

Bolton-on-Swale St Mary's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121604
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	380280
Inspection dates	16–17 January 2012
Lead inspector	Gordon Potter

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	97
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Edward Turner
Headteacher	Nicola Dobson
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2006
School address	Bolton-on-Swale Richmond DL10 6AQ
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Introduction

Inspection team

Gordon Potter

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed 12 lessons taught by 4 teachers, including joint lesson observations and visits to several classes with the headteacher. The inspector held meetings with representatives of the governing body, staff, pupils, parents and carers, and spoke to the school's most recent external development partner. The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school policies and documentation relating to safeguarding and strategic planning, examples of pupils' work, assessment data and monitoring records. He also scrutinised the 58 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as questionnaires from pupils and 7 staff. No responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) were available to assist in planning the inspection.

Information about the school

This school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well below average. The percentage of pupils supported at School Action is below average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs at School Action Plus and/or with a statement of special educational needs is below average. This group includes pupils who have significant behavioural difficulties. The school has achieved Activemark and Healthy School status, BECTA mark for ICT and the Eco-Schools Green Flag. The school has met government floor standards in two of the past three years. These are minimum standards set for pupils' attainment and progress.

The headteacher has been in post since April 2010. There has been some turbulence in staffing, including unavoidable long-term absence, since the school was previously inspected.

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. Pupils, parents and carers are very positive about the school and its inclusive ethos. They welcome the way it develops pupils' strong social, moral, spiritual and cultural awareness, keeps them safe, and encourages them to behave well and to have high attendance.
- Pupils' achievement is good. Attainment at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 is typically above average and is often high. In 2011, a lower proportion than usual of Year 6 pupils achieved the nationally-expected levels in mathematics. This was a result of disruptions to learning which slowed pupils' progress. As a result of initiatives taken by the headteacher, the attainment of pupils currently in school is above average and they make good progress from starting points in the Reception class that are in line with expectations. The headteacher is determined to regain the previous high standards seen in the school and has implemented a number of effective initiatives to do this.
- Teaching is good. It is good and often outstanding in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1. Teaching in Key Stage 2 has been affected by unavoidable staff absence, but with a return to staffing stability, it is now good and improving. Marking and target-setting are inconsistent in telling pupils how to improve their work.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and they say they feel safe in school. Pupils enjoy school and say that misbehaviour is uncommon and is effectively dealt with by their teachers. There are highly-effective procedures to support the learning of the few pupils who find difficulty in managing their own behaviour.
- Leadership and management are good. Senior leaders know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. They have used performance management and rigorous data analysis to improve the quality of teaching and the curriculum, and to target further improvements. Staff effectively seize opportunities to develop subject areas and contribute to school improvements. The governing body supports and challenges senior leaders well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By the summer of 2013, increase the rates at which pupils make progress and raise attainment to previous high levels, by:
 - using assessment information more consistently to ensure that work is matched accurately to the needs of individual pupils, especially in mathematics
 - giving pupils advice on how to improve their work and clear targets that will help them understand how to achieve the next steps in their learning
 - offering pupils even more opportunities to practise and apply their skills, especially in writing and problem-solving, in subjects across the curriculum.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children's starting points on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage are in line with those expected for their age. A wide range of stimulating, engaging activities capture children's imagination and move their learning on quickly in all areas of their development. They make especially good gains in their personal and social development, and their skills in counting and linking sounds and letters. The provision outdoors is particularly good at allowing children to investigate for themselves and develop their independence and their creative and physical skills. Across the school there is a coherent and systematic approach to teaching reading with a balanced emphasis on letters and sounds and comprehension. In the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, this leads to good progress and typically above average attainment in reading at the end of Year 2. There is a similar pattern of achievement in writing and mathematics in Key Stage 1 where pupils make good progress to achieve standards above those expected for their age.

Attainment at the end of Year 6 is typically above average and is often high. In 2011, the large majority of pupils attained expected levels in reading and writing. Although they made satisfactory progress from their starting points in the Reception class, some disruptions to staffing had slowed their progress, particularly in mathematics, in Key Stage 2. Evidence seen during the inspection indicates that as a result of strategies implemented by the headteacher, progress for pupils currently in school is good and attainment is above average. Pupils show good achievement in sport, music, art, drama and the humanities.

Pupils with special educational needs, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs and behavioural difficulties, make good progress due to a detailed analysis of their needs and tracking of their achievements. A review of the provision for these pupils has ensured programmes of support are effective in closing gaps. Most parents and carers believe that their children are making good progress. In lessons seen during the inspection this was the case, particularly in Key Stage 1 and in those lessons where teaching was clearly focused and offered pupils opportunities to engage with tasks which were at the correct level of challenge. For example, able pupils in Years 1 and 2 were challenged to extend their problem-solving skills by

calculating how much money they had spent and what items they could buy with that amount. Occasionally, in some lessons in Key Stage 2 there are low-level activities which do not effectively engage pupils or allow them sufficient time to engage with tasks and this slows progress.

Quality of teaching

In the best lessons, teachers make learning stimulating, explain clearly to pupils what they will learn and how they will know if they have succeeded. They employ interactive whiteboard technology well to engage pupils, and plan effective opportunities for pupils to learn through practical activities, including research, role-play, games and investigations. In an outstanding lesson in the Reception and Year 1 class, for example, children were enthralled by their investigation of the ice which had formed in the water tray and by their re-enactment of the story of 'The Three Little Pigs'. Teachers use questions well to check what pupils already know and that they have made progress. Lessons have a measured pace which helps pupils to consolidate knowledge and assimilate new learning, for example when pupils analysed their response to advertising posters. There are strong relationships and teachers and teaching assistants interact well with pupils to support them in their learning.

Occasionally work is not well-matched to the abilities of individual pupils and does not offer sufficient challenge. For example, in some English and mathematics lessons, teachers spent too much time explaining and modelling activities or checking understanding, offering pupils too little time to engage with tasks. Marking is done regularly and is well-used to tell pupils how successful they have been in specific tasks. It is used less successfully to tell pupils how to improve their work. In some classes, pupils have clear short-term targets which help them to take the next steps in their learning, but this approach is inconsistent across school.

The impact of the planned curriculum is good. There are many activities which help pupils to see the links between subjects and to develop and apply important skills, including teamwork and writing. For example, work on topics such as the Vikings, Egypt and the weather, or life in Kenya, develops imagination, writing and research skills. In these cases the impact of teaching on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. There are opportunities for pupils to write at length in subjects across the curriculum and to solve problems and apply their skills in mathematics. However, there are occasions when this approach could be developed further. Pupils in Key Stage 1 benefit from the extension of the Early Learning Goals and the practices which have served them well in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Behaviour and safety of children

Pupils enjoy school, are very polite to adults and respectful of each other and their school surroundings. Their attendance is high. The vast majority of pupils behave well in lessons, around school and when at play. Most parents and carers responding to the inspection questionnaires agree that overall there is a good standard of behaviour at the school, but there are a few who express concerns about behaviour in lessons. Good behaviour was evident in all lessons observed during the inspection. The inspector talked to many pupils during playtimes and more formally in group

discussions. They say that behaviour strategies are used effectively and that the few pupils who find good behaviour difficult respond well to rules and rewards. Indeed these systems help to promote self-discipline and a strong sense of right and wrong for all pupils. Pupils particularly like the praise system which encourages them to achieve well, work hard and develop teamwork and social skills.

Pupils say that bullying is not a problem. 'Buddies' help the youngest children settle quickly into school. Pupils feel safe and know that the teachers and other adults in school will help with any problems if they arise. The school council works very hard on behalf of other pupils and its members are particularly proud of the actions they have initiated to improve aspects of school life and improvements in pupils' behaviour.

Leadership and management

The headteacher, very ably supported by the Early Years Foundation Stage leader and the governing body, has a clear vision and a purposeful approach to driving school improvement. Well-targeted professional development and the sharing of good practice are focused on improving the effectiveness of leaders at all levels and the quality of teaching. Robust monitoring and self-evaluation highlights the right priorities for improvement with clear action plans in place. This rigour in self-evaluation ensures that the school has a clear understanding of its strengths and weaknesses.

The school's capacity to improve further is good. All subject leaders consistently apply the school's procedures to monitor and plan initiatives which have improved teaching and the curriculum and tackled a decline in attainment. Leadership responsibilities are distributed effectively to include all staff and they have a clear overview of teaching and learning. The school has refined its system for tracking pupils' progress and this enables them to identify swiftly groups and individuals who need additional support to close any gaps in their learning. The school has a clear commitment to and effective systems for promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements.

The school has a range of effective partnerships; for example, to provide opportunities in music and sport; and to support pupils who have a range of learning, emotional and behavioural needs and their families. The governing body is highly-supportive of the school, effectively manages the resources of this small school and provides a good level of challenge.

The curriculum is good. There is a strong focus on developing basic skills in English and mathematics and pupils' confidence in the use of information and communication technology (ICT). There are many interesting activities to develop reading, including opportunities for the most-able pupils to develop their skills in literary analysis. Well-planned enrichment activities, including visits to residential centres, places of worship and to museums, visits from dancers and writers, help to develop pupils' strong understanding of other faiths and cultures. Accordingly, pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good. This is further enhanced by the school's emphasis on developing pupils' interest in local history and a detailed programme of religious

education. There are many popular extra-curricular clubs which promote learning and enjoyment in sporting, arts and environmental activities.

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 up 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.
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.



18 January 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bolton-on-Swale St Mary's C of E Primary School, Richmond, DL10 6AQ

Thank you for making me so welcome when I inspected your school. I particularly enjoyed your singing and your music-making, and talking to you about your school and your work. I was impressed by your politeness and the care you show for one another so that you behave well and feel safe. Your excellent attendance is also praiseworthy.

You go to a good school and your headteacher and the governing body know how to make it better. Your teachers look after you well and make your lessons fun, although occasionally some activities are not challenging enough. You told me that you look forward to coming to school because you like your teachers, your lessons and after-school clubs and visits. Your parents and carers like the school very much. Your teachers have agreed that they can help your school to improve even more by:

- helping you reach higher standards at the end of Year 6 by making sure that all the information that teachers have about how well you are doing is used to plan work that is at the right level for all of you, especially in mathematics
- making sure that you know how to improve your work and have clear targets which help you to take the next steps in your learning
- giving you even more opportunities to practise your skills, especially writing and problem-solving, in all your subjects.

You can help by continuing to do your best. I wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely,

Gordon Potter
Lead Inspector

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