

Inspection of Markland Hill Primary School

Markland Hill, Heaton, Bolton, Lancashire BL1 5EJ

Inspection dates: 17 and 18 December 2024

The quality of education **Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes **Outstanding**

Personal development **Outstanding**

Leadership and management **Outstanding**

Early years provision **Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since October 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils thrive in an environment where 'Everybody is Somebody'. They benefit from a culture where all pupils are supported to develop their potential while finding their unique talents and interests. Pupils enjoy attending school. They feel that staff keep them safe and empower them to know how to stay safe out of school.

Pupils excel in their learning and flourish at this school. They live up to the school's high expectations. Pupils achieve exceptionally well and become confident, articulate learners.

Around school and in lessons, pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school sets high standards for pupils' behaviour, and they respond positively to these. Pupils demonstrate highly positive and mature attitudes to learning. They show determination and are encouraged to develop their leadership skills. For example, they have opportunities to become school ambassadors, house captains and prefects.

An extensive range of personal development opportunities are on offer for all. The '50 things to do before you leave' programme provides a rich range of experiences for all pupils. These include making money through enterprise, cooking on a campfire and creating a movie. Pupils profit from the school's exceptionally well-designed enrichment programme. For example, many pupils attend extra-curricular clubs such as golf, chess and fencing.

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

The school provides pupils with a high-quality education. It has developed an ambitious curriculum that enables pupils to excel academically, socially and emotionally. The school has meticulously thought through the small steps of knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember.

Staff teach the intended curriculum with skill and passion. They provide activities that engage pupils deeply in their studies. The high-quality professional development that all staff receive enables them to deliver effective lessons. Pupils respond well to this. They remember what they learn and can talk in depth about their knowledge across the curriculum. They make links with their previous learning.

Teachers follow a well-embedded structure to lessons, which is based on educational research. They review whether pupils have learned and understood what they have taught. Teachers use this information effectively to identify and address where pupils may have gaps in their knowledge.

The school has highly effective processes to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff expertly adapt the delivery of the curriculum. The school works well with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive high-quality support promptly. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve exceptionally well.

The school recognises the importance of learning to read. Well-trained staff deliver the phonics programme effectively, which begins as soon as children start school. Staff swiftly identify any child who is not keeping up with the phonics programme. The school puts appropriate support in place so that these children develop secure reading knowledge and become confident, fluent readers. The school promotes pupils' love of reading in a vast number of ways, beyond simply English lessons. As a result of this healthy reading culture, pupils are enthusiastic about the work of playwrights, authors and poets.

The school has shaped the curriculum carefully to make sure that children in the early years learn and achieve well. Activities are deliberately designed to develop children's vocabulary, language and communication skills. They have ample opportunities to develop their foundational knowledge. Adults support children with SEND extremely well, particularly when moving from one lesson to another. Children show high levels of engagement and concentration and are well prepared for learning in Year 1.

The curriculum also supports pupils' personal development. In subjects such as physical education, art and design and music, for example, enrichment and extra-curricular activities enhance the core offer significantly. Beyond lessons, pupils are encouraged to take part in activities that develop their self-esteem. This might be playing an instrument in the community concert, creating artwork for council exhibitions or learning basic first aid to help others. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take on leadership roles and have a voice in school. Pupils who take the roles of 'subject ambassadors' work with staff to develop lessons.

The school provides excellent support to ensure that pupils develop their character and the skills needed for life in their local community and modern Britain. Pupils have a deep understanding of, and respect for, the differences between people and communities. They develop feelings of empathy and have a true sense of belonging, being proud to be a member of their school.

Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong. They behave impeccably. Pupils are courteous to each other and adults. They are taught how to articulate their thoughts and feelings effectively. The school is unwavering in its efforts to ensure high attendance among its pupils.

The governing body ensures that school leaders are accountable for providing a high-quality education for all pupils. They carefully monitor the developments within school. They communicate in a purposeful manner with parents and carers. Staff appreciate the meaningful way in which leaders engage with them in a solution-focused manner. They appreciate the efforts of leaders to support their well-being, including through the staff choir that performs for pupils and parents.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	105159
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10347936
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	316
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Amanda McCorkindale
Headteacher	Jessica Kavanagh
Website	www.markland-hill.bolton.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 October 2014, under section of 5 the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The current headteacher and chair of governors took up their positions since the last inspection.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.
- The school operates a breakfast club.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading and writing, mathematics, computing and history. 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 spoke with subject leaders and looked at samples of pupils' work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils from key stages 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult. She spoke with some pupils about their reading and writing.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher and other school leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority and the school's external adviser.
- Inspectors talked with staff and leaders about their workload and well-being.
- Inspectors met with leaders responsible for attendance, behaviour, early years, the provision for pupils with SEND and pupils' personal development.
- 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 spoke with pupils about their wider experiences of school. They looked at a range of documents related to pupils' welfare and education. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around school.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils. An inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. They took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.
- Inspectors considered a range of documents provided by school leaders and staff. This included the school development plan, records of governing body meetings and headteacher's reports.

Inspection team

Lisa Littler, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Kelly Butler	Ofsted Inspector
James Marsh	Ofsted Inspector

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