

Boldmere Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103341
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376880
Inspection dates	12–13 September 2011
Reporting inspector	David Speakman

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	357
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Darby
Headteacher	Carl Glasgow
Date of previous school inspection	26 March 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors saw 18 lessons and observed 13 teachers. Meetings were held with senior leaders, representatives of the governing body and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including monitoring, evaluation and assessment records, policy documents, the school improvement plan, teachers' planning and samples of pupils' work. A wide range of documents and records was scrutinised in relation to the safeguarding of pupils. Inspectors took into account the results of questionnaires returned by 84 parents and carers, 104 pupils and 30 members of staff.

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

- Do pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same rapid progress that other pupils make?
- What are the range and impact of leadership and management initiatives that have led to the significant improvement seen since the previous inspection?
- Are the high quality of core skills in English and mathematics reflected in work in other subjects?
- To what extent are pupils involved in self and peer assessment?

Information about the school

This is a larger than average-sized, three-form entry, junior school. It operates in federation with the Boldmere Infant School. Each school has its own headteacher but there is a single governing body for both schools. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. There are a broadly average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds, but there are no pupils at the early stages of learning English. The percentage of pupils identified with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average, and the proportion with statements of special educational needs is below average. The main special educational needs are moderate and specific learning difficulties and autism. The school has been awarded a Basic Skills Quality Mark, National Healthy School Award, Active Mark for exceptional delivery with the National Schools Sports Strategy, Eco School bronze and silver and Gold Arts Mark.

Before- and after-school provision, 'Busy Bodies', is self-managed and run by the junior school. It serves both infant and junior school families.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Boldmere Junior School is an outstanding school. There has been much improvement since the previous inspection in many key areas and this is due to excellent leadership and management. Since joining the school just before the previous inspection, the headteacher has worked in close partnership with the deputy headteacher, senior leaders, staff and members of the governing body to accurately identify key areas for improvement. In addressing these, they have created an environment in which all pupils are able to excel. The quality of education has improved and is now excellent. This has led to significantly improved outcomes, which are outstanding. These improvements and other inspection evidence confirm that the school has an excellent capacity to maintain the current high standards and improve even further.

Attainment has risen steadily since the previous inspection. Attainment in English and mathematics is high and, this year, virtually all pupils achieved at least the nationally expected level in English and all in mathematics, regardless of their starting points. This represents exceptional academic achievement for all groups of pupils. Outstanding achievement has been brought about by the excellent quality of teaching. All teaching seen during the inspection was at least good, with half being outstanding. Teachers make exceptional use of assessment information to plan lessons in which tasks are matched very accurately to pupils' learning needs and which are highly challenging to move pupils at all levels on at a rapid pace. Teachers involve pupils in assessing the quality of their own performance but this is of varying quality. Some excellent examples of pupils judging their own work were seen, but many pupils do not fully understand the purpose of this process or what they need to do to achieve the different levels of success. Much of the self-assessment that was being carried out by pupils was sometimes used incorrectly and often too optimistic.

A new curriculum is in place. This has been developed in collaboration with the federated infant school with the purpose of creating greater continuity. Curriculum provision in the junior school is of an excellent quality. As well as meeting all pupils' learning needs exceptionally well, and enabling excellent achievement, the curriculum supports pupils' personal development very well. Together with excellent care, guidance and support, the curriculum promotes outstanding levels in pupils' personal development. Behaviour is outstanding and contributes significantly to the quality of learning. Pupils show a mature approach to learning and manage their own behaviour very effectively. Pupils feel very safe and therefore enjoy coming to school very much. Attendance is high. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils

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and adults, are of a high quality. These high quality personal attributes support outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' skills in assessing the quality of their own and others' work by:
 - improving pupils' understanding of the different criteria for success to enable more accurate self-assessment
 - making sure pupils understand the purpose and process of self- and peer-assessment
 - placing a consistent emphasis on pupils contributing to on-going evaluation in lessons to support the learning process more effectively.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils join the school with attainment that is above the national average. All groups make excellent progress and overall standards are high by the end of Year 6. Scrutiny of pupils' books confirms that high standards seen in literacy and numeracy are evident in other subjects. Pupils' books are very well presented, particularly in terms of writing standards. Speaking and listening skills are well developed, with pupils explaining their ideas very articulately. Older pupils have developed very good mental numeracy skills, which contribute well to learning in other subjects.

The school is aware of the range of learning needs and is very successful in meeting them. Target groups such as boys, pupils who narrowly missed the higher level in writing at Key Stage 1, and gifted and talented pupils have their 'Writing Club' sessions, through which they make accelerated progress in developing writing skills to reach their full potential. These pupils are fully engaged by inspirational teaching and sustain high levels of concentration over long periods of time. Year 4 boys, who had been working on scripting 'The War of the Worlds', were still buzzing with excitement half way through the morning. The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is outstanding. They are exceptionally well supported by both class teachers and skilled teaching assistants. The type of support is matched well to individual need. Some pupils with autism, for example, have one-to-one support but care is taken to ensure that they are fully included through working within groups of other pupils. Others with similar conditions, who are able to tackle more difficult tasks, work independently but adults continuously monitor their progress and are aware of any emerging needs. Support for pupils who speak English as an additional language is through their class work. None are at the early stages of learning English. However, adults are alert to their progress, and intervene at appropriate moments to clear any misunderstandings so they can continue with their work independently.

Pupils' sustained concentration has a major impact on the quality of learning. They are very curious and show high levels of interest, being very keen to contribute by

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answering confidently and asking questions. Pupils at all levels of attainment respond exceptionally well to challenge. Expertly planned work, in which pupils at all levels of attainment have similar tasks but at different levels of difficulty, gives all pupils a sense of being included. Consequently, pupils rise to the challenge and strive for success. They take a pride in their work: mathematics is very accurately and logically presented and cross-curricular books are interesting and show a range of learning experiences, which are neatly presented and carefully illustrated. Through excellent academic achievement, involvement in entrepreneurial activities and an enthusiasm to take on challenges, pupils are exceptionally well prepared for the future.

Pupils’ excellent awareness of how to live a healthy lifestyle is reflected in a number of related external awards. National Healthy School Award, Active Mark for exceptional delivery of the National Schools Sports Strategy, and Eco School bronze and silver awards all reflect an exceptional knowledge of healthy eating, other health issues and pupils’ engagement in physical activity. Pupils’ contribution to the school and local community is good. Pupils contribute exceptionally well to the school community through the school council, organising charity events and through acting as ‘buddies’. They make a good contribution to the wider community.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is outstanding and is often inspirational and highly effective in stimulating pupils’ enthusiasm. During the inspection, it was quite common to see teachers in role as Victorian teachers or as a ‘street child’, pupils observing clips from Charlie and

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

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the Chocolate Factory to stimulate their writing or entering into a competition to win Willy Wonka’s glasses on Roald Dahl Day. Careful monitoring of teaching, followed by supportive feedback and professional development, has led to a huge improvement in its quality since the previous inspection, when it was satisfactory. Teachers are skilled in planning work that matches pupils’ learning needs well and hence in challenging pupils at all levels of attainment. Questions are very carefully thought out to make pupils think and well focused on individual ability. Pupils are expected to think out answers for themselves, and rise to the challenge. Information and communication technology is used exceptionally well to enhance teachers’ presentations and promote pupils’ interest. Relationships between adults and pupils are based on mutual respect and are of a high quality. Pupils therefore feel comfortable in asking for help or making suggestions. Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers and their contribution to the learning and progress is extremely significant.

The curriculum has been revised and the ‘Boldmere Curriculum’ is a joint curriculum across the infant and junior schools’ federation. This has led to improved progression and skills development. The curriculum is exceptionally well adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of groups and raise standards and achievement. Secure arrangements ensure that core skills, including computer skills, are very well built in. Curriculum enrichment is varied and promotes a great deal of interest and enthusiasm for learning. The wide range of extra-curricular opportunities and high levels of uptake enhance pupils’ learning and provide them with a range of memorable experiences, such as trips to France, Black History week, camping experiences, pirate days and much more.

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils feel cared for and known to all staff. Two girls spoke about the headteacher, saying, ‘We started at the same time as Mr Glasgow. We’ve grown together; we know him and he knows us.’ Pupils are confident that any concerns will be dealt with fairly and effectively. Parents and carers express a similar level of confidence in the care shown for their children, with all who replied to the questionnaire responding positively.

The before- and after-school care, ‘Busy Bodies,’ provides an outstanding level of care for those who attend. High numbers from the infant and junior schools attend and there is a waiting list for places. A wide range of enjoyable and stimulating activities keep pupils fully occupied. Staffing is very well organised and clear roles guide their work. Exemplary procedures for parents and carers to collect their children ensure high levels of safeguarding. The excellent provision that the children receive is down to the outstanding leadership of its manager and her team of highly effective staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

<p>The quality of teaching</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>2</p>

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The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

As one parent wrote, 'It is the leadership that makes this school excellent.' Highly effective leadership and management have resulted in continuous and sustained improvement since the headteacher joined the school. He has established a unified approach among the staff team with a strong will to aim for high quality provision. The senior leadership team has a clear vision, are strategically placed and fully involved in effective monitoring and evaluation of outcomes to continually improve provision and the quality of education. High expectations across the board are evident. Senior leaders have high expectations of school performance and this is communicated effectively to staff and to pupils. There is a strong vision for ongoing school improvement.

Senior leaders have implemented a number of important changes that are already having a significant impact on provision and outcomes. New and robust pupil tracking systems record the progress of individuals, classes and year groups. This is monitored regularly through reviews of pupils' performance, where teachers are held accountable for the progress of pupils in their classes.

The work of the governing body is good. The federation governing body is relatively recently formed from those of the infant and junior schools. This reduction in numbers was managed smoothly and the new governing body is developing well. The governing body fully complies with statutory requirements. Federation policies are all current and appropriate responsibilities are distributed. The governing body is pro-active and canvasses views of parents, carers and pupils on important issues such as federation and curriculum development. It has a growing level of involvement in the school and is involved in making important strategic decisions and asking challenging questions. Members are well informed, mainly through detailed headteacher's reports and staff presentations.

Safeguarding is outstanding. Child protection is exceptionally strong and highly effective. Health and safety of the site and risk assessments of school activities are fully in place. Safeguarding procedures are constantly updated and reflect best practice. Excellent policies are fully reflected in the school's practice.

The school makes sure that all pupils, whatever their background, origin or ability, are given equal opportunities to succeed. No cases of discrimination are recorded, but procedures are in place should one occur. Because of this, all pupils achieve equally well. The school's promotion of community cohesion is good. The school has carried out a detailed analysis of its context and devised a comprehensive and well-considered action plan to address any identified areas. The school is developing its evaluation of the impact of its actions on outcomes. There are links with schools in

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France, Africa, Thailand and some in more local but contrasting localities. Pupils are developing a good understanding of the work of national services, such as the police and fire services.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Views of parents and carers

Just under a quarter of parents and carers sent in questionnaires and this response is lower than that usually found. Parents and carers have very positive views of the school and there was strong agreement for all statements in the questionnaire. Written comments outlined a small number of concerns, particularly relating to the lack of challenge for able, gifted and talented pupils. Inspectors looked carefully at this issue by considering their achievement, progress in lessons and provision in lesson and curriculum planning. Inspectors found this to be an area of no concern, as pupils capable of higher attainment are fully challenged and reach their potential.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Boldmere Junior 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 inspection team received 84 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 357 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	68	26	31	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	80	15	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	35	42	42	50	2	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	41	49	34	40	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	47	56	30	36	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	38	45	42	50	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	51	35	42	4	5	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)	53	63	30	36	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	38	45	39	46	2	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	39	46	32	38	1	1	5	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	38	45	38	45	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	58	69	23	27	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	59	70	22	26	1	1	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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



14 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Boldmere Junior School, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5SD

Thank you for the warm welcome we received when we inspected your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you in lessons and in the group discussions. Your views were exceptionally helpful and it was clear that you are very proud of your school and think highly of your teachers. Your pride is well earned as you go to an outstanding school, which has improved rapidly over the last few years.

You all make excellent progress and the standards in your school work by Year 6 are higher than in most other schools. As well as achieving high standards in English and mathematics, you do particularly well in music (we thought your singing in assembly was excellent), information and communication technology, physical education and art and design. The quality of your written work in other subjects is just as good as in your English books. Those of you who receive extra support because you find learning a bit more difficult make excellent progress.

Your personal qualities are outstanding. You have a sensible and mature approach to school life. You enjoy school a great deal and behave exceptionally well. Adults who look after you make sure that the school is a very safe and pleasant place for you to learn.

The school is so well led and managed by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior leaders that there has been a great improvement since your school was last inspected. However outstanding a school is, though, there are still areas that could be improved. We have asked staff to make sure that your skills and understanding of how to assess your own performance in lessons is improved so that this can be done more accurately.

Congratulations on helping your school achieve this outstanding status. We are confident that you will do all you can to help further, particularly by keeping your enthusiasm for school and learning at a peak.

Yours sincerely

David Speakman, Lead inspector

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