

Beal Vale Primary School

Salts Street, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 7SY

Inspection dates 3–4 June 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher provides an ambitious and clear direction for school improvement. He is well supported by senior leaders, an effective staff team and the governing body. As a result, the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement are both good and strongly improving. Parents agree and say that their children go from 'strength to strength'.
- Provision is outstanding in the early years and children make excellent progress. They are very well prepared for their future learning in Year 1.
- Pupils of all abilities make good progress throughout the school in reading, writing, mathematics and other subjects. They have increasingly good skills for improving their own learning.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have high expectations and know their pupils well. Teaching assistants are trained and deployed well.
- Pupils' behaviour and safety are good. Pupils are thoughtful and attentive. They consider the needs of others and older pupils take good care of younger and new pupils.
- The curriculum is well planned. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strongly promoted. The school takes firm steps to fulfil its motto: 'Learning is for life. Enjoy the journey!'

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Occasionally, guidance through marking does not help pupils to deepen their understanding and reasoning.
- On a few occasions, the work set for pupils is not demanding enough and limits their ability to give full answers and explain their thinking.
- Subject leaders do not always have sufficient first-hand knowledge of the quality of teaching in their subjects to be able to contribute fully to improving teaching and learning.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed teaching and learning throughout the school and also conducted several short visits to classrooms. They carried out a joint observation of teaching and learning with the headteacher. The inspectors also looked at a wide range of pupils' work and listened to several pupils read.
- Inspectors held discussions with groups of pupils, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors, a representative of the local authority and an independent consultant who supports the school. They also spoke to members of staff, including senior leaders and other leaders with particular responsibilities.
- The inspectors took account of the 13 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire (Parent View), the results of the school's own consultations with parents, and spoke to several parents during the inspection. They also considered the responses from staff to the inspection questionnaire.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including: information on pupils' current progress; the school's plans for improvement; the management of teachers' performance; the use and impact of pupil premium funding; and records relating to pupils' behaviour, safety and child protection.

Inspection team

Andrew Clark, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Julia Foulger

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school. Numbers on roll are rising.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those supported by pupil premium funding, is above the national average and increasing. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic heritages is above average and has increased since the previous inspection. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is also above that usually found.
- Children attend the Reception classes on a full-time basis.
- A much higher proportion of pupils than usual enter the school other than in the early years.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- An independently run pre-school is situated on the school site. It is subject to a separate inspection and receives a separate report, which is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Build on the already good teaching to accelerate pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that marking guidance to pupils is as good as it is in English and regularly helps them to deepen their learning in all subjects
 - ensuring that work pupils are set does not restrict their opportunity to give full answers with a high standard of presentation.
- Strengthen leadership and management by improving subject leaders' capacity to develop provision and outcomes through a first-hand knowledge of the quality of teaching in their area of responsibility.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher's vision and calm, clear direction for school improvement is shared by staff, the governing body, parents and pupils. There is an imaginative pursuit of improving standards in all aspects of the school's work through a period of increasing numbers and changes in pupils' needs. As a result, the achievement of all pupils is accelerating. The provision in the early years is outstanding.
- The senior leaders are good role models to other staff. They are skilled in improving the quality of teaching and setting targets to which others aspire. The deputy headteacher plays a key role in raising achievement and supporting improvements to teaching.
- Subject leaders take good advantage of training opportunities and create detailed action plans based on the systematic analysis of data. However, they are not well enough informed through first-hand observations of teaching and learning in their subjects to equip them to fully contribute to raising standards. Leaders are aware of the few remaining aspects of teaching which still need to be fully addressed in order for teaching and pupils' achievement to be outstanding.
- Staff morale is high. Teachers, teaching assistants and support staff appreciate the good quality of training and support they receive to promote their professional development.
- The school's rigorous procedures to check and measure pupils' achievement in all areas of learning are good. The school makes good use of thorough analysis of available data to set the direction for school improvement. The school has rigorously researched new assessment procedures to meet the needs of recent changes to the national curriculum and is effectively introducing them.
- Staff are held fully accountable for the progress their pupils make and are subject to fulfilling stringent targets, linked to pupils' achievement, to reach the next salary level.
- The local authority provides good support to this school through regular visits and challenging reviews of pupils' achievement. The local authority contributes to a good range of training opportunities to staff and also to the governing body which have contributed to the increasingly effective leadership.
- The school tackles any issues of discrimination and fosters good relations well. It promotes equality of opportunity successfully and this contributes effectively to the well-being of children and their families. This is reflected in the pupils' views, such as: 'I am a Catholic and my friend is a Muslim. We talk about our faiths and we understand each other. Some of the things are the same.'
- Leaders use the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils well. This has a positive impact on minimising any gap between the standards they reach and those of other pupils. Pupils' individual learning needs are identified and they are given support in class, including one-to-one training if needed, linked to their work in the classroom.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Literacy and numeracy are central to the school's work. Pupils have many opportunities to develop musical, artistic and sporting skills. The specialist teaching in music, for example, contributes to the high quality musical and movement performances by all ages. The school makes effective use of the primary school physical education and sport funding and builds on good links with local professional sports organisations. This successfully contributes to pupils' extensive involvement in competitive sports and team games and the development of teachers' skills in teaching physical education.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development particularly well. The pupils actively work towards the core values of friendship, reverence and courage in their work. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. Tolerance and respect for the views of others are promoted strongly through many aspects of the school's ethos, assemblies and studies in history and religious education.
- Statutory safeguarding requirements are met. Policies are up to date and reflect robust local and national guidance. Staff are well trained and vigilant in child protection and are supported by good systems of communication and record keeping.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is led and managed well. Governors are passionate about the school and make a good contribution to school improvement.
 - Since the previous inspection, the governing body has reconstituted and reviewed many aspects of its work and improved its efficiency. Members' skills are closely matched to the roles they undertake on the governing body, which contributes to their knowledge and success.
 - The governing body receives detailed reports from the headteacher linked to the school improvement plan. There are regular consultations with the local authority and presentations by staff. For example, teachers gave a detailed presentation of the effectiveness of one-to-one teaching programmes and the contribution to raising achievement, particularly of disadvantaged pupils. Governors regularly take

advantage of training opportunities with other local schools. They make good use of this to hold leaders to account.

- Governors are well informed about the quality of teaching in order to support decisions as to whether teachers should be rewarded salary increases and to review targets for the headteacher. They are clear about the steps the school takes to address any aspects of underperformance.
- The school's policies and website are updated regularly and the governing body ensures that statutory requirements are met. They promote equality and diversity well. For example, the headteacher and Chair of the Governing Body gather the views of pupils who start school other than in the early years, including those who speak English as an additional language, to ensure that all their needs are being met.
- Finances are well managed by ensuring close scrutiny of all aspects of budget planning and raising challenging questions on, for example, the use and impact of specific spending such as the pupil premium and sport funding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils enjoy their school and are eager to talk about their experiences. Pupils are polite and friendly towards each other and their teachers.
- Teachers have high expectations for good behaviour. Consequently, classrooms are calm and orderly. Very occasionally, pupils are not as self-motivated as they could be when teaching does not fully meet their needs.
- The school keeps detailed records of the few incidents of poor behaviour and responds to them in a robust and well-considered manner. There are few exclusions. The school has had good success in supporting pupils who have emotional and social difficulties to improve their management of their own behaviour.
- Pupils work well with others. They work hard and take pride in their work and their appearance. They increasingly assess their own work and do so accurately. Pupils are proud of the responsibilities they take on within the school, for example, as school councillors and prefects.
- The school makes good use of primary sport funding for outdoor activities at lunchtimes and after school. This contributes well to pupils' good behaviour and their personal and physical development.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree. Leaders and the governing body are well trained and vigilant in ensuring that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment.
- Attendance is broadly average and improving. There are rigorous procedures to improve attendance, including effective use of pupil premium funding, and to support families who are new to the school and have little previous educational experience.
- Pupils understand risks and dangers in their everyday life. They are well informed about different types of bullying, including racist, homophobic and cyber bullying. Well-planned assemblies, special days and studies in several subjects reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils rightly feel that there are few incidents of bullying and know what they would do should any occur. They are tolerant of the views and beliefs of others. Staff and the governing body work well to promote this.
- Pupils are prepared well for the potential dangers they may meet in later life. For example, they learn road safety and how to keep safe on the internet from the early years onwards. Personal and social education, including activities undertaken with the emergency services, teaches them how to avoid the dangers of drugs and alcohol misuse as well as fire safety and other concerns.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers establish positive relationships with their pupils and have high expectations for their success throughout the school. Classrooms are orderly and stimulating environments. As a result, all groups of pupils are keen to learn and aim to do their best.
- Staff make good use of accurate assessments of pupils' progress to set clear targets for them to achieve in all subjects. A good improvement since the previous inspection is the development of pupils' knowledge of their own achievement and their ability to be self-critical.

- Teaching assistants are deployed well throughout school. They bring skilled support to pupils of all abilities, particularly those who have special educational needs and the most able. They make a strong contribution to the progress made by pupils who do not start at the school at the usual start times each year. There has been a good improvement to procedures to manage teaching assistants' professional development and several, particularly in the early years, are completing training to become teachers.
- Leaders use the funding for disadvantaged pupils well to provide teaching that is closely matched to these pupils' individual needs. Leaders regularly analyse and review the effectiveness of specific activities to address any gaps in learning in order to ensure they are effective and that staff are suitably trained.
- Teachers generally question pupils closely to broaden and deepen their thinking. For example, in Year 1, the teacher prepares pupils well for written work by ensuring they answer questions in full sentences and with a rich vocabulary prior to writing.
- Teachers guide pupils to develop positive attitudes to learning and build skills such as resilience and persistence in their work.
- The teaching of literacy is good overall. Effective teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) from the early years onwards contributes to pupils' success. Teachers encourage pupils to listen carefully and articulate sounds accurately. Their love of reading is strongly promoted throughout the curriculum, such as in their research in history, geography and science. Writing skills are now systematically taught. Pupils particularly identify improvements to the school library as a contributing factor to their love of reading.
- Teachers expect pupils to write for a wide range of purposes and accurately apply their very good knowledge of grammar and punctuation skills. Pupils largely acquire a fluid handwriting style from the early years onwards.
- The teaching of mathematics is now good throughout school so standards are average and rising. Teachers make good use of a well-planned scheme of work to ensure pupils' calculation skills are developed well and regularly applied in mathematical problem-solving calculations.
- Marking and feedback are sometimes used well to celebrate pupils' achievement and, particularly in writing, to help them reach the next level. However, this is not always the case in work in different subjects. In particular in mathematics, teachers' comments do not always ensure pupils deepen and extend their reasoning and thinking.
- On a few occasions, the work that pupils are set is not demanding enough. This limits pupils' opportunity to give full answers and present their writing to the highest standard of which they are capable.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils of all abilities achieve well overall in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school. The outstanding achievement of children in the early years setting is being built upon as they move through Key Stage 1.
- The results in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 have risen consistently over the last three years. They are at least average. The proportion of pupils reaching higher levels has improved well since the previous inspection. The pupils who spend the large proportion of their education in this school reach above average standards overall by the end of Year 6. The evidence of the inspection shows that the majority of pupils in the current Year 6 are working at standards above those normally expected for their age, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- The significant proportion of disadvantaged pupils make good progress compared to non-disadvantaged pupils in school. The school makes effective use of funding for disadvantaged pupils. This is not fully reflected in the National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6. This is because the figures are negatively affected by the above average number of pupils who join the school part way through their primary education and have not had enough time to fully benefit from the good teaching and support provided by the school. .
- In 2014, disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 were behind other pupils in the school in reading by two terms and by one and a half terms in writing and mathematics. They were one and a half terms behind other pupils nationally in reading and two terms behind in writing and mathematics. Inspection evidence shows that the attainment gap between disadvantaged and other pupils is narrowing across the school and particularly in the current Year 5 and Year 6 classes.
- Pupils who join the school at times other than the early years make good progress. The school has very robust procedures to gather accurate information on their previous educational experience to ensure teaching meets their needs, especially in literacy and numeracy.
- The most-able pupils achieve well overall. Pupils retain facts effectively and make good use of their skills

in a range of subjects. These pupils show good levels of maturity, enthusiasm for their work and, when given the opportunity as they increasingly are, the ability to take the initiative. This is evident, for example, in their understanding and application of computer coding to control models in Year 5.

- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well from their individual starting points. Their individual needs are regularly and accurately checked. Staff ensure that they are prepared well for their future learning by systematically and thoroughly developing their literacy and numeracy skills.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well. The school accurately assesses their previous achievement, sometimes in their heritage language. They make rapid gains in their early speaking, reading and writing skills to ensure they have full access to all aspects of learning that the school provides
- Pupils read well. Pupils make good progress in their phonic skills and they use them well to tackle unfamiliar words. The results in the Year 1 national screening check for phonic skills are above average and have improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils take a keen interest in books. Older pupils have a clear understanding of the level they are working at and what they need to do to next to reach challenging targets. By Year 6, they describe in considerable depth the strengths of different authors and how they make them feel. Pupils of all abilities read with good expression, fluency and enthusiasm.
- Pupils of all abilities increasingly write well overall and make good progress. They are largely productive and enjoy writing. Pupils of all abilities use increasingly complex grammar and vocabulary in order to make their writing interesting. For example, in Year 1 pupils describe a 'fox scavenging for food' and in Year 5 they write imaginatively in response to the poem, *The Highway Man*, 'He is such a handsome man. He makes me feel so special and treats me like a queen, an empress, A GODESS!' However, occasionally the work set for pupils limits them from being as productive as possible and attaining the highest standards of handwriting and presentation.
- Pupils achieve well in mathematics overall. They build on their knowledge of number facts, such as number bonds and multiplication tables, to use these skills in written calculations and solve real-life problems. By Year 6 pupils have a good knowledge of place value, decimals and fractions to use in their investigations. However, very occasionally, the pupils' mathematical reasoning skills are not always fully extended by, for example, further investigations and posing questions from the outcomes of their data work using Venn and Carroll diagrams and pie-charts.
- The headteacher and senior staff address any underachievement. The few remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and learning mean that achievement is good overall but not outstanding.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Outstanding leadership, team work and continuous development of the learning environment have ensured the early years has continued to improve since the previous inspection. The staff thoroughly understand the needs of young children and take a lead role in developing early years practice with other local schools.
- Children's starting points are generally below those typical for their age. This is particularly the case for children's communication, reading, writing and personal development. The proportion who achieve a good level of development is at least in line with and increasingly above the national average. A significant proportion of children are already working at Year 1 levels by the time they leave the early years, particularly in writing. As a result, they are extremely well prepared for their future learning.
- Staff quickly establish excellent relationships with parents through rigorous induction procedures. They form a strong partnership with parents and other local early years providers. This ensures that staff build an excellent knowledge of children's individual starting points and move quickly to reduce any gaps in their learning.
- Children's behaviour and safety are outstanding. They feel very safe and are cared for exceptionally well. This is very evident in their confidence and care for each other in all aspects of their work and play.
- They are resilient and resourceful with a good awareness of others. The imaginative role play in the Beal Vale Vets, for example, raises children's awareness of how to keep themselves safe and look after others. Children make very well written posters on 'Looking after a dog' including phrases such as 'Keep him safe and brush him every day.' Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strongly promoted through stimulating and thoughtful activities including studies on different faiths represented in the community.
- The quality of teaching is outstanding. Staff are very well trained and enthusiastic. They assess precisely children's achievement and plan activities to build on their experiences. Resources are exciting and

vibrant, and children are keen to handle them. For example, they enjoy comparing the different capacity of large and small containers in their outdoor water play and putting them in order. Staff consistently ask questions which challenge children to use their imagination and to think deeply. This is complemented by written challenges for able readers such as: 'You are in the middle of the jungle. What can you see? What can you feel?'

- The most able children make outstanding progress because they make rapid gains in key skills, such as phonics and extended addition and subtraction to numbers beyond 20. They make very good use of computer tablets and sustain their concentration for long periods.
- The disadvantaged children make excellent progress. They regularly make particularly good gains in their early language and communication skills. The gap in attainment between less-able children and others is increasingly narrower than the national average.
- Reading and writing skills are taught rigorously. Traditional and modern tales, nursery rhymes and songs fully engage children. They enthusiastically and accurately join in the repeated rhymes, phrases and actions. For example, children of all abilities wrote speech bubbles inspired by the story of Goldilocks. They make very good use of their phonic skills to spell independently and accurately.
- Children are challenged to use their knowledge of number and shape to solve problems through a wide range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. Counting, ordering, adding and taking-away skills are taught very well.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105672 |
| Local authority | Oldham |
| Inspection number | 461908 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 191 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Chris Richards |
| Headteacher | John Richards |
| Date of previous school inspection | 21 May 2012 |
| Telephone number | 0161 770 5752 |
| Fax number | Not applicable |
| Email address | info@beal-vale.oldham.sch.uk |

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