

# Bridgewater Park Primary School

Plantation Close, Castlefields, Runcorn, Cheshire WA7 2LW

## Inspection dates

8–9 November 2016

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- Since the school opened, significant strengths in leadership, especially from the principal, have ensured that pupils are now receiving the good standard of education they deserve.
- Teaching has improved considerably. While there is some slight unevenness resulting from staff turnover, the overall quality is strong.
- Underachievement is now a thing of the past. Good teaching is ensuring that many pupils are making rapid progress and reaching the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers also provide pupils with interesting opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in a wide range of other subjects. Exciting visits to places of interest and after-school clubs increase pupils' enjoyment of learning.
- The curriculum helps pupils to understand how to keep healthy and stay safe. They are taught about British values in a variety of ways, but their understanding of some of these values is not secure.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. Pupils know the importance of coming to school regularly and are keen to earn the rewards for good attendance.
- Children in the early years get a flying start to their education. Each day they are involved in exciting activities which rouse their curiosity and promote a love of learning. They make friends, learn to share and learn letter sounds, numbers and shapes. By the end of Reception, they are well prepared for work in Year 1.
- Pupils behave well and develop skills in how to be a successful learner. They are keen to show off their learning and neatly presented work, of which they are rightly proud.
- Governors require school leaders to provide a lot of information about the school's work so they can keep a close eye on things. Governors gather parents' views, but have yet to survey pupils' and staff views.
- Governors have identified that they need to provide parents with more information about the school's approach to bullying and also about how parents can help keep their children safe, especially when using the internet.
- The school's work to safeguard and protect pupils is effective. Staff training is regular and record-keeping is meticulous. Detailed records are also kept about behaviour, but some playground name-calling is not routinely reported.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to embed good teaching across the school.
- Further improve the quality of leadership and management by:
  - increasing leaders' and governors' knowledge of pupils' views, especially about behaviour and safety
  - ensuring that all staff are aware of the importance of reporting incidents of prejudice-based behaviour, including homophobic name-calling
  - further improving pupils' understanding of British values so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain
  - ensuring that parents have a clear understanding of the school's approach to bullying
  - providing parents with more information about how they can help keep their children safe, particularly when using the internet
  - increasing leaders' and governors' knowledge of staff views about the school's work
  - making sure that the school's website provides all of the required statutory information.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The Heath Family Trust has supported the school very well since it became an academy on 1 April 2014. Together with the dedicated and highly effective leadership of the principal, this once-vulnerable school is now successful.
- Strong leadership has made a difference to many aspects of the school's work. In particular, there have been notable improvements to the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement, their attitudes to learning and attendance.
- Expertise within the multi-academy trust and externally brokered by the multi-academy trust have supported the principal's sharp and honest evaluations of the school's work. Strengths and improvements are celebrated, while areas for development are clearly identified, with detailed actions to steer further improvement.
- The principal's vision of excellence and drive for improvement is communicated well at all levels and in ways that unite the staff. His high expectations are evident in the astute observations he makes during regular visits to lessons, checks on pupils' books and discussions with pupils about their work. All these are solidly focused on determining whether teaching is having the best possible impact on pupils' learning.
- The learning culture instilled throughout the school means that staff value the principal's supportive and constructive feedback. This includes the half-termly professional discussions where staff reflect on their practice and how they might improve it. To this end, staff training and coaching programmes are carefully organised to meet the school's needs and those of individual staff. These include opportunities for staff to learn from research and observe good practice beyond the school, both locally and nationally.
- When necessary, personalised staff-support programmes and targets are put in place and monitored regularly. If improvements are not timely, staff are not retained because leaders will not compromise the high aspirations for pupils' achievement. This rigorous process has resulted in some unavoidable staff turnover. Nonetheless, while this might temporarily affect the consistency of teaching quality, the strong support provided for new teachers ensures that over time the course of improvement does not lose momentum.
- A significant challenge has been to build leadership capacity from an initially depleted starting point. Undeterred, the principal assumed leadership of the early years and the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. His determination and enthusiasm ensured that what he did not know about these areas at the start, he quickly became expert at. This put the principal in a good position when appointing staff to these leadership roles. Moreover, enabling new leaders to increase their skills through specialist training further strengthened the school's capacity for improvement. This is being built upon well by establishing subject teams to ensure strong leadership across the curriculum.
- The assistant principal leads the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities well. There is a good exchange of information with teaching staff to support pupils' individual learning and behavioural needs. Funding is used

effectively, for example to train staff in teaching specialist catch-up programmes for literacy and numeracy. Pupils and their parents are routinely involved in discussions about academic and personal targets and pupils' progress towards these.

- The school's broad curriculum enables pupils to achieve well across a wide range of subjects and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' interests are fired by appealing half-termly themes and 'big questions' such as 'Were the Vikings always victorious?' and 'Why are tigers not like humans?' Pupils learn important skills in reading, writing and mathematics in the daily dedicated time for these subjects and within other subjects, through which they are reinforced well.
- From Nursery upwards, a specialist language teacher teaches pupils French. Pupils also benefit from physical education (PE) lessons taught by specialist coaches. In the humanities and creative arts, pupils learn about the cultural traditions of different countries and civilizations and the main world religions. An interesting range of visits and visitors, such as a day with a survival expert to find out what life would have been like in the Stone Age, adds depth and meaning to pupils' learning. A variety of after-school opportunities, including clubs for singing, enterprise, computing and gymnastics, also enriches the curriculum.
- The programme for pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education provides a valuable additional dimension to the curriculum. The programme addresses the underpinning principles of British values. For example, pupils learn about diverse beliefs and cultures and have some opportunities to learn about different types of families and relationships. However, although a different value is focused upon each half-term, pupils' understanding of some aspects of British values is limited.
- While the school's published strategy for the use of the pupil premium does not comply with all Department for Education guidance, decisions about spending this premium are underpinned by a good understanding of the barriers faced by disadvantaged pupils in the school. The detailed and accurate assessment information of pupils' achievements, behaviour and attendance enables leaders to evaluate the very positive difference this funding is making.
- The support package purchased with the additional funding to improve PE and sport has been used effectively. This has helped to improve the teaching skills of the school's own staff and strengthened the school's position to sustain good teaching in this subject. The funding has also been used to increase opportunities for pupils to experience a wider range of sports activities, both in lessons and extra-curricular clubs, although pupils would like to have more competitive games with other schools.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governors know the school well and are ambitious for its success. They are informed about how and why the school has improved over time and what leaders are doing to bring about further improvement.
- Systems for governors to manage the performance of the principal and oversee the performance management of teaching staff are rigorous. Governors provide a good level of challenge to senior leaders. They ask a range of probing questions about the quality of teaching, pupils' attendance, parents' views and pupils' academic performance, including the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Some governors are particularly knowledgeable about the reasons for dips in pupils' test and

assessment results and how these are being addressed by the school. Governors themselves are challenged and held to account for the performance of the school by the multi-academy trust board.

- Although governors survey parents' views, they have not surveyed staff views or, importantly, pupils' views about behaviour and safety. Consequently, there are some gaps in governors' and leaders' knowledge of key stakeholders' views of the school's work.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- The school checks carefully to ensure that all adults who come into contact with pupils are suitable and officially cleared to work with children. Policies and procedures for safeguarding and child protection are routinely updated to take account of the most current guidance. The designated leaders for safeguarding and for pupils in the care of the local authority are knowledgeable about this aspect of their work and diligent in carrying out their responsibilities.
- Child protection training for all members of staff is regular. As a result, staff know what to do if they have any concerns about the well-being of a pupil. When concerns are reported, prompt action is taken. Record-keeping is detailed and information is updated rigorously and cooperation with external agencies is timely and effective.
- Records of behaviour show that every allegation of bullying is taken seriously and thoroughly investigated. The school educates pupils about the different forms bullying can take and what they should do if it happens to them or they see it happening to someone else. Bullying ambassadors and digital leaders have been trained to further support the school's work to keep pupils safe from this type of behaviour and when using the internet.
- The school's policies for behaviour and anti-bullying make clear the school's strong stance on and approach to bullying. However, leaders and governors recognise that parents' responses to the school and the Ofsted surveys on this matter show that the school needs to do more to ensure that parents understand the school's approach. Leaders have also identified that they need to provide parents with more information about how they can keep their children safe, particularly about e-safety.
- While records of pupils' behaviour are detailed, there are no records of reported homophobic name-calling, despite pupils explaining that they hear the word 'gay' being used in this way in the playground.
- The school has rigorous processes to track and monitor attendance. Unexplained absences are rigorously followed up. The school works diligently and successfully with parents and the educational welfare officer to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching has improved markedly since the school opened. While there are some slight variations across year groups, the overall quality is far more consistent than previously. Over time, teaching is having a good impact on pupils' learning.
- Teachers' good subject knowledge results in confident and assured teaching that captures and holds pupils' interest from the start. Teachers explain new ideas clearly and make effective use of questioning to check pupils' understanding and extend their learning. Pupils are fully aware of teachers' high expectations of their behaviour and application to work. Consequently, they are attentive and ready to learn at the start of lessons. Learning proceeds at a brisk pace and much is accomplished.
- Across the school, teachers work hard at developing pupils' spoken language and widening their understanding of vocabulary. In many lessons, teachers give pupils opportunities to discuss new learning with a partner to clarify their thinking and identify things they remain uncertain of.
- This is a significant feature of mathematics lessons, where talk is seen as essential in developing pupils' reasoning and problem-solving skills. Pupils discuss, for example, various strategies for calculating the number of seats in a theatre and the different ways they can represent these calculations symbolically. In getting pupils to explain their strategies, the teacher was able to quickly identify and address any misconceptions. This is characteristic of much of the mathematics teaching. So too is the use of resources to represent abstract mathematical ideas and make learning more meaningful.
- Reading has a high profile and is taught well. Teachers choose texts that interest pupils and promote their enjoyment of reading. Highly effective teaching of phonics begins in the early years and continues during key stage 1, alongside activities that develop pupils' vocabulary and skills in reading for meaning. This is built upon very well in key stage 2, where teachers extend pupils' understanding of different texts and teach more advanced skills, such as inference and deduction. At both key stages, pupils read regularly to staff. Reading homework is a staple for all pupils.
- Teachers ensure that pupils learn and practise different kinds of writing. Even when focusing on composition and the use of expressive vocabulary, teachers reinforce the importance of correct spelling, punctuation and grammar. This is also the case in lessons across the curriculum, where teachers insist that pupils use what they have learned in reading, writing and mathematics to support their present work.
- Topic lessons are thoughtfully planned to ensure that pupils develop subject-specific knowledge and skills in science and the non-core subjects, and develop resilience as independent and cooperative learners. Pupils' books show that teachers are successful in expanding pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world, their creativity and their skills in a wide range of subjects.
- Throughout the school, teachers are very ably supported by a committed and highly effective team of teaching assistants. These individuals have developed and honed their teaching skills through training. They make an extremely valuable contribution to the quality of teaching and learning. Teaching assistants frequently lead the teaching of groups and do so very successfully.

- Staff make accurate assessments of pupils' achievements and use the information well to ensure that work is correctly pitched for pupils of different abilities. As a result, the most able pupils are challenged to deepen their learning. Those who need to practise skills for longer are allowed to and those who require extra help to understand new ideas receive it. Teachers and support staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and support these pupils well with their learning.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Good**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- From the early years upwards, the strong focus on problem-solving, reasoning and answering 'big questions' gives pupils a good insight into what it means to be a successful learner, and plenty of opportunities to develop and practise these skills. Pupils know that problems can be tackled in different ways. They like the fact that at times they are allowed to present their work in ways that suit them because, as one pupil explained, 'Not everybody learns things in the same way'.
- Across the school, pupils are showing increasing resilience in concentrating on work they are asked to complete independently. They remain just as focused when discussing work with a partner or working collaboratively as part of a group.
- Pupils have a good understanding of their improvement targets and are conscientious when asked to mark their own or a partner's work to specific criteria provided by the teacher; for example, checking the correct use of punctuation. These opportunities are improving pupils' confidence in their abilities and raising their aspirations.
- In the formal and informal discussions with the inspector, pupils explained that bullying happens. Most said that they feel confident about sharing any concerns about bullying with a teacher. Pupils considered that teachers and the principal take such concerns seriously and deal with them fairly. Pupils were less satisfied with the way some lunchtime staff deal with concerns and with some pupils' behaviour at this time.
- The pupils were able to explain what to do if they, or someone else, are being bullied. They referred to assemblies that cover this type of behaviour, the worry boxes in which concerns can be shared anonymously and the anti-bullying ambassadors who are trained to look out for bullying around the school.
- Pupils had a good awareness of the need to respect race and cultural differences and different religious beliefs. They knew that prejudice-based name-calling linked to race, ability and appearance is wrong and why. Pupils explained that, while these types of behaviour are rare, they more often hear the word 'gay' used in name-calling, especially in the playground. Pupils were aware that the use of this word in this way is wrong but, in discussion, only one pupil was able to explain why.
- Pupils could explain different ways to keep safe when using the internet and showed an informed awareness of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying. Work in pupils' books shows that they learn a lot about how to keep healthy and this came through in discussions with pupils. Pupils were able to explain about the importance of

vitamins and having a balanced diet with vegetables, fruit, protein and carbohydrates, but not too much sugar. They knew about the importance of exercise and sleep.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils like and respect their teachers and are very polite and welcoming to visitors. When pupils move around the school they do so sensibly. In lessons, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and apply themselves well to their work. If someone on their table gets stuck, they are eager to help them out.
- Pupils say that they like the nice books and paper they are given to record their work and are proud when this is displayed around the school. They also take great pride in presenting their work well and making sure their handwriting is neat.
- Most of the pupils the inspector spoke to and who completed the Ofsted pupil survey felt that behaviour was generally good. Pupils recognise that a minority of pupils have difficulty managing their behaviour. Some show significant maturity in identifying themselves in this group and explaining how the school has helped them learn to control their behaviour and stay calm.
- The promotion of good behaviour starts at the breakfast club, where staff encourage good manners and social skills and are alert to any issues that might affect pupils' behaviour during the day. At lunchtime in the dining hall pupils behave well. Here too, the correct use of cutlery, good manners and the social benefits of eating together and conversing are fostered well.
- At playtime, some behaviour is boisterous but mostly good-natured. Pupils are aware of the need to make sure no-one feels left out and are quick to give help if anyone falls over or seems upset. At lunchtime, a good range of games and equipment is provided to encourage good behaviour and relationships, and increase pupils' enjoyment.
- The high expectations the school sets for good attendance and the appealing incentives, rewards and awards that are provided have had a very positive impact. Attendance has improved considerably and is now at least in line with the national average. Persistent absence has also reduced.

## Outcomes for pupils

**Good**

- Leaders are very successfully addressing the underachievement of pupils that was evident when the school became an academy. Many pupils have made rapid progress and are now attaining the standards expected for their age in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The number of pupils in year groups can vary significantly and occasionally numbers are in single figures. Consequently, key groups of pupils, such as the most able and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are sometimes too small to make meaningful comparisons with national data. The high proportion of disadvantaged pupils within the school means that more reliable comparisons can be made for this group. However, it is not always possible to compare trends in boys' and girls' achievement because some year groups have significantly more boys and others

significantly more girls.

- Nonetheless, leaders meticulously monitor and track pupils' attainment and progress, both individually and as part of specific groups. This ensures that any indicators of underachievement are swiftly identified and successfully addressed.
- Although fewer than 10 pupils took the national tests and assessments at the end of key stage 2 in 2016, the assessment information for this group of pupils shows they achieved well in relation to their starting points. This was also the case in 2015, when almost double this number of pupils completed the tests. There has been similarly strong assessment information at end of key stage 1 in 2015 and 2016. At both key stages, disadvantaged pupils achieved well. This data is a clear sign that the school is successfully improving pupils' achievement. Moreover, the work in pupils' books shows that these improvements are being cemented across the school.
- In all of the published sets of end-of-key-stage data over the past two years, the school's effective use of the pupil premium funding is clear in the much-improved standards and progress of disadvantaged pupils.
- Although the proportion of pupils attaining the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check dipped in 2016, including for disadvantaged pupils, these pupils are being supported well in Year 2. Already, most of these pupils are demonstrating the successful application of phonics when they read. The success of the school over the last two years in enabling all Year 2 pupils to attain the necessary phonics skills by the time they start Year 3 indicates that, by the end of the year, most pupils will have caught up.
- Older pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, read fluently and expressively, with good understanding. They express preferences for particular authors and types of books, and enjoy choosing books from the school's well-stocked library. Pupils have a secure understanding of how to use reference books to find information.
- Writing skills develop well. By the time pupils are in upper key stage 2, they structure different types of writing well and use interesting vocabulary, similes and metaphors to good effect. This was evident in pupils' instructional writing 'How to train your Dragon' and accounts from the perspective of a soldier landing on the beach in 1066.
- Pupils' knowledge and skills in other subjects show good progression through the school. Pupils in key stage 1, for example, classify animals into carnivores, herbivores and omnivores and develop skills in using an atlas. Pupils in key stage 2 construct circuits and design wearable technology. Across the school, the study of famous musicians and artists inspires pupils to appreciate different types of art and music, develop skills in these subjects and produce their own compositions.

## Early years provision

**Good**

- On entry to the early years, the knowledge and skills of a high proportion of children are below those typical for their age. Children's speaking skills, understanding of language and personal, social and emotional skills are particularly underdeveloped.
- The leadership of the early years is highly effective and has ensured significant improvements to provision and children's outcomes. As a result, the children are now

making good progress and achieving well. In 2014, less than a third of the children who left the Reception Year attained the good level of development needed to be ready for work in Year 1. In 2015, over half the children attained this standard, while this year almost three quarters were well prepared for Year 1 work, a proportion that is above the national average.

- The school's success is further demonstrated by a considerable diminishing of the attainment gap between disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged children. While there is still an attainment gap between boys and girls in some areas of learning, this has also diminished this year.
- Underpinning these improvements is practitioners' good understanding of child development and of how young children learn. This is evident in many ways, including the thoughtfully organised indoor and outdoor environments, where interesting objects and resources capture and sustain children's interest, stimulate their play and allow them to be active or quiet, as their mood dictates.
- Staff know the value of play and are skilled in using it to deepen and extend children's learning. Adults play alongside children, give them time to explore ideas and encourage them to discuss what they are doing. Comments from staff such as 'I like how you are moving each nut as you count' help the children to focus on how they are learning, as well as what they are learning. Adults also model how to be a good learner and thinker, giving children problems to solve rather than immediate answers.
- This was demonstrated well when a child stated that giraffes like pears and another concluded that a soft wire dishwasher pad picked up by a magnet could not be metal because metal is hard. The children were helped to think about ways they could find out what giraffes liked to eat and further explore the properties of metal through the new challenges set by the teacher.
- Within the hive of continuous exploration of new ideas and opportunities for children to be imaginative, creative and physically active, the staff promote children's behaviour and well-being very effectively. They continually model and praise good manners and behaviour, and commend the children for their efforts.
- Important skills in speaking, listening, reading, writing and mathematics are reinforced frequently throughout each day, as well as in planned teacher-led sessions. Children in the Nursery Year develop an understanding of number, counting and rhyming words and sounds. Excellent teaching of phonics for children in the Reception Year enables them to quickly learn letter sounds, which they use to read and write words, including in their spontaneous play.
- Good supportive relationships are established with the children's parents. Pre-school visits give practitioners valuable information about the children's experiences before and beyond school and inform plans to meet each child's emotional and learning needs when they start school. The daily ongoing assessments of the children help practitioners plan the children's next steps in learning to support their good progress.
- Parents are invited to watch their children at work in the weekly 'stay and learn' sessions and they value the learning journey books in which the children's achievements are meticulously recorded and attractively illustrated.
- The school's website provides parents with good information about how children are taught in the early years. However, it does not provide enough information about what

they will be taught.

- Welfare requirements are met. The warm and supportive relationships staff create ensure that the children feel safe and cared for. They like and trust the adults who teach them and they develop good attitudes to school.

## School details

Unique reference number	140612
Local authority	Halton
Inspection number	10022794

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Wendy Heap
Principal	Paul Holloway
Telephone number	01928 563 838
Website	<a href="http://www.bridgewaterpark.halton.sch.uk/">www.bridgewaterpark.halton.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:head@bridgewaterparkprimary.org.uk">head@bridgewaterparkprimary.org.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school does not comply with Department for Education guidance on what academies should publish about its pupil premium strategy and the content of the curriculum for children in the early years.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and who speak English as an additional language is low.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the pupil premium provides support is high.
- An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is low.
- The school provides both part-time and full-time places for children in the Nursery

Year. Children in the Reception Year attend full-time.

- 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.
- A free breakfast club is provided for all pupils who wish to attend.
- The school opened as a sponsored academy on 1 April 2014 and is part of the Heath Family (North West) Multi-Academy Trust. When its predecessor school was last inspected in 2013 it was judged to require special measures.
- The school has experienced significant staff turnover. Many of the current staff were not at the school when it opened.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed teaching and learning in all classes, checked pupils' work and listened to pupils read. The school's assessment information about pupils' attainment and progress was reviewed.
- The inspector held a formal discussion with a group of pupils from key stage 2 and spoke informally to other pupils in lessons and at playtime and lunchtime.
- A range of school documentation was reviewed. This included the school's evaluation of its effectiveness, the school's improvement plan, curriculum plans and information about teachers' performance. Safeguarding information and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance were scrutinised.
- The inspector held discussions with senior and other leaders, three governors and a representative from the multi-academy trust.
- The inspector considered 13 responses to the online survey (Parent View) and spoke to some parents as they brought their children to school. A survey of parents' views undertaken by the school earlier in the year was also reviewed.
- The inspector considered seven responses to the online pupil survey and five responses to the online staff survey.

## Inspection team

Margot D'Arcy, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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