

Boltons CE School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112245
Local Authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	357073
Inspection dates	22–23 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Janette Corlett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Murphy
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Pitcher
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors saw nine lessons or parts of lessons, observing five teachers. They examined a variety of pupils' written work. Inspectors held meetings with a member of the governing body, teachers and groups of pupils. They scrutinised the school's child protection and safeguarding documentation, information about the curriculum, development plans, records of pupils' progress and minutes of the governing body meetings. The inspectors also analysed 45 questionnaires from parents and carers and 56 from pupils in Key Stage 2.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Inspectors considered whether pupils make consistently good progress as they move through the school, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The team explored whether there are appropriate levels of challenge in lessons to enable more-able pupils to attain the highest possible standards.
- The extent to which indoor and outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage supports their learning and development.
- The extent to which pupils have sufficient information on how to improve their work.

Information about the school

This is smaller than other primary schools serving a rural community. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and the vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.

Extended care provision operates on the school site. It is managed externally and is not subject to this inspection but a report of its quality can be found on the Ofsted website.

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: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. It is a friendly and vibrant learning community, where pupils feel very safe and have total confidence in the adults who care for them. Parents, carers, staff and pupils are proud of the school. 'This is a brilliant school' and 'School staff are caring and helpful,' are comments that aptly reflect the views of many parents and carers. The quality of care, guidance and support the pupils receive is outstanding. Exceptionally well-targeted support means that all pupils are able to take full advantage of the opportunities provided by the school. Pupils are polite, courteous and behave well. They thoroughly enjoy coming to school and thus their attendance is high.

Achievement is good and pupils reach standards which are above average by the time they leave the school. Pupils' overall progress is good as they move through the school. Boys' progress in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2 is not quite as rapid girls' because teachers do not always take advantage of opportunities to inspire and engage boys in writing across the full range of subject areas. The school is very successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities who, as a result, make good progress. Teaching is good and pupils have a clear understanding of their individual targets. More-able pupils receive a good level of challenge in lessons and as a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the highest possible standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 is increasing. The imaginative curricular provision is well-organised and impacts positively on pupils' attitudes to learning and their progress.

The strong leadership of the headteacher is at the heart of the school's success. She has established a shared vision for improvement in pupils' academic and personal skills which is embedded in all aspects of the school's provision. As a result, pupils are confident, reflective and creative learners, with good levels of spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness.

Communication with parents and carers is highly effective, leading to exceptional engagement in their children's learning. Additionally there are excellent partnerships with other schools and outside agencies to support pupils' learning and development, particularly that of vulnerable children. Self-evaluation is effective in providing school leaders with a developed view of the school's performance and what needs to be done to improve. As a result, for example, standards in reading have improved significantly throughout the school. Good improvements since the previous inspection and effective management ensure that capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve boys' progress in writing in Key Stages 1 and 2, by:

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- – providing boys with a broader range of opportunities for sustained writing in the wider curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' positive attitudes and good behaviour contribute strongly to their learning. They listen well and enjoy opportunities to work with 'talking partners' or in small groups. They make good progress in lessons because work is well-tailored to meet their learning needs, and teaching inspires their enthusiasm for learning. While their overall skills vary from year to year due to the small numbers involved and the range of individual starting points, children generally enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with expected skills for their age. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave Year 6. Attainment in mathematics dipped in 2010, but, due to a school wide focus on improving this subject, standards are currently above average. The good support and challenge that more-able pupils receive ensures that they achieve to their full potential.

Pupils enjoy the opportunities to take responsibility within the school, such as being part of the active school council. School councillors are currently involved in the House of Commons Speaker's Award Scheme through a project on developing a sustainable school. Older pupils take great pride in looking after their younger friends. They are reflective and show great respect for other people's feelings and beliefs. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through helping to organise a wide variety of fundraising events for local and national charities. Pupils' widespread participation in a broad range of after-school clubs and sporting events, demonstrates their enjoyment of physical activity and their good level of commitment to healthy lifestyles.

Attendance is high because pupils are very enthusiastic and want to learn as much as they can. Pupils show an excellent awareness of the possible dangers of drugs, alcohol and the inappropriate use of the internet. They say that there is no bullying in school. Pupils leave the school as independent problem-solvers and confident learners, with the ability to reflect critically on the effect of their own and others' ideas and actions. These qualities prepare them well for the next stage of their education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

An effective combination of clear learning intentions shared with pupils, well-planned activities based on secure assessments of prior learning, lively questioning and opportunities taken to reinforce learning, lie at the heart of teaching at its best. In such lessons, teachers encourage pupils to be actively involved and, as a result, pupils work with enthusiasm. Most lessons move on at a brisk pace and no time is wasted. Teachers' marking of written pupils' work is regular but in mathematics it does not consistently provide as much information for pupils on the next small steps in their learning as it does in writing. Furthermore, when teachers give helpful advice on improvement, they do not routinely allow time in mathematics lessons for pupils to act on the comments and this sometimes reduces the impact of the marking on pupils' learning and progress.

The good quality curriculum is matched well to pupils' needs. The structure of the curriculum has improved and teachers increasingly make links between a range of different subjects and experiences. Even so, this does not consistently inspire boys to practise their skills in sustained writing and raise their attainment in this subject. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively by teachers to raise interest and promote basic skills through a range of subjects. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, as well as educational visits and visitors to school. Pupils learn French and have opportunities to take part in a number of artistic and musical activities. Older pupils have the opportunity to go on an annual residential

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visit, with a cultural or outdoor educational focus. All this adds to pupils' enjoyment of school and to their development as confident and independent learners.

Parents and carers appreciate the school's very caring ethos and the outstanding support that their children receive. Teachers and support staff know each pupil individually and provide highly effective pastoral support, especially for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and vulnerable children. Careful tracking of their work swiftly leads to individual support programmes for those pupils in danger of falling behind. The school draws exceptionally well on the expertise of external agencies to work collaboratively upon programmes for those with more complex needs, and it keeps in close contact with parents and carers about how well their children are progressing. Excellent transition arrangements mean that pupils are confident in moving between key stages in the school and ultimately on to secondary education.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and the senior teacher provide strong leadership and effectively ensure a sustained drive for improvement. The school successfully promotes a simple and clearly articulated vision for pupils to achieve well academically and at the same time to develop confidence and self-esteem. School leaders are effective in ensuring all groups of pupils have equality of opportunity and that there is no discrimination. The school promotes community cohesion well. Pupils demonstrate a good awareness of their school, local and worldwide community, and increasingly have opportunities to develop their understanding of their place in wider British society and of other faiths. The high level of engagement with parents and carers has a very positive impact on the school and local community. For example, every morning a parent volunteer ensures that pupils can enter the building safely by directing traffic on the adjoining road.

School leaders rigorously monitor the quality of teaching and learning and provide effective guidance to enable teachers to improve their skills. Effective use of tracking procedures ensures that information on individual pupils' progress is easily available and potential underachievement is swiftly identified and tackled.

The school has good procedures in place for safeguarding and all staff receive regular and relevant training. Resources are deployed well. The governing body is well-informed and effectively supports the school in managing its finances and in securing good value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Strong links with the local pre-school group mean that children swiftly settle into the school family. They make good progress because the class teacher and teaching assistants have a clear understanding of how young children develop and learn. Adults work together closely and support children's learning well, maintaining a good balance between adult-directed activities and the opportunities children have to choose the direction of their own learning. Sometimes the activities provided for explorative play do not link sufficiently with the class theme or topic and this restricts children's opportunities to build on their prior learning and interests.

Staff make good use of the limited indoor space by extending activities into the conservatory, outdoor covered area and the outdoor play area. As a result, children display high levels of independence, cooperation and confidence. They know how to keep themselves safe, demonstrate good awareness of personal hygiene and show consideration towards one another. Arrangements to promote children's health and safety are secure which ensures that children feel very safe and are happy in school.

Parents and carers make valuable contributions to their children's learning and are warmly welcomed into school at all times. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader reflects on practice and has a clear view of what needs to be done to improve further. His good leadership results in a clear sense of direction and children who are well-prepared to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A high proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, the overwhelming majority are very happy with the quality of education and care provided at the school. They typically comment that they feel welcome in school and have many opportunities to talk to staff. A very few parents and carers raised an issue about poor behaviour in lessons. During the course of the inspection, inspectors looked at this very carefully and found that pupils' behaviour in lessons was well-managed and did not disrupt learning.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Boltons CE School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspector received 45 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	67	13	29	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	35	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	26	58	18	40	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	28	62	15	33	2	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	31	69	13	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	26	58	17	38	1	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	73	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	28	62	15	33	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	53	19	42	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	56	17	38	2	4	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	56	20	44	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	34	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	33	73	11	24	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

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.



24 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Boltons CE School, Wigton, CA7 8PA

Thank you for making me so welcome in your school when I inspected it recently. I was impressed with your good behaviour and the way in which you care for one another in school. A special thank you to those of you who gave up your lunchtime breaks to talk to me and tell me how much you like coming to school and enjoy learning. I was particularly interested to hear how the school council are taking part in the House of Commons Speaker's Award through your Sustainable School project.

You are right to be so proud of your school, because it is a good school. You achieve well, feel very safe and are exceptionally well looked after. You told me that your teachers are kind, and how you really trust them because they listen to you and are always willing to help. You also mentioned how much you appreciate the exciting activities your teachers arrange for you, particularly the trips to interesting places and the after-school clubs.

Your headteacher, all the other staff and the governing body are determined to make things even better for you. I have asked them to help boys in particular to improve their writing by providing more opportunities that enthuse them to write for longer periods of time in different subjects.

You can help by continuing to work hard and to look after one another as well as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Janette Corlett

Lead inspector

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