

Inspection of Lower Darwen Primary School

Milking Lane, Lower Darwen, Darwen, Lancashire BB3 0RB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 March 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are happy to attend each day and they are proud of their school. They feel that they are supported well by their teachers and other staff. This helps them to feel safe in school.

Leaders have ensured that pupils are eager to help each other, whether this be with learning or at playtimes. Pupils, including those who attend the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND (specially resourced provision), are confident, articulate ambassadors. Added to this, they have many opportunities to represent the school, for example in different sporting competitions.

Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, regardless of their background or the challenges that they may face. Similarly, leaders expect the best of pupils' behaviour. Pupils value the rewards that they receive for positive behaviour. They are keen to do their best, and take pride in their work. Pupils behave calmly and courteously at social times.

Staff deal with incidents of bullying quickly and effectively. When appropriate, leaders ensure that staff are trained well to help and support pupils to resolve any friendship issues that may arise.

The school sits at the heart of the local community. Parents and carers value the support offered by staff. For example, staff signpost where families can go to get practical help that they might need.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious and well-ordered curriculum that is informed by the needs of pupils, including children in the early years. Pupils, including pupils in the specially resourced provision, achieve well across the curriculum. Children in the early years learn the knowledge and skills that they need to succeed in Year 1.

For the most part, leaders have thought carefully about how pupils' learning in each subject builds on what they already know, from the early years through to Year 6. However, in a few subjects, leaders are not as clear about the building blocks of knowledge that pupils should learn. In these subjects, teachers are less confident to design learning that supports pupils to build securely on their prior knowledge.

Mostly, teachers are knowledgeable about their subjects. They use their expertise to design learning for pupils and to provide explanations with clarity. Added to this, most teachers are skilled at checking regularly on pupils' learning and putting support in place for pupils who are in danger of falling behind. That said, in a few subjects, some teachers have not received sufficient training to deliver some aspects of the curriculum with confidence. From time to time, this hinders some staff in

choosing the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn the intended curriculum.

Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND are identified by staff at the earliest possible stage. Leaders make sure that staff receive training on how to best support pupils with SEND to access the curriculum. This includes pupils who attend the specially resourced provision. Pupils with SEND are fully involved in all aspects of school life, including participating in competitive sports.

As soon as children join the Reception Year, they begin learning phonics. Leaders have ensured that staff are equipped well to deliver the phonics programme. Staff choose books for pupils to read that carefully match the sounds that they have learned. Teachers check on pupils' progress through the phonics curriculum frequently. Leaders ensure that pupils who fall behind receive the support that they need to catch up quickly. As a result, almost all pupils can read with accuracy and fluency by the end of Year 2.

Older pupils enjoy reading. For example, they were keen to tell inspectors about the books they were reading to support their learning in other subjects.

During lessons, pupils show interest and enthusiasm for the topics that they are learning about. Disruption to learning during lessons is rare. Well-established routines in the early years support children to learn independently. Pupils attend school regularly.

Leaders' personal development programme is designed to ensure that pupils develop self-belief, determination, integrity, courage, leadership and entrepreneurship. For example, pupils have been supported to set up their own businesses to raise money for charity.

Pupils understand, and firmly believe in, the importance of respecting individual differences and beliefs without discrimination. They have a strong understanding of fundamental British values and how these help to shape our modern society. Leaders have taken great care to ensure that pastoral support from staff supports pupils to develop as resilient, confident individuals.

Leaders and governors are informed well about the strengths of the school and those aspects that require further development. For example, leaders have already made several positive changes to the wider school curriculum. These changes are having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Mostly, leaders are mindful of staff's well-being, and they are careful not to create unnecessary workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work together effectively to identify and help vulnerable pupils and their families, when needed. Leaders ensure that staff receive current, suitable

safeguarding training. This ensures that all staff remain alert to the signs that may indicate a pupil is at risk of harm.

Leaders have been highly successful in building strong relationships with outside agencies. This ensures that pupils and their families receive timely and appropriate support.

Through the well-designed personal, social, health and economic education curriculum, pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. For example, they understand the importance of respecting other people's wishes and personal space.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not ensured that the specific building blocks of knowledge that pupils should learn are clear enough to teachers. In these subjects, teachers are less able to design learning that supports pupils to build logically on what they already know. Leaders should ensure that teachers have the information that they need to design learning for pupils that builds sequentially towards ambitious end-points.
- In a few subjects, some teachers have not received the support and training that they need to deliver some aspects of the curriculum with confidence. On occasion, this prevents some staff from choosing the most appropriate activities to help pupils to learn the intended curriculum. Leaders should ensure that all staff are equipped well to design learning for pupils.

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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	119120
Local authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	10268845
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	380
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Shelley Simmons
Headteacher	Steven Cumbo
Website	www.lowerdarwenprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	24 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school includes a specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND. This provision caters for up to 16 pupils across key stages 1 and 2. Sixteen pupils with a designated hearing impaired special educational need attend this provision.
- Leaders do not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- During this inspection, inspectors met with the acting headteacher and a wide range of other staff.
- The inspectors met with the chair of the governing body and with a representative of the local authority.

- The inspectors spoke with pupils about their work and their wider school life.
- The inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding. They examined leaders' approach to safer recruitment. The inspectors also spoke to staff about their safeguarding knowledge and checked how well they understood their safeguarding responsibilities.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during playtimes and while in lessons.
- The inspectors spoke with parents to gather views about the school. They considered the views of parents submitted through Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives into English (including early reading), mathematics, history, geography and music. They spoke with the staff who lead these subjects, visited lessons and spoke with teachers. They also spoke with pupils about their learning and viewed examples of their work. The inspectors considered how leaders organise curriculums in some other subjects.
- The inspectors observed children in the Reception class and pupils in key stage 1 reading to a trusted adult.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Liz Davidson, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Michelle Ridsdale	Ofsted Inspector
Ian Young	Ofsted Inspector

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