

Bolsover Infant School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	112511
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	378502
Inspection dates	17–18 January 2012
Lead inspector	Sue Hall

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	296
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Frank Hawkins
Headteacher	Fiona Cowan
Date of previous school inspection	21 November 2006
School address	Welbeck Road Bolsover Chesterfield S44 6DE
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

Inspection team

Sue Hall

Additional inspector

Patricia Underwood

Additional inspector

Raymond Biglin

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspectors observed 10 teachers or higher-level teaching assistants in 18 lessons and two shorter activities. They also observed three guided group-reading sessions and heard three children of mixed abilities, from each of the three Year 2 classes, read individually. The inspectors also held meetings with groups of pupils, with senior leaders and with representatives of the governing body. They scrutinised data about achievement across the school and examined samples of pupils' recent work. They looked at documents including the school's self-evaluation summary, the school improvement plan, minutes of governing body's meetings and a sample of whole-school policies. They examined evidence regarding the safeguarding of pupils. There were no responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) to take account of when planning the inspection. Inspectors analysed 66 questionnaires received from parents and carers and 28 from members of staff. The school decided not to use the inspection questionnaire for pupils because of their young age.

Information about the school

This is a larger than the average-sized infant school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion of the pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs is close to the average. Most of these pupils have speech and language difficulties or behaviour, social and emotional difficulties.

The school has achieved a range of awards recently, including National Healthy School status, a silver ECO-School award and a Derbyshire Anti-Bullying Commitment silver award.

Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new headteacher who is now in post and approximately half the teaching staff has changed. There have been two changes of leadership to the governing body in this period and several new governors have been recently appointed. There is provision for children from the age of three in the Early Years Foundation Stage in the Nursery and Reception classes.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. 'I am very impressed with the warm and friendly atmosphere ... the staff seem genuinely interested in my children.' This reflects the many positive responses made by parents and carers about the school.
- Pupils make good overall progress and achieve well. Provision and progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly successful and outstanding.
- Teaching is good overall. The teaching of children in the Nursery and Reception classes is excellent. That for pupils in Key Stage 1 is more varied and includes both good and some satisfactory teaching.
- Across the school, pupils' speaking skills are often limited. While staff use good questions to encourage pupils to respond, they sometimes miss opportunities for them to discuss their ideas and develop a wider vocabulary.
- The planning of lessons is good but, occasionally, when staff are working with one group of pupils, they do not ensure that other groups are calm and well-focused. Conversely, in some other lessons, pupils are not fully involved in activities and listen passively to adults. They then find it difficult to concentrate and do not produce their best work.
- Behaviour is good. The school values all pupils, who say they feel safe and enjoy being there. Pupils with additional needs, including behavioural difficulties, receive effective support from skilled staff, including learning mentors.
- Good leadership ensures school self-evaluation procedures are tightly focused. The headteacher is driving improvement well, as reflected in the improvement in provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good overall, although their

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cultural understanding, especially their multicultural awareness, is quite limited.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently at least good by:
 - providing more opportunities for pupils of all abilities to extend their speaking skills – including discussing their ideas with a partner
 - making sure that when teachers support one group of pupils that they maintain a calm and purposeful learning environment for others
 - checking that all pupils are fully involved and engaged in each part of lessons and develop the habits of a good learner.

- Extend the range of opportunities for pupils to widen their cultural and multicultural experiences and understanding of the world beyond their local environment.

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Main report

Achievement of pupils

Parents and carers believe their children do well in this school and inspection findings endorse their views. Children start Nursery with skills that while wide-ranging, are often below the level expected for their age. This is in most areas of their early learning and particularly in their communication skills. Many have quite a limited vocabulary and respond to others very briefly. They make excellent progress in the Nursery and the Reception classes and enter Year 1 with skills that are often a little above average.

Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make good overall progress. Data show that at the end of Year 2, attainment in recent years has often been significantly above average in reading, writing and mathematics. In 2011, standards were above national averages, but not quite at the same high level as in the previous years. Some groups of pupils, in particular those entitled to free school meals and the boys, did not do as well in reading and mathematics as previously. Current tracking information, lesson observations and samples of pupils' work confirm that in Years 1 and 2 pupils make good, if somewhat variable progress. Attainment is above average and pupils achieve well. The gap between the achievement of groups of pupils in this school, including the boys and pupils entitled to free school meals, compared with that of all pupils nationally, is closing rapidly.

Children with disabilities and those with special educational needs are identified at an early stage. With high quality and well-targeted support provided as they move through the school, they make similar progress to their classmates.

Achievement in reading is good. Boys, girls and pupils of different abilities and backgrounds all enjoy their reading and like the wide variety of books they have to choose from. Pupils use a good range of strategies, including their knowledge of the sounds letters make to help them work out unfamiliar words. By the end of Year 2, attainment in reading is above average.

Pupils make good use of their reading, writing and mathematical skills in other subjects. For example in class observations, Year 2 pupils were seen to enjoy using their reading skills to find out more about Florence Nightingale, then role-playing life in Scutari hospital. Such activities help them to make connections between aspects of their learning and contribute well to their moral and social development.

Quality of teaching

All the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children are well taught, as do the pupils themselves. Inspectors endorse their views. The quality of teaching in the Nursery and Reception classes has improved since the last inspection and is outstanding. Activities take place in a very

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calm and particularly purposeful environment where there is lots of encouragement to find something out. For example, excellent progress is made by children smelling pots of different items, and then identifying where they might have come across vanilla or other smells before. Outstanding progress is made in all the Reception classes, including in outdoor learning activities. The children particularly enjoy thinking about *The Owl Babies* story, wearing owl hats and deciding together what materials to use to then make an owl house. This supports the children's moral and social development well.

The quality of teaching is predominantly good in Years 1 and 2. The planned curriculum is good and assessment information is used effectively to provide an appropriate level of challenge to groups of different abilities. Across the school teachers and teaching assistants have good subject knowledge. Their enthusiasm often captures pupils' interest so that many engage well in lessons. The teaching of key literacy and numeracy skills is good. Staff use questions well to check pupils understanding and to identify what they are unsure of. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, the teacher made good use of questions and key words, such as protein, to reinforce what pupils were learning about healthy bodies.

Resources are used effectively to add interest and excitement to learning. Role-play activities are provided for all age groups and are a central part of classroom provision. In the more successful lessons, staff explain things well. However, there are inconsistencies. This was illustrated in two parallel mathematics activities where because the explanation to pupils was clearer for one group they then made better progress. At times, staff miss the opportunity for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner and several sit passively and offer few ideas to teacher-led discussions. Occasionally some groups within a class are not managed well, and the noise they make impacts on the learning of others.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Most parents and carers who replied to the inspection questionnaire consider behaviour in school is good, although, a few noted concerns in this area. They are also very confident that the school deals well with incidents, if they occur. Inspectors found that behaviour and safety are good.

The behaviour for learning of the majority of pupils is good. Where they are well taught, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage, behaviour is often exemplary. Here children develop the ability to work well together and show an awareness of their own and others' safety when using trikes and other equipment. They move around the quite tight space available in a sensible and mature manner for their age. They also develop an understanding of how to make a positive contribution to their class by making a significant effort to help others when the 'pack away music' is played.

Groups of pupils in Year 1 and 2 discussed behaviour with the inspectors and confirm that this is typically good. They know that if there is any misbehaviour this is not

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acceptable to the staff and other pupils. Most recognise that there are school rules and understand the rewards and sanctions in use. This makes a positive impact on their understanding of right and wrong and their moral development. Pupils are taught about the dangers of bullying, including cyber-bullying, and cultural respect at a level that is appropriate to their age and understanding. Very occasionally when they are not closely supervised in class, or when eating lunch, staff miss the opportunity to encourage pupils to consider the impact of their behaviour on others.

Pupils of all ages and backgrounds generally get on well together. The learning mentors work successfully with individuals and groups of pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties. This is seen in well organised playtime activities where games, including football, are well supervised. These pupils also enjoy specific targeted activities – including baking – together, which promote their social and communication skills well.

Attendance has improved since the last inspection and is a little above the national average. The school monitors this carefully and works closely with the very small number of families whose children are persistent absentees.

Leadership and management

The headteacher drives school improvement in a determined and challenging manner. Senior staff are well focused on ensuring that what has been a successful school for some time continues to move forward and keep abreast of current educational thinking and methods. This has been particularly successful for the younger children, where provision is now consistently outstanding. The Early Years Foundation Stage staff work well together as a unit to ensure the smooth and seamless flow of activities and a high level of challenge in their teaching. The management of the programme to support pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is very effective. Planning in Years 1 and 2 is good but the organisation and effectiveness of teaching is more variable. The newly-formed governing body is striving to ensure they are in a position to challenge senior leaders further by developing their programme of focused visits. Overall, the capacity to improve further is good.

School self-evaluation procedures are effective and largely accurate, and inspection findings match the school's overall view of its own effectiveness. Assessment data are carefully analysed to ensure that groups of pupils, including those entitled to free school meals and those with special educational needs, received additional support where appropriate. Equality of opportunity is promoted well and ensures that all pupils receive a supportive curriculum and good-quality teaching. Staff training is focused on ensuring that learning and progress continues to improve for all pupils and that their safety is assured. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and are central to the work of the school.

The curriculum is good, with particular strengths for the younger children, where activities are imaginative and often exciting. Pupils have opportunities to learn and

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practise their communication, reading, writing and mathematical skills across a range of subjects. The school holds awards for promoting healthy lifestyles, ECO awareness and for its work in combatting bullying. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall and they have opportunities to reflect on their own learning. There is a range of visits made and visitors to the school to help broaden the pupils' understanding of life beyond their local area. However, the pupils' cultural and, especially, their multicultural awareness is not developed well enough.

Communication with parents and carers is good and responses to the inspection questionnaire include an appreciation of the regularity of information provided. The school does much to encourage parents to be more involved in their children's learning. Joint activities with the adjoining junior school ensure greater consistency in the quality of provision for pupils as they move to the next stage of their education.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning; pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons, and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



19 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bolsover Infant School, Chesterfield S44 6DE

Thank you very much for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. We all enjoyed talking to you and listening to your ideas. We also liked watching what you do in lessons and other activities. I particularly enjoyed seeing the children in the Reception classes working together and making a home for an owl baby.

There are many things that we like about your school.

- The activities for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are excellent and they make outstanding progress.
- Your school is a good one, and your headteacher and staff are working well together to ensure it keeps on improving.
- Most of you work hard and behave well in lessons and around the school.
- Teaching is good overall and excellent for the younger children.
- You feel safe in school and trust adults to help you if you need it.
- Your attendance at school is good and you enjoy being there.

These are the things we have asked the school to do to make it even better:

- To provide you with more opportunities to discuss your ideas with others, and to make sure that when you are working in groups you always behave well and that you have things to do in all parts of lessons and don't just listen to others.
- To give you more opportunities to learn about the life and experiences of people in other parts of the country and the wider world.

You can also help by always trying as hard as you can and not waiting for other people to give their ideas or showing you what to do.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall
Lead inspector

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