

Inspection of a good school: The Gates Primary School

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

Inspection dates:

20 and 21 September 2023

Outcome

The Gates Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Everyone at The Gates Primary School is proud to belong to this caring community. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They build positive and trusting relationships with staff. This helps them to feel happy and safe.

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), rise to the high expectations that the school sets for their academic achievement and behaviour. They work hard and achieve well. Pupils and staff champion the school's values, 'The Gates Golden Goals'. These promote resilience and respect. Pupils proudly collect points in recognition of their positive conduct and collaboration.

Pupils benefit from the many opportunities that they have to enhance their learning beyond the classroom. For example, pupils carry out a range of leadership roles with meaningful responsibilities, such as reading buddies, eco-warriors, prefects and digital leaders. Pupils spoke fondly about their school pet, Lizzie the lizard, which they help to look after. These opportunities help pupils to develop their sense of responsibility and increase their levels of independence and confidence.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of trips and extra-curricular activities that are on offer, including multisports, choir, guitar sessions and radio club.

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

The school is continually developing and improving the curriculum that is on offer. Consequently, pupils, including those with SEND, experience a broad and ambitious curriculum that engages them and meets their needs. Pupils achieve well as a result.

As a priority, the school has heavily supported the development of leadership at a subject level. This has ensured that, across subjects, everyone is clear about the most important subject-specific knowledge that they want pupils to learn and the order in which they should learn it.

In lessons, teachers use their strong expertise to break down information into small steps and explain new content clearly to pupils. In most subjects, the school's assessment strategies are used well to identify gaps in pupils' knowledge effectively so that they can be addressed. However, in a small number of subjects, these assessment strategies are not used as effectively as they could be to identify and resolve gaps in learning and revisit key ideas. This hinders some pupils from building their knowledge securely over time.

The school provides strong incentives and encouragement to ensure that pupils read widely and often. Pupils relish taking part in the whole-school reading challenge and they make regular use of the school and local community library. The school engages with pupils and parents to select diverse and varied books. This emphasises for pupils the importance of reading different text types, as well as the joy of reading for pleasure.

Recently, a new phonics programme has been introduced with success. The school has invested in continuous training to ensure that this programme is delivered well and with increasing confidence. Pupils begin to learn sounds as soon as they start school and they read books that match the sounds that they know. Any pupils who struggle to keep up with the programme, or those who join the school mid-way through the year, are swiftly provided with extra support. Most pupils learn to read with fluency.

Pupils with SEND are ably supported to access the ambitious curriculum in place for all subjects. The school is quick to identify any additional needs and secure early help and expert support for pupils if it is needed. Pupils with SEND enjoy learning alongside their peers and achieve well.

Pupils show highly positive attitudes to their learning. Low-level disruption is rare. Pupils are polite and kind to one another. There is a clear behaviour policy in place that everyone knows and understands. This creates a sense of fairness and consistency for pupils. Effective support is provided for any pupil who struggles to control their own behaviour.

The school prioritises opportunities for pupils to develop their moral and social awareness. Pupils learn about difference, celebrate diversity and have a secure understanding of British values. Every year, the school holds an aspirations week where pupils explore future career interests. In addition, the school ensures that pupils know how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including online.

Governors share the school's high aspirations for pupils. They know the school well and they provide effective support and challenge to ensure continuous improvement. The school is mindful of staff workload when introducing changes and devising policies. It provides effective professional development and support.

Parents and carers are regularly involved in the life of the school. For example, they are invited to attend weekly celebration assemblies to celebrate pupils' academic achievements. They also take part in an active parent-teacher association where they consult with the school and help to organise community events.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of foundation subjects, the assessment strategies that the school has devised are not used as effectively as they could be. This means that some pupils struggle to recall some aspects of their earlier learning. The school should ensure that it further refines and embeds its strategies for assessment in these few subjects so that pupils are more effectively supported to know and remember important information over time.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in June 2018.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years,

looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	133926
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10291428
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	317
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Michael McVerry
Executive Headteacher	Vicki Guest
Website	www.thegates.bolton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 June 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is in the process of appointing a new headteacher. The current executive headteacher is leading the school on an interim basis. She is based at The Gates Primary School site for two and a half days a week.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and a range of staff.
- The inspector met with a representative from the local authority.

- The inspector met with representatives from the governing body, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with subject leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the views expressed by parents in their responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text comments.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. The inspector also spoke with staff to discuss the support that they receive from leaders.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils. The inspector also spoke with some pupils about school life.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Amanda Downing, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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