

The Gates Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133926
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	381568
Inspection dates	27–28 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Michael Hewlett

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	312
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Lindy Griffiths
Headteacher	K Coiffait
Date of previous school inspection	19 May 2009
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 17 lessons and observed 11 teachers. They also held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including development planning, pupils' work, safeguarding arrangements, self-evaluation records, policies and performance data. Inspectors examined 93 questionnaires from parents and carers, as well as those from staff and pupils.

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

- What the school is doing to raise attainment and achievement across the school.
- How far teaching is challenging for all pupils.
- How well informed, cohesive and focused staff are in driving improvement forward, given recent changes in staffing.

Information about the school

Most pupils in this larger than average-sized primary school are White British. A very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for a free school meal is below average. The school has Healthy School status as well as the International Schools' award which was achieved in 2011.

There have been significant changes in staffing over the last two years, with three key stage managers and a deputy headteacher appointed in April 2011. There was a major programme of building and refurbishment last year. An independently managed pre-and after-school facility on the school site is subject to a separate inspection and report.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. The good safeguarding, care and support pupils and their families receive make a considerable difference to their lives. Through the well-planned programme of personal and social education pupils also have a good understanding of what it means to lead a healthy lifestyle and many aspects of their personal development are good as a result. The very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire are highly supportive of the school's work.

Children enter the Nursery with basic skills that vary each year but are, overall, broadly typical for their age. In the Early Years Foundation Stage they make good progress in their personal development but satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' progress through the rest of the school is also satisfactory. Attainment on leaving the school is average but improving, as new ways of working begin to have an impact. Real gains have been made in pupils' attainment in mathematics but writing remains a weakness in some classes. Teaching is satisfactory overall but variable in quality. Better lessons feature appropriate pace and challenge but weaker ones lack these features, as well as an appropriate match of activities to pupils' needs. Pupils' writing skills are underdeveloped in satisfactory lessons and there are too few opportunities available for pupils to use these skills in other curriculum areas. The satisfactory curriculum is being updated to make it more imaginative. It has strengths in the arts, sport and provision for extra-curricular activities.

Many pupils take full advantage of the opportunities provided for them to take on responsibilities within the school and this area is good, as is pupils' involvement in the local community. Behaviour is good and attendance above average. Pupils say they enjoy school and feel very safe there because of the good levels of care and support they receive. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Recent challenges facing the school are being overcome and the school is moving forward under the determined leadership of its headteacher, staff and governing body. The school has a well-informed understanding of its strengths and weaknesses but some of its evaluations do not fully explain the impact of changes that have been made. Development planning gives a clear picture of what needs to be done but it is too soon to demonstrate sustained improvement. As such, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is satisfactory.

Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment and achievement by ensuring that the quality of learning and progress is good or better in all lessons by:
 - ensuring there is consistently good use of assessment data across all classes, to more accurately match activities to all pupils' needs
 - providing more pace and challenge in lessons
 - improving pupils' writing skills by providing more opportunities for them to use and apply these skills in other areas of the curriculum
- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by :
 - sharpening the evaluation of changes that are made so that their impact is more clearly measured and results used to inform the next stage of school planning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation that learning and progress in lessons is satisfactory overall. It varies widely due to differences in the quality of teaching. In lessons most pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding and learn and practise their skills satisfactorily. They are keen to succeed, mostly apply themselves well in lessons, work at a good pace and enjoy their learning, when provided with appropriate tasks and guidance. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is average but rising in response to more stable staffing. The proportion of pupils gaining the higher grades in national tests in Year 6 fluctuates from year to year. It is close to national averages in mathematics but remains just below average in English. Progress in developing pupils' writing skills across the school has been made but these skills are still underdeveloped in some classes. This limits some pupils' abilities to communicate their learning. However, inspection evidence and school data show that the large majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress from their starting points, including those who join the school partway through a year. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress, helped by the extra support they receive.

Behaviour is good around the school and often very good in the best lessons. The school places a high priority upon developing pupils' understanding of healthy living. Pupils also make a good contribution to the daily running of the school through the effective work of the school council, which has its own budget, as well as through their active involvement within local community. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Despite satisfactory basic skills, pupils develop good personal qualities and skills in information and communication technology so that they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their learning.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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 skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is satisfactory across the school. The school has the issue of weaker teaching well in hand, however, with additional support and restructured staffing in place for the new school year. In the better lessons, good planning ensures that varied activities are provided that meet the needs of pupils, and good pace and challenge from the teacher stimulate their interest. The school has recently introduced several new initiatives, including improved assessment practices to raise the quality of teaching. Pupils are well informed about their progress and how to improve through marking and feedback from adults. However, the new changes are not being adopted consistently across all classes. For example, in some lessons assessment data are not used effectively enough to accurately match activities to pupils' needs. Writing skills are not as well established as they could be, with the result that not all pupils learn as effectively as they should. In addition, pupils have too few opportunities to practise their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum.

The curriculum has been subject to major review recently, with a more extensive range of creative topic approaches being introduced to develop pupils' skills. Weaker areas in English and mathematics have been identified and good support has been put in place to target them. Good links with outside agencies, such as the Bolton Music service, contribute to the broad range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. There is a good range of visits and visitors to the school and an extensive programme of personal, social and health education that contributes significantly to pupils' well-being. Much of the curriculum development work is in its early stages and its consistent use across the school and its impact is not yet fully evident.

The care, guidance and support provided by the school are good. They have a positive impact upon pupils' personal development and increasingly upon their learning. The staff work hard to create a welcoming learning environment and the impact of this is seen in the warm, harmonious atmosphere of the school and the very positive relationships between pupils and adults. Transition arrangements for

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

pupils joining and leaving the school, including those who do so mid-term, are good. There is a good range of information provided for parents and carers which they confirm that they find very useful. The school has good links with the on-site pre- and after-school club and works well with a range of agencies to support the learning of pupils who are deemed to be vulnerable due to their circumstances.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account:	
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher and school leaders have a clear vision for the school and are driving improvement forward with energy and determination. They have largely stabilised staffing, overseen a considerable upgrading of facilities and introduced new ways of working. Their vision is shared by the staff, governing body, and parents and carers, who are appreciative of the changes brought about. A programme of support and challenge to improve the quality of teaching and learning has been initiated and is well supported by all staff. The school recognises that it still has work to do in raising expectations by embedding the effective use of individual pupil learning targets. The school's self-evaluation practices are accurate, with regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning, although aspects of the monitoring and evaluation lack a sharp focus. For example, evaluations of intervention strategies do not always highlight the impact of the changes that have been made in order to identify areas for improvement.

Procedures to safeguard pupils are good, reflecting the levels of care within the school. There is good practice, especially in the checking and vetting of staff, and in the recording and monitoring of support for vulnerable pupils. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory, reflecting the variability in the quality of teaching, but gaps in pupils' performance are being reduced. Discrimination is extremely rare and when encountered is dealt with well. The school engages well with parents and carers, especially through the extensive range of newsletters and booklets that keep them informed about the school's work. The school works closely with its neighbouring schools, often leading them in development activities. Community cohesion is good at all levels and the school's success in raising pupils' understanding of the wider world has been recognised by its recent award of International School status. The governing body is well organised and has an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is supporting and challenging the school's drive for improvement. The satisfactory outcomes from the school mean that it is giving satisfactory value for money.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3

The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

All children, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make satisfactory progress during their time in Early Years Foundation Stage. They make good progress in their personal development. Behaviour is good. Children respond positively to adults, play well with their classmates and display enjoyment in their learning. The majority join the school with skills that are broadly similar to those expected for their age. Most begin Year 1 well equipped to access the Key Stage 1 curriculum with skills which are average. This represents satisfactory progress from their starting points. Children learn effectively through a variety of adult-led and child-initiated activities. Children's progress is monitored on a daily basis and this information is used effectively to record milestones and to plan next steps in adult-led activities which are well-planned and well-matched to children's needs. Adults take every opportunity to engage children in conversation and develop their speaking and listening skills. Children respond very positively, display enjoyment in activities and show pride and pleasure in their achievements. Leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. In the short time that leaders have been in post they have introduced an exciting curriculum and better teaching. However, it is too soon to demonstrate the results of these changes in relation to children's achievement. Effective liaison with pre-school settings and good relationships with parents and carers enable children to settle quickly. They make a smooth transition from one stage to the next.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of those who responded are highly satisfied with the school. This feedback reflects the information gathered by the school from its own surveys. Typically, they comment very positively about the quality of care and the leadership of the school. Many positive comments were also received by inspectors about how supportive the school is and how much their children enjoyed school. Within the small number of negative comments received, there was no underlying pattern. In

their questionnaire responses, a few parents and carers signalled concerns over how the school manages unacceptable behaviour and whether their children were making enough progress. During the inspection, inspectors scrutinised the school procedures with regard to these two areas. Discussions were also held with pupils. Inspectors' conclusions are contained in the body of this report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Gates Primary 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 93 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 312 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	53	57	37	40	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	55	59	36	39	2	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	35	38	48	52	8	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	31	33	44	47	14	15	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	40	47	51	4	4	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	38	49	53	8	9	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	47	51	41	44	2	2	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)	40	43	44	47	3	3	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	33	50	54	4	4	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	31	48	52	9	10	3	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	34	48	52	5	5	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	41	44	49	53	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	43	48	52	3	3	1	1

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.



29 September 2011

Dear Children

Inspection of The Gates Primary School, Bolton, BL5 3QA

Thank you for the welcome you gave to me and the other inspectors when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed our visit. You were eager to talk to us and tell us how much you like your school. This helped us to find out about the school and how well it is doing.

Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. You told us you feel very safe when you are in school. We saw that you enjoy learning and were very impressed by the good contribution that you make to your school and to your local community. You behave well and know a great deal about staying healthy. You try your best in all the things that you do. This is helping you to make progress in your learning. All the adults take good care of you. They all want the best for you. Teachers work hard to find things that interest you and help you to learn.

We have asked the school to improve two things. First, we want to see you getting better results in English and mathematics. We are asking your teachers to make improvements in lessons to make sure some of the tasks you are given are even harder and that they are planned to meet your needs. Second, we want the adults to check on the changes that have been made to make sure they are working successfully.

You can help by continuing to try hard with all your work.

Best wishes in the future.

Yours sincerely

Michael Hewlett
Lead inspector

