

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: Bowmansgreen Primary School

Telford Road, London Colney, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL2 1PH

Inspection dates:

4 and 5 March 2025

Outcome

Bowmansgreen Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bowmansgreen Primary is a place where pupils are happy and learn to respect each other. The school helps pupils develop a strong sense of identity and to appreciate their diverse community. Pupils develop socially by celebrating the achievements of others.

Lessons and assemblies help pupils to have a notable awareness of the feelings of those around them. They learn ways to manage their emotions and look after their well-being. Pupils use these approaches to give helpful advice to their peers. As a result, pupils are kind and thoughtful, which contributes well to purposeful classroom environments.

Incidents of poor conduct, including bullying are now rare, but some pupils recall times in the recent past when this might have been more common. They identify the positive work across the school to reduce the risk of unkindness. Pupils trust adults in school and know they can share any worries, if they arise.

The school supports pupils to achieve well and pupils are proud of their successes. From the moment they start in Reception, children are supported to develop a love of books and traditional stories. Pupils talk enthusiastically about the books staff share with them during the school's 'festival of reading'.

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

The school has continued to refine and improve its broad and ambitious curriculum. This has helped pupils gain the knowledge they need to be well prepared for future learning. Exciting learning begins as soon as children join the school in the Reception Year. Activities in the early years capture children's interests and attention. Children are

confident to practice and apply what they learn. This is seen in their high levels of concentration.

The effective teaching of phonics has a positive impact on pupils' early reading. Teachers provide pupils with reliable, daily practise. This helps pupils to gain the knowledge they need to begin to read. Pupils who fall behind their peers are provided with highly effective support to catch up. Individual reading support with skilled staff helps these pupils to feel confident and to read with fluency.

Teachers check routinely what pupils know before moving on to new learning. They provide clear guidance to help pupils see where they have made mistakes. However, sometimes teachers do not adapt their approach to respond to these misconceptions. This means pupils do not always have the chance to apply knowledge accurately and embed this learning in their work. This can affect how well pupils remember some concepts.

The support of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has improved recently. The school has introduced robust systems to identify the specific needs of pupils with SEND. This results in detailed and precise information that staff use to help these pupils to succeed. The school has trained staff to know their roles and responsibilities well. Teachers adapt the curriculum routinely to remove the barriers pupils with SEND face. The school knows it has more to do to embed these important changes, but this work is well underway.

The school has worked closely with staff to tackle previous inconsistencies in the management of behaviour and attendance. The staff have gained the expertise needed to support issues as they arise. This has shifted the culture around school and ensured that pupils and staff feel safe and cared for. The attendance of some pupils is still not good enough. Leaders are taking action, and attendance is already improving. However, some pupils are still absent too often.

The school promotes pupils' independence and leadership abilities well. Pupils develop communication skills and confidence through useful leadership roles, such as house captains and elected members of the pupil parliament. The school promotes inclusion effectively by allowing pupils to share different ways that they learn and communicate. In assemblies, a 'sign' of the week is modelled by pupils to teach sign language to the wider school community. The school has designed a detailed strategy of wider opportunities that all pupils access. This exists to prepare pupils for a healthy and successful future.

Governors have a secure understanding of their responsibilities. They hold leaders to account and check that improvements made are sustainable and positive. They have accurate knowledge of the school and the experiences of pupils. They use local authority advice effectively, to support leaders to address weaknesses in provision.

Leaders have a bold vision and high expectations for pupils in the school. They have made several key improvements in a short period of time. These are informed by secure self-evaluation and have been made in the best interests of pupils. Following a period of change, leaders are proactively listening to and collecting pupils', parents' and staff's

views. They have established systems that mean this feedback will continue to shape improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Sometimes, teachers do not adapt their teaching approaches to respond to pupils' errors or misconceptions. This means that pupils do not always refine or embed what they have already learned. As a result, pupils can lack confidence recalling some concepts they have already been taught. The school should ensure that teachers have secure understanding of how to respond to the gaps in pupils' knowledge and provide pupils with work that supports them to build fluency and remember more.
- The attendance of some pupils is too low. The school is taking effective action. However, trends and patterns in individual pupils' absence are not always responded to as swiftly as possible. The school should make best use of available data and attendance information to ensure that actions taken to address regular absence are as impactful as possible.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024, graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in February 2016.

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	117187
Local authority	Hertfordshire
Inspection number	10345173
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	343
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Janet Matthews (co-chair) and James Alderson (co-chair)
Headteacher	Louise Fleming
Website	www.bowmansgreen.herts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	12 and 13 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in headteacher. The new headteacher started in January 2024. There has been a significant change in staff and those in key leadership roles.
- The school makes use of one registered alternative provision.
- The school provides a breakfast club childcare provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 this evaluation of the school.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, interim deputy headteacher, inclusion coordinator, the early years lead and a selection of subject leaders.

- The inspector met with six representatives of the governing body, including the co-chairs of governors. A separate meeting was held with an improvement partner from the local authority.
- The inspector visited a broad sample of lessons, spoke to a range of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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

Kristian Hewitt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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