

# Inspection of Balshaw Lane Community Primary School

Bredon Avenue, Euxton, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 6NS

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Inspection dates:	23 and 24 April 2025
The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Outstanding</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

The headteacher of this school is Catherine Hodgson. This school is part of the Aspirational Futures Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Steve Mitchell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Keith Fielding.

Ofsted has not previously inspected Balshaw Lane Community Primary School under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. However, Ofsted previously judged Balshaw Lane Community Primary School to be outstanding for overall effectiveness before it opened as an academy.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are proud to attend Balshaw Lane. They arrive happily each morning, keen to see what the day has to offer. Pupils enjoy school. They feel well-cared for by staff who know them well.

Pupils follow the school's rules of being, 'ready, respectful and safe.' This begins in the Reception Year, where children quickly learn the school's routines. They are ably supported by older pupils who act as their buddies. In addition, those pupils in Year 6 who wear the 'Y6 Standard' badge know that this is because they are entrusted to be excellent role models for younger pupils. Pupils of all ages are respectful of their teachers.

The school has high expectations of pupils' achievement. By the time they leave, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. This goes beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils demonstrate a strong understanding of core fundamental British values, such as democracy and tolerance. They possess a deep awareness of how the law protects people, ensuring equality both in schools and workplaces. In addition, art, sport, and music play an important part of school life. Pupils learn to play a range of instruments, take part in sports' matches, and perform in the local community.

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

The school prioritises the teaching of reading. Early reading begins as soon as children start in the Reception Year. The school's phonics programme helps children to learn the letters and sounds they need for reading and writing. Early years staff encourage children to enjoy stories, songs, and rhymes. As pupils move into key stage 1, they become more proficient readers and writers. Well-trained staff support pupils who need help to keep up. This ensures that pupils develop strong literacy skills by the time that they leave the school.

The school's curriculum outlines what should be taught and when. In most subjects, staff have thought carefully about how to help pupils to remember what they learn. Teachers confidently identify connections within and between subjects. This helps pupils build on what they have already learned and apply it to new knowledge. For example, in science, Year 1 pupils learn that fur keeps animals dry. They later link this to their learning about man-made waterproof materials. Staff check pupils' learning so that they can correct any misconceptions. Typically, pupils learn well across the curriculum. However, in some subjects, the knowledge, and skills that pupils need to learn and by when are not as well-thought-out. In these subjects, some pupils do not learn as well as they should.

From the early years upwards, the school quickly identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It works closely with parents and carers and outside agencies to meet these pupils' needs. Staff receive the necessary training to support pupils with SEND. This training helps staff make the required adaptations to learning, allowing pupils with SEND to access the same curriculum as their peers. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Pupils benefit from an exemplary personal, social and health education that prepares them exceptionally well for life in and beyond the classroom. This includes an extensive programme of enrichment experiences, including visits, residential trips, visiting speakers, assemblies, and clubs. Pupils learn about different types of families. As a result, they value the similarities and differences among themselves and their friends. Pupils show remarkable empathy towards those with additional needs. They are well-informed about how to stay safe in their local area. Pupils understand rail and water safety. They make good use of the school's support for their mental health. The worry boxes and weekly well-being drop-ins offer pupils the opportunity to seek help when needed.

Pupils are polite and friendly. They play happily together at playtime and enjoy the range of activities on offer. Different zones in the playground enable pupils to spend quiet time with their friends; whilst other pupils play football and basketball. Pupils move sensibly around school and in the hall at lunchtime.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' attendance and overall rates are high. The school has identified that some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. Effective measures are being taken to support these pupils and their families so that their attendance improves.

Governors and trustees are united in their high aspirations for pupils. Processes are in place that ensure good communication between the trust, the local governing board, and the school. Leaders develop staff through useful training opportunities and consider their workload carefully, which staff appreciate highly. As a result, staff feel valued and enjoy working at the school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- In some subjects, the school has not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know and when this should be taught. This makes it more difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils acquire and remember essential subject knowledge over time. The school should ensure that teachers are clear about the important knowledge that pupils need to learn in these subjects.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	150117
<b>Local authority</b>	Lancashire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10378050
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	399
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Keith Fielding
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Steve Mitchell
<b>Headteacher</b>	Catherine Hodgson
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.balshawlane.co.uk">www.balshawlane.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Aspirational Futures Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school offers a breakfast club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of 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 carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, including early reading; mathematics, history, art and design and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also discussed with pupils their learning in some other subjects.
- An inspector observed pupils from Year 1 to Year 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher and other leaders, including those from the trust. An inspector also met with trustees and members of the local governing board, including the chairs of both of these bodies.
- An inspector met with the CEO of the trust.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and breaktimes. They also spoke with pupils about their views of school life.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents. They reviewed the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspectors considered the views of staff and pupils who responded to Ofsted's online surveys.

## Inspection team

Frith Murphy, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Cole Andrew

Ofsted Inspector

David Lobodzinski

His Majesty's Inspector

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