

Bowerham Primary & Nursery School

Address: Bowerham Road, Bowerham, Lancaster, LANCASHIRE, LA1 4BS

Unique reference number (URN): 119129

Inspection report: 20 January 2026

Exceptional	
Strong standard	
Expected standard	
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

Safeguarding standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Leaders maintain a consistent focus on pupils' attendance and behaviour. This is underpinned by a clear culture of care, high expectations and inclusion. The school's nurturing ethos, supported by sensitive pastoral care, means that pupils feel safe and comfortable in school. This contributes to high attendance rates and low persistent absence over time. Attendance is monitored carefully. Patterns of absence are picked up quickly, enabling leaders to act early and work productively with families and external services. Tenacious, respectful communication with families and well-targeted support have a positive impact on the attendance of vulnerable pupils. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), pupils who speak English as an additional language and those who are disadvantaged or are known to social care. This ensures that many pupils attend school regularly.

Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are consistently of a high standard across the school. Pupils behave courteously, follow routines confidently and show respect for others in lessons and social times. Classrooms are calm and purposeful, enabling pupils to engage fully with learning. Leaders apply behaviour policies consistently and fairly. Staff know pupils exceptionally well and adapt expectations thoughtfully for those with SEND or with social, emotional and mental health needs. Pupils give convincing examples of how staff respond quickly when rare concerns around bullying arise.

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have created a highly ambitious, well ordered and inclusive curriculum that helps every pupil build secure knowledge and skills from their starting points. In the early years, staff focus on communication, language and physical development to prepare children for future learning. Across the school, the curriculum embodies high expectations for all. Clear progression routes and thoughtful adaptations ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who are disadvantaged and pupils who are known to social care learn from the same rich curriculum as their peers.

Teaching succeeds because teachers know their subjects well and explain new ideas with great clarity. They use extremely effective strategies to help pupils remember key learning. Pupils show secure knowledge and understanding as a result. Teachers expertly foster positive learning behaviours, leading to high engagement and growing independence. They have a deep knowledge of pupils' needs. Teachers use this insight to shape meaningful learning. Insightful checks help teachers spot gaps in pupils' understanding and skilfully adapt lessons to shape future learning.

Leaders are highly successful in ensuring that the foundations for future learning are taught well. This is especially true for the teaching of phonics and mathematics. Leaders have a strong insight into the quality of the curriculum and its delivery. They have acted quickly to the minor inconsistencies in pupils' spelling or handwriting skills across some curriculum subjects. Leaders' actions are improving these areas rapidly.

Early years

Strong standard 

A warm, purposeful and highly nurturing early years environment encourages children to settle quickly and confidently. The curriculum is carefully ordered. Staff's expert teaching and purposeful interactions with children support high-quality language development. For example, staff model and extend children's language skilfully. Children happily use ambitious vocabulary such as 'unpredictable' and 'hoodwinked'. Indoor and outdoor activities offer abundant opportunities to support children's development in early mathematics, communication and physical development.

Staff use their specialist knowledge of early reading extremely effectively. Children love sharing picture books with staff and with their friends. As soon as they start in the Reception Year, children learn letters and their sounds rapidly. They do this through very well-crafted activities.

Provision for 2- and 3-year-olds is skilfully tailored and effective. Discrete spaces allow the youngest children quiet time. This gives them a gentle start or a chance to step away from the hustle and bustle of other activities in the Nursery Year.

Staff have excellent relationships with parents and carers. This enables them to build a deep understanding of children's starting points. Staff adapt provision thoughtfully, particularly for those children with special educational needs and/or disabilities or those who are disadvantaged.

Children thrive socially, emotionally and academically. As a result, they are well prepared for Year 1.

Inclusion

Strong standard 

Leaders foster a highly inclusive culture. They have aspirational expectations for all pupils. This includes pupils who are disadvantaged, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are known to social care or who speak English as an additional language. Pupils' individual needs are identified swiftly. Targeted and well-matched support successfully reduces pupils' barriers to learning. For example, the early identification of communication needs in the early years supports children's wellbeing and readiness to learn. Pupils with complex SEND needs are offered well-thought-out individual provision, which is highly effective.

Staff training is effective. This ensures consistent inclusive practice across the school. For instance, staff are well trained to adapt activities and resources effectively, for example offering pupils 'wobble cushions' to help them concentrate in lessons or additional ideas to help them get started in their writing. Leaders check pupils' learning regularly. This includes talking to pupils about their work. As a result, leaders make sure that pupils, regardless of their starting points, achieve well.

The pupil premium strategy is carefully designed. It enables disadvantaged pupils to access the curriculum. It also offers them the chance to enjoy wider experiences such as clubs and trips, as well as benefitting from targeted pastoral support. This work successfully reduces their barriers to learning. Leaders work effectively with external agencies and maintain

strong partnerships with families. As a result, pupils are fully involved in their learning. They show resilience and independence.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders know their school extremely well. Pupils' best interests are at the heart of all that they do. This is particularly, but not exclusively, the case for pupils who are disadvantaged, those known to children's social care, pupils who speak English as an additional language or those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Leaders have created an ambitious, caring and inclusive culture that enables pupils to thrive academically and in their personal development.

Staff describe a culture of trust, open communication and supportive teamwork. Morale is high and wellbeing is a priority. Their workload is considered thoughtfully. For example, the school gives staff dedicated time to carry out their responsibilities, which they appreciate greatly. As a result, staff develop pride in their work and in the work of the school.

Leaders' constant reflection ensures that they continually seek to improve the school. Leaders provide a comprehensive programme of professional development. It is thoughtfully based on the latest research as well as staff's and pupils' needs. This leads to a clear and positive impact on the quality of teaching.

Leaders pride themselves on their relationships with families, which are respectful and supportive. They offer a wide range of ways to communicate with parents and carers so that everyone is well informed.

Governors are highly effective. They bring a wealth of expertise and contribute actively to shaping the school's culture and expectations. They fulfil all of their statutory duties. Governors challenge leaders appropriately and hold them to account for their work in helping all pupils, regardless of their barriers to learning, to thrive and flourish.

Personal development and wellbeing

Strong standard ●

A rich programme to promote pupils' personal development and wellbeing sits at the heart of school life. The personal, social, health and economic and relationship education curriculum from Year 1 to Year 6 is well designed and shaped to meet pupils' needs. It teaches pupils how to stay safe, build healthy relationships and understand the world around them. For example, they learn about local risks such as the nearby canal and railway. In the early years, children take part in activities that build their personal, social, emotional and physical development. Teachers use age-appropriate discussions to teach pupils about respect and diversity.

The school's values are shown in staff's and pupils' daily practice. Pupils can explain how they show kindness and compassion. By Year 6, they discuss topics such as democracy and social change with confidence, drawing on their secure understanding of fundamental British values.

Pupils' personal development is recognised through awards such as 'citizen of the week' and end-of-year celebrations that highlight qualities like perseverance.

A wide range of experiences broadens pupils' horizons and deepens their understanding of their community and the wider world. They visit places such as a mill, the beach and a university. Creative opportunities, including musical theatre and gardening, help build self-belief and curiosity. Staff track participation in clubs and enrichment activities that ensure that disadvantaged pupils can participate and benefit from all that is on offer.

Pupils take pride in their leadership roles in ecology, sport and art, as well as science, technology, engineering and mathematics groups. They contribute to community projects such as fundraising or environmental work. These roles strengthen their self-esteem and social skills. This is especially the case for disadvantaged and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Programmes that build resilience, independence and practical life skills help pupils learn to cooperate, solve problems and lead projects such as planning a dinner party or organising a fishing trip. As a result, pupils feel valued, safe and ready for the next stage of education and life beyond school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard

The school has high aspirations for pupils' achievement. Typically, pupils achieve well from their different starting points. Their attainment by the end of Year 6 is broadly in line with the national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. In other subjects, pupils generally achieve well across different year groups.

The school provides effective support for pupils who struggle to catch up and keep up with their peers, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged pupils. Where pupils with SEND do not achieve as well in national tests, many make considerable progress from their starting points. This progress means that many pupils, including those with SEND, have the knowledge that they need to move on successfully to secondary school.

Leaders have responded quickly to make sure that children's positive start in the early years is not lost in key stage 1. Pupils in the Reception Year and in Year 1 confidently build the phonics knowledge that they need to become fluent readers by the end of key stage 1.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at Bowerham Primary and Nursery School are part of a warm, caring community where they are known and valued by staff. Pupils take pride in being part of the 'Bowerham family'. Children in the early years settle quickly into the nurturing environment, where they feel happy and safe. They build warm relationships with staff and their classmates. Pupils live up to the school's values of respect, kindness and responsibility. They are enthusiastic about responsibilities such as being a member of the school council or an eco-councillor.

Pupils enjoy the school's outdoor spaces. These offer daily opportunities to play and explore together. There is a wide range of clubs and community events, for example boxing, skateboarding, mindfulness and the local 'Bowerham Busk'. These experiences enrich and strengthen pupils' sense of belonging. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, and those who face other barriers to learning, join in fully with all that the school has to offer. They do so with the support of staff who understand their needs and help them succeed.

Pupils enjoy learning and speak enthusiastically about the rich curriculum that they are offered. Well-sequenced teaching builds their knowledge securely over time. This enables them to make positive progress through the curriculum and attain in line with national averages. Pupils develop confidence in reading, writing and mathematics. They relish opportunities to apply their learning through creative projects such as the 'Where the Wildings Are'. Staff work closely with families and external agencies to reduce barriers for pupils.

Pupils behave well, show self-discipline and manage their emotions effectively. They engage actively in learning and respond maturely to the school's expectations of their behaviour. Pupils feel safe because staff act quickly when they are worried. For example, staff deal with rare incidents of bullying effectively. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They describe it as a place where they feel supported and encouraged. Pupils learn to be responsible citizens in modern Britain. They enjoy activities that promote teamwork and leadership, for example as playtime buddies or learning champions. These experiences help them thrive academically and personally.

Next steps

- Leaders should build on their work to secure consistency in pupils' spelling and handwriting skills across the wider curriculum.

About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is David Knight.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

The inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other school leaders and members of staff.

The lead inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.

To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record and took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils. They also 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. They spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. They also considered the views of pupils shared through Ofsted's online pupil survey.

Inspectors spoke with staff about their workload and wellbeing. They also considered the views of staff shared through Ofsted's online staff survey.

Inspectors spoke with some parents and carers. They considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. This included the free-text responses.

Inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

The school also, under the same registration, runs provision for 2-year-old children. This is based within the school.

The school also, under a separate registration, runs a baby unit. This provision caters for children from 3 months up to the age they move to nursery. This unit is based within the school.

Headteacher: Jo Banks

Lead inspector:

Sue Eastwood, His Majesty's Inspector

Team inspectors:

Christopher Metcalfe, Ofsted Inspector

Trish Merritt, Ofsted Inspector

Tracy Beaty, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 20 January 2026

School and pupil context

Total pupils

478

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

532

Well above average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

17.94%

Below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

2.93%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with special educational needs (SEN) support

12.76%

Close to average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Below average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

No resourced provision

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and mathematics measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	61%	61%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	60%	62%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	53%	61%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	68%	60%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	74%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	83%	75%	Above
2023/24 (final)	72%	74%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	83%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	77%	72%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	74%	72%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	82%	72%	Above
2022/23 (final)	75%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	73%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	67%	74%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	58%	73%	Below
2022/23 (final)	80%	73%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	46%	46%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	23%	47%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	46%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	65%	44%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	62%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	54%	63%	Close to average
2023/24 (final)	71%	62%	Close to average
2022/23 (final)	76%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	59%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	38%	59%	Below
2023/24 (final)	86%	58%	Above
2022/23 (final)	65%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	51%	60%	Close to average
2024/25 (revised)	31%	61%	Below
2023/24 (final)	43%	59%	Below
2022/23 (final)	71%	59%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	46%	68%	-22 pp
2024/25 (revised)	23%	69%	-46 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	67%	-25 pp
2022/23 (final)	65%	66%	-2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	68%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25 (revised)	54%	81%	-27 pp
2023/24 (final)	71%	80%	-8 pp
2022/23 (final)	76%	78%	-2 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher-assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	59%	78%	-18 pp
2024/25 (revised)	38%	78%	-40 pp
2023/24 (final)	86%	78%	8 pp

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
2022/23 (final)	65%	77%	-13 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	51%	80%	-28 pp
2024/25 (revised)	31%	81%	-50 pp
2023/24 (final)	43%	79%	-37 pp
2022/23 (final)	71%	79%	-9 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	3.6%	5.2%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	4.3%	5.5%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	4.3%	5.9%	Below

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (2 term)	7.9%	13.3%	Below
2023/24 (3 term)	8.7%	14.6%	Below
2022/23 (3 term)	8.0%	16.2%	Below

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standard expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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