pupils' collaborative 'class books' shows that leaders actively promote pupils' understanding of equality, including in relation to gender, culture and religion.
- Leaders' effective use of the physical education and sport funding is having a positive impact on pupils' participation in a range of sports. This is especially the case for girls. Pupils learn to take care of their physical and mental health through activities such as golf, judo, yoga and daily running.
- Leaders acknowledge that too few pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils, were prepared for secondary school in 2017 because their outcomes were too low. However, information about the achievement of current pupils in Year 6 shows that most are now on track to reach at least the expected standards in 2018.
- Teachers and subject leaders are overwhelmingly supportive of the changes that they can see in the school. They can see the difference that these changes are making to pupils' outcomes. Staff speak highly of the leadership of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. Almost all staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey said that they are proud to work at the school.

Governance of the school

- Governors share the headteacher's drive and commitment to improving the quality of education for pupils at the school.
- Following the appointment of a new chair of the governing body in 2017, governors took advice about their effectiveness and impact on the school. They have made changes to the structure of the governing body, and to the ways in which they ask school leaders for information. Governors now hold leaders to account more effectively for the decisions that they make. They have a clear picture of where outcomes need to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have established a strong culture of safeguarding in school. Recruitment of new staff follows safe practices. The systems for carrying out checks on

the suitability of adults to work with children are thorough and fit for purpose.

- Staff are vigilant and know how to recognise signs of abuse and neglect. Training is up to date and all staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Leaders, including the school's family liaison worker, ensure that referrals to children's services are prompt and appropriate. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to keep children from harm.
- Pupils say that they feel safe and staff and parents support this view.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Most teachers plan learning that is well structured and meets the needs of pupils. Pupils settle quickly to learning because teachers set clear expectations for their conduct.
- The actions that leaders have taken to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have been successful in developing teachers' secure subject knowledge. This enables teachers to plan work that meets the needs of most pupils.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to prompt pupils, including the most able, to reflect on their learning or to explain their thinking in more detail. Teachers assess pupils' progress during lessons and identify where further clarification might be needed. As a result, most pupils make strong progress.
- Pupils work calmly and purposefully. They sometimes chat quietly to each other about their work and help each other by sharing their views. Pupils are almost always attentive and stay focused throughout lessons because teachers' expectations are clear.
- Teachers encourage pupils to review what they have learned, and consolidate their knowledge. This helps teachers to identify and correct misconceptions. They deepen pupils' understanding through further challenges, for example by 'proving' their ideas in mathematics, or comparing the language used in different poems. Many pupils, including the most able, are therefore making strong progress.
- Teachers organise classrooms to help pupils to learn effectively. For example, pupils told inspectors that they use the information that teachers have displayed in the classroom to remind themselves about how to solve specific mathematical problems. They aptly use dictionaries to check the meanings of words. They learn to think for themselves and do not always need to ask for help from the teacher.
- Teachers enable pupils to learn and practise their skills in reading, writing and mathematics across the curriculum. Pupils also learn more about other subjects during English and mathematics lessons. For example, pupils practise finding acute and obtuse angles in the national flags of the countries about which they have learned. They learn to apply their skills to real-life situations.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and key stage 1 is good. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 who read to inspectors demonstrated how they segment and blend letters and sounds to work out new or unfamiliar words. Even the youngest children are developing the ability to hear sounds in words and try them out in their own writing.

- Teachers provide feedback to pupils in line with the school's policy. Pupils say that this helps them to understand where they need to improve their work. Teachers encourage pupils to check their work in lessons, and to reconsider, redraft and improve what they have done. Consequently, pupils learn from their mistakes and develop positive attitudes to learning.
- Pupils are set homework in line with the school's agreed approach. Parents are generally of the view that there is an appropriate amount of homework. Most parents who spoke with inspectors and who completed the Parent View questionnaire appreciate the information that the school provides about their child's progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils display confident attitudes in school and say that they are 'proud to be part of The Gates'. Work in books shows that most pupils take pride in their presentation, and displays around the school promote good handwriting skills.
- Governors and leaders have established a strong focus on pupils' well-being and provide them with activities to help them develop personally and academically. As part of the school's wider curriculum, leaders and teachers have devised a list known as, 'The Gates Great Expectations'. This sets out a commitment to ensure that all pupils take part in experiences as diverse as representing their school, taking part in business enterprise and performing in public.
- As part of their development of a culture of safeguarding, leaders have appointed a family-liaison worker to promote good attendance, and to ensure that pupils and families who need extra help access the support that they need. Attendance for all groups of pupils is consistently strong, and procedures for following up absences are well established.
- Transition arrangements between home and school and between key stages are strong, and pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education. To ensure that provision in the next class meets pupils' needs, teachers talk with each other and share important information about pupils' learning strengths and weaknesses.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves extremely well in school, and movement between classes and the outdoor play areas is calm and orderly.
- Behaviour in lessons is almost always good. In some cases it is exemplary, especially among older pupils in key stage 2. On the very small number of occasions when pupils lose focus, it is because the work that teachers have planned does not meet their needs.
- Teachers make effective use of the school's behaviour policy and most apply it

consistently. Pupils understand the 'traffic light' system and what happens if they misbehave. Teachers are very strongly of the view that behaviour is well managed.

- Leaders have made changes to lunchtime playground arrangements because they had noticed that some poor behaviour arose when there was not enough for pupils to do. Girls and boys now engage in organised, coached football sessions, and the number of incidents of poor behaviour has reduced significantly.
- Pupils are of the view that behaviour at The Gates is 'mostly good'. The majority of parents support this view. Pupils say that bullying does not happen often, but if it does, teachers are good at sorting it out.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Leaders know that outcomes require improvement. In recent years, pupils have not made enough progress, especially in reading and mathematics.
- In 2017, outcomes at the end of key stage 2 were varied. Pupils' progress in writing was in line with other pupils nationally. This represented an improvement from the previous year. However, the progress that pupils made in reading and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 in 2017 was well below average. This was especially the case for disadvantaged pupils.
- Fewer than half of the pupils in Year 6 in 2017 attained at least the expected standard in the national tests in reading, writing and mathematics. This was consistent with attainment in 2016. Only a quarter of disadvantaged pupils reached the expected standard in all three subjects.
- In recent years, outcomes for pupils in key stage 1 have remained strong. In 2017, an above-average proportion of Year 2 pupils attained the expected standards in writing and mathematics, and an average proportion attained that standard in reading. Attainment for disadvantaged pupils was even better. In all three subjects, a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils reached the higher standards than other pupils nationally. Outcomes in the phonics screening check for Year 1 pupils in 2017 were also better than those nationally.
- The decisive actions that leaders have taken to improve the situation in key stage 2 are having a positive impact. Information from the school's assessments shows that outcomes are now improving rapidly for most pupils. Progress is particularly strong for the current Year 6, where more pupils than in previous years are on track to reach at least the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2018.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school are currently making very strong progress. As a result, gaps between their achievement and that of other pupils have either closed or are closing rapidly. In some classes and in some subjects, disadvantaged pupils are making better progress than their non-disadvantaged peers.
- Where staffing turbulence has persisted, outcomes are taking longer to improve. Although progress for most current pupils is improving, some inconsistencies remain in the progress of lower key stage 2 pupils. The progress of pupils in Year 3 has improved more quickly in reading than in writing and mathematics. Conversely, for pupils in Year 4, progress has been stronger in writing and mathematics than in reading. This variability means that some pupils are still having to catch up so that they are ready for

the next stage in their education.

- The achievement of pupils in key stage 1 continues to be strong and reflects the good progress that they make from their starting points at the end of the early years. This is because teachers plan work that is challenging, especially in reading and in mathematics. Attainment in the phonics screening check looks to be similar to that in 2017.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Younger pupils who read to inspectors did so confidently, and used their phonic skills well to help them to read unfamiliar words. Older pupils talked enthusiastically to inspectors about the books that they have read. They are highly motivated to achieve the '100 Book Reading Challenge'.

Early years provision

Good

- Children at The Gates make a strong start to their education, because of the good provision. Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths of the provision, as well as where it needs to improve, because they draw upon a wide range of information to support their evaluation.
- Teachers plan well for children's transition from home to school. Children quickly settle in because teachers have created an environment that is stimulating and well resourced, and engages children's interests, both indoors and outdoors.
- The good relationships that children develop with teachers and staff make them feel secure. They behave well because teachers have established clear expectations that are appropriate to the children's ages and stages of development. As a result, children become engrossed in their activities and quickly start to make progress in their learning.
- Parents come into school and share in their children's learning. For example, teachers provide workshops on mathematics and activities to promote children's fine motor skills. Feedback from parents suggests that they value these sessions and feel more confident about what their children are learning.
- Procedures to protect children from harm are in line with the school's policies and there are no breaches of the safeguarding and welfare requirements.
- Leaders have established effective systems to track children's development and progress over time. Children start nursery with skills typical for their age. All teachers and staff observe children regularly and make records of what children do and say. This helps teachers to plan effectively for the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers and staff join with other schools and with the local authority to check the accuracy of their assessments. They attend regular training events, and make good use of advice from external consultants, for example in their recent reorganisation of classroom spaces.
- Outcomes for children in the early years have been improving consistently for the last three years. In 2017, the proportion achieving a good level of development was in line with that of other children nationally. Information about the progress of current children suggests that outcomes in 2018 will be very similar overall. Most children are well prepared for Year 1.

- Leaders have taken steps to narrow gaps in the achievement of boys and girls, especially in reading and writing. For example, they have used the indoor and outdoor areas to provide activities that are more likely to appeal to boys. Boys' progress is now improving, and gaps are narrowing.
- Children who have SEN and/or disabilities are well supported in the early years. Staff work cooperatively with parents, and liaise with a range of agencies, including speech and language therapists and the educational psychology service. Children's needs are assessed using a wide range of information, and children make good progress towards meeting their individual development targets.

School details

Unique reference number	133926
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10042493

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	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liam Nuttall
Headteacher	Karen Forshaw
Telephone number	01942 634734
Website	www.thegates.bolton.sch.uk
Email address	office@thegates.bolton.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26–27 September 2013

Information about this school

- The school is a larger than average size primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is below average.
- The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is slightly above average.
- The headteacher was appointed in 2015, and deputy headteacher in 2016. The chair of the governing body was elected in 2017.
- The local authority has provided and brokered support for the school, including working with specialist leaders of education from other schools.
- In 2017, the school did not meet the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' achievement in English and mathematics at the

end of key stage 2.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons.
- Meetings were held with senior and subject leaders, school staff and the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. Inspectors also spoke formally with groups of pupils, and with some parents.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a selection of pupils reading from key stages 1 and 2.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the current pupils' progress.
- Other documentation scrutinised included plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and minutes of governing body meetings.
- Inspectors took account of 59 responses from parents to the free-text service and 64 responses to Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View. They also took account of 28 responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire and 48 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mavis Smith, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Doreen Davenport	Ofsted Inspector
Nusret Ellahi	Ofsted Inspector

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