

Emmanuel Holcombe Church of England Primary School

Helmshore Road, Holcombe, Bury, Lancashire BU8 4PA

Inspection dates

4–5 October 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher's strong and effective leadership has been behind the marked improvements made since the last inspection.
- A strong sense of teamwork exists and leadership responsibilities are shared among staff. Morale is high and all are committed to bringing about further improvements.
- Checks on the quality of teaching are rigorous. Bespoke training and support provided for teachers have led to ongoing improvements.
- The quality of teaching is now good. Lessons are interesting, engaging and motivate pupils.
- Standards are rising and all groups of pupils currently in the school, including disadvantaged pupils, are making good progress.
- The curriculum on offer is good. The range of visits and visitors to the school greatly broadens pupils' experiences.
- Governors know the school well and robustly hold leaders to account.
- Teachers continue to overcome gaps in pupils' basic skills in writing and mathematics caused by previous weaknesses in teaching.
- Pupils are extremely polite and friendly towards adults and each other. Standards of behaviour are exemplary. This is a happy school where pupils are safe and well cared for.
- Leadership of the early years is very effective. Reception children are eager to learn. They respond enthusiastically and become engrossed in learning. Children make an excellent start to school life because of high-quality teaching.
- Parents have a high regard for the way staff care for their children and help them make progress.
- Pupils know that staff will always take care of them when they use the internet in school. However, some pupils need further guidance on how to safely use mobile technology independently.
- Progress in writing is not yet as strong as that in reading. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to write long pieces that challenge them to apply their skills fully.
- There remain a few variations between the standards reached by boys and girls.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Speed up progress in writing still further by extending pupils' skills and developing their creativity and resilience as writers when they write longer pieces of work.
- Continue to eradicate any remaining gaps in the standards reached by boys and girls, particularly in key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- Eliminate any remaining gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding of grammar, spelling and punctuation and basic mathematical skills.
- Further develop pupils' understanding of how to stay safe when independently using mobile phones and other mobile technology.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher has demonstrated a determined resolve to rapidly drive improvements. Her inspirational leadership and clear sense of purpose has developed an effective staff team. Ably supported by the deputy headteacher and committed governors, the headteacher has established a culture where high expectations of all aspects of the school's work is the norm. The school is well placed to continue to improve.
- Senior leaders and governors know the school very well. Self-evaluation is accurate and helps to inform priorities and plans for improvement. Leaders frequently and rigorously check the effectiveness of the school's work. As a result, any weaknesses are identified quickly and tackled robustly.
- Effective systems are in place to ensure that the quality of teaching is at least good. Leaders and governors link teachers' pay awards to the progress made by pupils. A strong commitment exists to ongoing professional development that keeps teaching skills sharp and up to date. Teachers share what is going well with colleagues in the school and, increasingly, with teachers in local schools.
- Pupils' progress is tracked rigorously. Senior leaders use this information to carefully target any pupils at risk of underachievement. The pupil premium is deployed well to ensure that the personal and academic development needs of the small number of disadvantaged pupils are met well.
- Subject leaders are well informed and passionate about the subjects they lead. They have helped to develop assessment systems to check how well pupils are doing in subjects, such as in history and geography. As a result, leaders know how well pupils are doing in their subjects and are clear about what needs to be done to bring about further improvements.
- The curriculum has been thoughtfully designed to respond to and meet the learning needs of pupils. Some subjects are taught discretely and others through topics. Themed weeks, such as the upcoming 'All Different All Equal' week, which will focus on messages about anti-bullying and contributions from parents about their careers, form an important part of the school's curriculum.
- Leaders have taken steps to adapt the curriculum to ensure that boys are able to achieve as well as girls in the school but there has not yet been enough time for these changes to have a full impact on the progress made by boys.
- The range of opportunities provided through the curriculum and school life strongly promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils' understanding of others' faiths and cultures is well developed.
- Pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain and of British values is closely aligned with the school's own values. Their interactions with each other and the adults in the school are characterised by mutual respect and tolerance.
- Leadership of the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is strong. Pupils' needs are quickly identified and carefully designed learning

programmes are put into place. Extra funding to support this group of pupils is spent wisely.

- Pupils whose circumstances might make them vulnerable are supported extremely well. Well-established partnerships with external agencies contribute well to this work.
- The primary school physical education and sport funding is spent wisely to promote pupils' good health and well-being.
- Parents are quite rightly proud of the good progress that their children now make. They appreciate the close-knit and nurturing family atmosphere that the school provides.
- The local authority provides effective support for the school. Visits have been used to validate leaders' evaluations of the school's work and to provide training for staff, in areas such as mathematics and subject leadership. Local authority staff brokered support from the Bury Teachings School Alliance and secured the services of an acting headteacher following the resignation of the previous post holder.
- The school works closely with a number of other schools in the local area. They challenge each other and, collaboratively, share good practice. This has been a strong factor in the school's success.

Governance of the school

- The supportive governing body is ambitious for the school and its pupils. Governors hold high expectations about what can be achieved and constantly seek to improve the school still further.
- Governors bring a good range of skills and expertise to the role. They have further developed their skills through well-focused training.
- Governors make regular visits to the school to gain first-hand views of its work. They receive high-quality reports from the headteacher and other leaders about all aspects of the school's work. As a result, governors are well informed about the school's performance and use this information effectively to hold school leaders fully to account.
- The governing body checks carefully that additional monies, including the primary school sports funding and funding to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are spent wisely. Governors ensure that the pupil premium funding is used to support the academic and personal development of disadvantaged pupils.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective because the headteacher and governors have established a culture in which staff take their safeguarding responsibilities seriously. Staff are vigilant and pupils are kept safe.
- Systems to deal with any referrals to the designated safeguarding lead are robust. Record-keeping is thorough and of a high quality. Confidentiality is maintained where appropriate.
- Safeguarding training of staff and governors, including that for the 'Prevent' duty, the

government's anti-extremism strategy, is up to date and at an appropriate level for all concerned.

- Pupils are adamant that staff keep them safe when they use the internet in school. They know to report any issues to their teachers and that they should not share personal information online. However, the school's work to inform pupils about the potential dangers associated with the internet needs revisiting to ensure that pupils know how to use mobile phones and other technology safely.
- Breakfast and after-school clubs have a secure system for ensuring that parents register their children on arrival in the morning and before they leave in the evening.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Decisive action taken by the headteacher and other leaders has secured ongoing improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment, which is now good. Some teaching, particularly in the Reception class, is outstanding.
- All staff have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The atmosphere around school and in classrooms is calm and purposeful, enabling staff and pupils to be fully engaged in learning tasks.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge. They check carefully on pupils' progress during lessons, and strive to make learning engaging and fun. Staff use questioning skilfully to identify misconceptions, extend pupils' understanding and deepen learning.
- Homework is used well. It is set regularly and is securely linked to class learning. Pupils and their parents commented on how useful they find the online programmes for reading and mathematics. The topic-based project work in key stage 2 is popular with most pupils.
- Pupils like the way their teachers organise learning for subjects like history, geography and art into topics. All new topics start with a check on what pupils already know and what they would like to find out about the new topic. At the end of each topic, pupils review what they have learned. Work in pupils' topic books and teachers' assessments shows that pupils make good progress in most subjects.
- Pupils share their thinking through collaborative work with classmates. Across the school in mathematics, for example, pupils explain the strategies they use in order to build their confidence and develop understanding. In Year 6, for example, pupils quickly worked together in pairs to apply their reasoning to reach a given figure, using times-table facts and addition skills. The challenge and competitive edge introduced by the class teacher encouraged all to work quickly and collaboratively and with much success.
- The impact of leaders' actions can be seen in mathematics and literacy lessons. Teachers skilfully ensure that gaps in learning are addressed. They also set work which stretches the thinking of the most able pupils and allows them to make at least good and sometimes rapid progress.
- Teachers consistently provide feedback in line with the school's policy. Time known as 'Green Time' is allocated in lessons for pupils to look at comments from their teachers and then make improvements to their work. Pupils are familiar with this approach and

they make any changes diligently. This contributes well to the good progress made.

- Pupils are increasingly developing a love for reading following the changes made to this subject by school leaders. The school very effectively promotes reading. Teachers make very good use of a variety of texts as part of curriculum topics. Pupils are increasingly able to predict and infer meaning from the texts. Inspection evidence, including the school's own assessment data, confirms that pupils currently in the school are making at least good and sometimes excellent progress in reading.
- Literacy lessons develop spelling, grammar and punctuation skills effectively and pupils apply these skills well when they write in English and other subjects. However, pupils have too few opportunities to write at length to develop their creativity and use of basic skills, and this sometimes restricts the progress that pupils, including the most able, can make in writing.
- Sports funding has been used to provide training to increase teachers' expertise in delivering high-quality physical education (PE) lessons. Specialist coaches are employed to offer a variety of sports sessions after school and school records show increased participation in activities as a result. Pupils say that PE lessons are much more fun now. Lessons demand that pupils are more active. They say they have to work harder. This is helping pupils improve their health and fitness.
- Well-planned extra support for pupils who have fallen behind and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities enables all pupils to make at least good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school provides a positive, calm and welcoming environment where pupils feel safe and cared for well. Pupils are confident and self-assured. All are highly valued and known as individuals.
- Pupils learn about healthy lifestyles. They understand the benefits of making healthy food choices and the positive impact of exercise. Many more now participate in the wider selection of after-school sports clubs on offer.
- Pupils report that incidents of bullying are exceptionally rare. School records and parents' comments support this view. Pupils are confident that any issues would be dealt with quickly by staff.
- Pupils say that adults keep them safe in school when they use the internet, as harmful sites are blocked. Visitors to an assembly showed pupils how to use the internet safely and pupils can explain that they should not share personal details when they use the internet. However, leaders know that there is more to do to ensure that pupils make the correct choices when they independently use technology such as mobile phones.
- Pupils enjoy taking on responsible roles, for example as members of the school council. Members of the council played an important part in the selection process when the

governing body was seeking a new headteacher.

- The school's rules, which are known as the 'Rainbow Rules', are understood by all. Pupils think that adults apply these rules, and the school's awards system, consistently and fairly. Pupils and their parents enjoy the regular assemblies held to celebrate achievement.
- Pupils' personal and emotional development is supported very well because adults know pupils so well. Staff diligently identify pupils whose circumstance might make them vulnerable and in need of support from partner agencies.
- Pupils throughout the school are well prepared for the next stage in their education.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- The respect shown by pupils to one another and staff makes a strong contribution towards this happy, warm and welcoming school. Parents who made their views known to the inspector, without exception, agreed that pupils are well behaved.
- Throughout the school, pupils respond promptly to their teachers' signal to stop what they are doing and pay attention. They follow instructions immediately. For example, in Class 3, pupils know that when their teacher says that it is 'red' time, they are to stop any collaborative discussions and concentrate silently on their own work.
- In lessons, pupils demonstrate exceptionally positive attitudes to learning. They take great delight in finding things out for themselves and like nothing better than to rise to the challenge set by their teachers in lessons. Pupils maintain their concentration extremely well.
- Pupils become increasingly well organised and independent as they move up through the school. During the inspection, the inspector observed two pupils who quietly stopped by the prayer table in the busy corridor. One pupil wished to write a prayer and began to do so as her friend quietly helped her with the spelling and wording as their schoolmates moved around them on the way to lunch. They then placed the prayer in the box provided and went on their way.
- The presentation of work in pupils' books shows a marked improvement since the previous inspection. A neat, joined handwriting style is being developed across the school. It is obvious that pupils have great pride in their work.
- The playground is a busy space when all classes are out together. At these times, it is clear to see how well pupils of all ages get on together. The buddy system, which links Year 6 pupils with Reception children, helps the younger ones enjoy lunchtime breaks.
- Senior leaders and staff encourage pupils to develop independence in class and around school. Supervision is appropriate but unobtrusive, as pupils are trusted to move around school sensibly and they respond accordingly.
- Pupils clearly enjoy school and attend very regularly and on time. Attendance is above average.
- Behaviour is excellent in the breakfast club and helps the day get off to a great start for those who attend. Pupils of all ages enjoy the activities provided, and as in other

areas of school life, younger children are well cared for by older ones.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Caution is needed when interpreting published data due to the small number of pupils in some year groups. For example, in Year 6 in 2017, one pupil represented around 8% of the group. The inspector, therefore, took account of the school's own information on pupils' outcomes, as well the published data.
- Pupils' outcomes across the school have improved and progress is much stronger than at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in all year groups make good and sometimes rapid progress in all subjects. Senior leaders maintain an unrelenting focus on improving the quality of teaching. Gaps in pupils' learning, for example in mathematics and basic literacy skills, caused by previous weaknesses in teaching are being overcome. As a result, the outcomes achieved by pupils continue to improve.
- Children enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills generally typical for their age. Outcomes in the early years have improved significantly since the last inspection. All children make at least typical progress during their time in the Reception Year and a high proportion now make rapid progress due to the high quality of teaching. In 2017, most children reached the expected standard for their age and a good proportion did better than this.
- The standards reached by Year 2 and Year 6 pupils in 2017 represent at least good and often better progress from low starting points at the end of the early years and a legacy of weak teaching in the past. Outcomes in reading were higher than those in writing and mathematics due to gaps in pupils' skills in these subjects.
- The school's tracking of pupils' progress and the quality of work in pupils' books, including the most able, show that pupils in the current Year 6 are making at least good progress in all subjects. Progress remains strongest in reading, although that in writing and mathematics is catching up quickly as teachers address gaps in learning. Progress in other year groups is generally at least good in all subjects.
- Some gaps remain between the standards reached by boys and those of the girls in the school. Changes made to the curriculum and individual targets for all pupils are helping teachers speed up the progress made by boys, and gaps are beginning to close.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is low. Nevertheless, the progress of this group is very closely tracked. As with all other pupils in the school, leaders set individual targets and have a precise understanding of how well all pupils are doing. Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, perform as well as their peers and make at least good progress from their starting points and given their abilities.
- Taking into account the diverse needs of the small number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they make good progress in relation to their starting points. This is due to swift intervention and good partnerships with outside agencies to ensure that the individual needs of this group of pupils are met effectively.
- Early reading skills are taught well. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 reaching the national expectation in the phonics screening check is now in line with national figures. This work is built on well in Year 2 and throughout key stage 2, as pupils continue to

use their knowledge of phonics to tackle unfamiliar words.

- Pupils make good and sometimes better progress across the full range of subjects taught. They enjoy regular opportunities to learn about science as they plan and carry out experiments and record their findings systematically.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Since the previous inspection, actions taken by the headteacher and the leader of the early years have brought about significant improvements. As a result, children now make rapid progress in the Reception Year, particularly in early reading and mathematical skills, and their attainment is above average. Children are very well prepared for life in Year 1.
- The very calm and highly welcoming learning environment helps children to settle extremely well. Staff work as an effective team and all quickly develop a deep understanding of the needs of each child.
- The early years curriculum is highly engaging and very well planned. It captures and responds to children's interests really well. For example, a group of children were using a number of crates as drums on the outdoor stage. With great gusto they wielded wooden spoons as drumsticks, beating out rhythms. It was pouring with rain but this did not dent their enthusiasm at all. At an appropriate point, an adult turned on the outdoor music system to provide the children with an opportunity to match the rhythm of the music being played and this helped move learning on well. Great teamwork, as well as immense fun, was clearly evident as all involved improved their physical coordination.
- Behaviour is excellent. Children eagerly follow instructions, take turns and play very happily together. They are highly motivated learners who listen well to each other and to the adults, who in turn have high expectations of behaviour and what can be achieved in each session. Relationships between adults and children are extremely warm. Children display very caring behaviour because activities encourage them to work and explore ideas together.
- Children's phonics skills are developed very well in sessions led by adults and at times when children learn and play independently. Learning is well planned and adults skilfully question children to check for understanding, and quickly address any misconceptions.
- High-quality teaching in the early years has had a highly positive impact on children's learning and progress over time. Adults manage children's learning skilfully. They know exactly when to intervene in children's play to move learning on and when to give children the freedom to explore ideas themselves.
- Close links with parents are quickly established before the start of the year. Staff make visits to the early years settings attended by children and many parents commented very positively on how smoothly the transition to school was managed.
- Parents hold highly positive views of the teaching and care that their children receive. Staff provide regular information about children's progress and parents are actively encouraged to support their child's learning at home. The recent workshop on phonics

and early reading development, for example, was found by parents to be very helpful.

- Leadership of the early years is very strong. The leader is extremely knowledgeable and well organised and has an excellent understanding of the needs of each child. Thorough planning ensures that little learning time is lost as each child, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and the most able, is challenged to make the best possible progress.
- Safeguarding and welfare arrangements are effective. Staff are vigilant and maintain high standards of care. As a result, children are kept safe and feel very secure.

School details

Unique reference number	105338
Local authority	Bury
Inspection number	10036784

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	101
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elaine Allum
Headteacher	Sue Wardle
Telephone number	01706 823498
Website	www.emmanuelholcombe.bury.sch.uk
Email address	emmanuelholcome@bury.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	23–24 September 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is a much smaller than average-size primary school. Some year groups contain fewer than 10 pupils. A much higher proportion of girls attend the school than attend other schools elsewhere. There almost twice as many girls as boys in some year groups.
- There is one Reception class in the early years. Other year groups are taught in three mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils in the school is low.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well

below average.

- The proportion of pupils who have a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is above average.
- Since the previous inspection, the school has experienced significant changes in leadership. A new headteacher was appointed in April 2016. In addition, a new leader for the provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities was appointed in September 2015, followed by new leaders of the early years and key stage 1, who took up their posts in January 2016. Middle-leadership roles in the school have been restructured.
- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club for its pupils.
- The school is a member of several local clusters of schools. Since the last inspection, it has been supported by the Bury Schools Teaching Alliance.
- 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.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector gathered a range of evidence to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment over time. She observed learning in classes and when pupils learned in small groups, some jointly with the headteacher.
- The inspector looked at examples of pupils' work and talked to them about their work. She listened to pupils read and observed the teaching of reading skills. Pupils talked to the inspector about the books they have enjoyed and those they are currently reading.
- The inspectors talked with pupils informally as they played at breaktimes, visited the dining hall at lunchtime and observed pupils' behaviour as they moved around school. She met formally with three groups of pupils.
- The inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body and eight other governors.
- The inspector met with a representative of the local authority and the school improvement partner.
- The inspectors spoke with middle and subject leaders, and other members of school staff.
- The inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day. She took account of 35 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and the school's most recent surveys of pupils' and parents' views.
- The inspector examined a range of documents, including information about pupils' progress, school improvement plans, information about teachers' performance and external views of the school. She reviewed the contents of the school's website and scrutinised records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding completed by school staff.

Inspection team

Lyn Pender, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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