

Inspection of Bowerhill Primary School

Halifax Road, Melksham, Wiltshire SN12 6YH

Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

Overall effectiveness

Good

The quality of education

Good

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Chris Light. This school is part of The White Horse Federation, which means other people in the trust have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the interim chief executive officer, Simon Cowley, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Ninna Gibson.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend Bowerhill Primary. They feel safe due to the strong relationships they have with staff. Pupils are keen to take on roles of responsibility such as eco-councillors and school ambassadors. These help them understand the meaning of democracy and respect.

Staff expect pupils to work hard, and they do. In lessons, most pupils settle down to learning promptly. They focus well and willingly offer their views and ideas. Around the school, pupils are well mannered and courteous to each other and adults. Pupils are confident that they can rely on adults to resolve any worries or concerns they have.

Staff use the school's values expertly to guide pupils to make the right choices and shape their character. For example, pupils show 'responsibility' by raising money for charity and 'respect' by treating everyone fairly. This makes for an inclusive and kind school community.

Beyond the classroom, pupils enjoy an impressive range of experiences that complement their learning. These include taking part in clubs, visiting places of worship and trips to culturally diverse places such as London. Older pupils spoke with delight about how they act as 'buddies' to younger children. They set about this role with great maturity.

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

Since the previous inspection, the school and trust have acted quickly to raise expectations and develop an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

The school gives reading a high priority. It has invested in new and engaging texts to capture pupils' interests and develop a love of reading. Older pupils confidently discuss books they read. They make links between different authors and themes. Many express the view that reading 'sucks you into different places'. Most pupils read fluently by the time they leave the school.

Phonics begins as soon as children start in the early years. Staff are well trained. They have the expertise to teach reading effectively. This helps pupils learn how to blend sounds and confidently read unfamiliar words. Staff use assessment sharply to identify any gaps in pupils' phonics knowledge. If pupils struggle, they get the support they need to keep up with the phonics programme.

From the start of the early years, children learn from a well-constructed curriculum. The school has ensured that pupils build on concepts they have learned before. For example, pupils in Year 6 use their knowledge of length to calculate the volume of shapes. In music, pupils' understanding of notation builds from using different symbols in key stage 1. However, in a few of the more recently developed subjects,

pupils' recall of content over time is less secure. As a result, pupils do not have a deep body of knowledge in these subjects.

A focus on teaching strategies that help pupils to learn the curriculum is beginning to have an impact. For example, teachers adapt learning to support pupils with SEND so that they benefit from the same rich curriculum as their peers. Moreover, the school has fostered strong links with experts to ensure that pupils with SEND get the right help they need to achieve well. However, the school recognises that the agreed teaching strategies are not fully embedded in all subjects.

Pupils' attendance is high. They enjoy coming to school and show positive attitudes to their learning. Classrooms are productive places. Pupils apply the school's value of 'resilience' when they find things difficult.

The school meticulously plans opportunities to enrich pupils' wider development. Its '7 in 7' programme helps to raise pupils' aspirations and reduce social disadvantage. For example, all pupils get the chance to perform on stage and visit a theatre by the time they leave the school. Pupils have a deep understanding of equality and respect for groups protected by law. They state that at Bowerhill 'everyone is included, and no one is left out'. Pupils feel empowered to make a difference locally and in the wider world. For instance, pupils in Year 6 read to older residents in the community and raise funds for legacy projects through an enterprise scheme.

The headteacher is determined that every child succeeds. He has cultivated a strong spirit of teamwork. Staff feel valued and appreciate leaders' efforts to support their workload. The trust and local governors offer suitable support and challenge to ensure that every child achieves their potential.

The vast majority of parents would recommend the school to others. Many commented on how the improvements to the curriculum are securing better outcomes for their children.

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 of the more recently developed subjects, pupils' recall of knowledge is less secure. This means that pupils do not have a deep body of knowledge in these subjects. The trust and school should ensure that the curriculum is fully embedded in all subjects so pupils can build and retain their knowledge over time.
- The implementation of the school's agreed teaching strategies is not consistently applied in some subjects. This does not help pupils practise the knowledge they

need and slows their learning. The trust and school should continue to develop staff's understanding of the agreed teaching methods to maximise pupils' learning across all 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

Unique reference number	146343
Local authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	10322318
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	399
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Ninna Gibson
CEO of trust	Simon Cowley (Interim CEO)
Headteacher	Christopher Light
Website	www.bowerhill.wilts.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	1 and 2 February 2022, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The White Horse Federation multi-academy trust.
- Since the previous inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative provisions.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the trust's executive leaders and staff. The lead inspector met with members of the

local governing body, representatives of the board of trustees and the chief executive officer.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons across the school, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also met with curriculum leaders and looked more widely at pupils' work in science and design technology.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1, 2 and 3 read to an adult.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors met with the designated safeguarding lead, checked 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during breaktime and lunchtime. They spoke with pupils and staff about behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss how the school supports their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including free-text comments. They also considered responses to Ofsted's staff survey. Inspectors also spoke to parents at the end of the school day.

Inspection team

Darren Preece, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
David New	Ofsted Inspector
Dale Burr	His Majesty's Inspector

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