

Inspection of Burnley Lowerhouse Junior School

Liverpool Road, Burnley, Lancashire BB12 6LN

Inspection dates: 12 and 13 September 2023

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Burnley Lowerhouse Junior School is a place where everyone is made to feel welcome, regardless of their differences. Pupils are kind and considerate towards one another. They told inspectors that staff know them well.

Pupils trust that staff will listen to any concerns that they may have. This helps them to feel safe at school. Over time, pupils grow in confidence due to the care and support that the school provides.

Most pupils have positive attitudes, and they engage willingly in their learning. The school has raised its expectations of what pupils can achieve. This means that pupils have started to benefit from recent improvements to the curriculum. However, in some subjects, including reading and mathematics, pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

Pupils know that they are expected to behave well. They are polite and courteous. The school has effective systems in place to ensure that staff deal appropriately with incidents of bullying.

Pupils value taking part in different school events and activities. They particularly enjoy the leadership roles that the school offers, such as having the opportunity to act as well-being ambassadors. Pupils are proud of the part that they play in deciding what clubs will take place. All pupils can participate in these activities, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

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

More recently, the school has taken steps to improve how well the curriculum is designed and delivered. For instance, the school has ensured that pupils access a broader and more ambitious curriculum than they did previously.

In some subjects, the school has ordered learning thoughtfully. Typically, in these subjects, when staff introduce new content, they ensure that it builds logically on pupils' previous learning. Staff check on what pupils know and can remember. They use this information to shape future learning. As a result, pupils have begun to achieve well in those subjects that the school has prioritised for improvement.

In other subjects, however, it is still early days. Shortcomings in how the school designs and delivers the curriculum in these areas mean that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should. For example, the school does not afford pupils enough opportunities to develop a secure understanding of essential knowledge. As a result, some pupils have insecure foundations on which to build new learning.

The school quickly identifies any additional needs that pupils may have. Staff ensure that pupils with SEND are supported well to learn the same curriculum as their classmates. Staff receive appropriate information and support to adapt how they

deliver the curriculum to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. However, shortcomings in the design and delivery of the curriculum also hamper how well pupils with SEND achieve.

The school has carefully considered the reading materials available to pupils and ensured that there is a clearly structured phonics programme in place. However, the school has not prioritised the teaching of this programme. For example, some staff have not received sufficient training to enable them to deliver the programme consistently well. In addition, some pupils who struggle to read do not receive effective support to catch up quickly.

Pupils are polite, friendly and caring towards each other. The atmosphere throughout the school is calm and purposeful. Poor behaviour rarely disrupts lessons. This means that pupils can concentrate on their learning without interruption.

The school is working closely with parents and carers to improve pupils' attendance, especially for pupils with SEND. However, many pupils continue to be frequently absent from school. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils. This hampers these pupils' learning.

Through the curriculum, pupils develop an appropriate understanding of people's differences and similarities. For example, they understand that other people may have faiths, cultures or family structures that are different to their own. Pupils learn about relationships and friendships and how to consider the views of others. These experiences help to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain.

Governors are dedicated to their roles. However, over time, they have not provided sufficient challenge to improve the quality of education for pupils. This is particularly the case for pupils' achievement in reading.

Most staff spoke positively about how the school considers their well-being. For example, when policies are reviewed, this is done alongside consideration of staff workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school, including governors, have not ensured that some staff are well trained to deliver the reading curriculum, including the phonics programme. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should in reading. The school should ensure that staff are suitably trained to deliver the reading curriculum consistently

well. This is so that pupils can read fluently and accurately.

- In some subjects, the school has not ensured that learning is designed to help pupils remember the most important knowledge for subsequent learning. This prevents pupils from accessing new learning, as well as developing and deepening their understanding of concepts. The school should ensure that learning helps pupils to embed important knowledge into their long-term memory.
- Those responsible for governance do not have a secure enough understanding of the quality of education that pupils receive. As a result, they have been unable to provide a sufficient level of challenge to the school. Those responsible for governance should ensure that they are well equipped to hold the school to account effectively.
- Some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not attend school as often as they should. These pupils miss out on important learning. The school should ensure that these pupils receive the support that they need to attend school regularly.

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	119215
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10294306
Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Peter Greenhalgh
Headteacher	Lesley Isherwood
Website	www.lowerhousejuniorschool.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 May 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher, deputy headteacher and chair of governors have been appointed since the school was last inspected.
- The school makes use of two registered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors conducted deep dives in English, mathematics and physical education. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.

The lead inspector heard pupils read to a familiar adult.

- Inspectors also considered other curriculum areas. They met with leaders, spoke to pupils and looked at pupils' work.
- Inspectors spoke with a group of governors and spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: 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.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Peter Berry

Ofsted Inspector

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