

Boughton Heath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111164
Local authority	Cheshire West and Chester
Inspection number	378240
Inspection dates	18–19 October 2011
Reporting inspector	Steve Isherwood HMI

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	210
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Lewis
Headteacher	Steve Ellis
Date of previous school inspection	27 September 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in 11 lessons, taught by eight teachers and held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and a representative from the local authority. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of evidence including the school improvement plan, the tracking of pupils' progress, monitoring reports, the work pupils were doing in their books and the school's documentation relating to safeguarding of pupils. The inspectors also analysed 79 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and took account of those completed by staff and pupils.

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

- Whether all groups of pupils are making equally good or better progress from their starting points, particularly from Year 3 to Year 6?
- How well teaching takes into account the different needs of learners.
- The quality of pupils' learning in lessons and across the curriculum.
- The effectiveness with which leaders at all levels evaluate the impact of actions taken to drive improvement.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average-sized school. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has gained a number of awards including The Healthy Schools Standard and Activemark.

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

Boughton Heath is an outstanding school. Pupils achieve extremely well. They reach high standards in their work and make exceptionally good progress in their personal development. They are very caring and considerate towards others and are confident and enthusiastic learners. When asked to express their views on how they see things they found it very difficult to think of any improvements they would like to see. Their pride and enthusiasm for the school came shining through. There was strong praise for staff, the high levels of care they receive and the range of exciting opportunities on offer. 'We get to do loads of fun activities.' and 'Visits are really fun and we learn lots of new things.' were typical of their comments.

Parents and carers also hold the school in high regard. 'The staff are well organised, enthusiastic and conscientious' and 'My children can't wait to get there in the mornings.' are just some of the comments that reflect their positive views.

Pupils come on in leaps and bounds from the moment they enter the school. Provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage is excellent. By the time pupils leave in Year 6 their attainment is significantly above the national average in English and mathematics. This represents outstanding achievement considering their starting points. This is all made possible because the curriculum is very successful in meeting pupils' needs and teaching is consistently good with some outstanding features. In the very best of lessons pupils are encouraged to test and deepen their understanding with carefully crafted opportunities that promote high levels of discussion and active learning. Where teaching is less strong, on occasions in a small number of lessons, senior leaders recognise that too much time is spent on describing to pupils what they are going to do, which reduces their opportunities to work independently and direct their own learning.

The success of the school is underpinned by leaders and managers spearheaded by the headteacher who provide outstanding leadership. As a group, they keep a close eye on the school's performance and are very secure about the direction the school must take to sustain its momentum. They are quick to identify and tackle weaknesses and know the school exceptionally well.

Considering the advances made since its previous inspection and along with its other strengths, including the rigorous analysis of pupils' progress and strong teamwork, the school is exceptionally well placed to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- In a small number of lessons, reduce the time spent on general explanations and increase opportunities for pupils to work independently and direct their own learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Pupils enter the school with skills and abilities broadly in line with those typically seen. They quickly develop a love of learning and are keen and motivated to succeed. Their natural curiosity is harnessed well through a wide array of experiences which sees busy pupils responding with gusto to a range of practical and stimulating activities. They particularly enjoy opportunities which fire their enthusiasm for learning, such as coaching and supporting each other, making their own decisions and discussing and sharing their ideas with others. For example, pupils in Year 3 showed high levels of independence and made excellent progress in their understanding of how to write a non-chronological report. Elsewhere in Year 6 pupils developed a good understanding of how to write extended sentences using a connective by working effectively together in pairs and in small groups.

Work in lessons and in pupils' books together with the school's own data show that pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve outstandingly well and regularly reach standards that are well above those expected for their age. A notable success is that the percentage of pupils achieving or surpassing the expected Level 4 in the national tests at the end of Year 6 is consistently high in English and mathematics.

Pupils speak highly of staff and feel very secure and safe in school. They mature into thoughtful and caring young people with clear values of honesty, respect and tolerance. Their enjoyment of school is reflected in their high level of attendance and by their enthusiasm for all that the school provides. They behave extremely well and are kind and considerate to others. Pupils commented, 'Playtimes are really good, we all get on well together.' and 'Bullying is not a problem here'.

Pupils are confident that their voice will be heard and that any problems will be swiftly resolved. They are keen to take on extra responsibilities such as looking after younger ones and by their involvement in the active school council and eco committees.

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?

Pupils make outstanding progress in their work because of consistently good or better teaching and the excellent use of assessment by teachers to support learning and plan the next steps in pupils' provision. Teachers have increased their understanding of what constitutes effective practice through training and support and as a group have established their own vision of learning. As a result a number of common strengths were seen in lessons. Teachers are skilled in developing pupils' thinking through effective questioning that keeps pupils on their toes. Teaching assistants provide an effective layer of extra support, particularly for those that find learning difficult. New skills build well on pupils' prior learning. Pupils consistently have opportunities to coach and support each other and to check each other's understanding. Pupils are supported effectively in knowing how to improve their work. When the planning and teaching are at their very best, the impact on pupils' work is outstanding, as when Year 5 pupils were writing a recount using text and notes from interviews and newspaper reports relating to an unidentified flying object seen recently over Chester by a member of the public. With skilful prompting from the class teacher children were able to deepen their understanding of sensational language and the use of direct speech.

Where teaching is less strong, on occasions in a small number of lessons, pupils' work is sometimes over-directed which reduces the opportunities for pupils to be independently active and take charge of their own learning.

The curriculum is very well planned with a clear emphasis on the development of key skills. The teaching of these subjects is made more meaningful to pupils through a creative approach by staff and reference to cross-curricular themes. For example, by using real-life situations in problem-solving activities and using the locality to engage pupils' interests. All pupils benefit from an excellent range of enrichment

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

opportunities such as visits and visitors to the school. There is a high take-up of the additional extra-curricular clubs and activities. These add considerable enjoyment to pupils' learning and are much appreciated by the pupils.

No stone is left unturned to ensure that all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them most vulnerable, are very well cared for and supported. There are excellent procedures for introducing pupils to school and very effective links with high schools ensure their smooth transition to secondary school. Commenting specifically on how well her child had settled into the Reception class this year, one parent said, 'The school went out of their way to build the confidence and self-esteem of my child by visiting us in our own home. He can't wait to get there in the morning now. If he's happy I am too.'

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Excellent leadership and management at all levels along with the good work of the governing body and first-rate partnerships with other agencies, lie at the heart of the school's improved effectiveness. The drive and ambition of senior leaders to improve provision is central to the school's success. Since his appointment last year, the headteacher has successfully communicated his high expectations about continuing to improve the quality of pupils' learning and raise their achievement further. He has identified and tackled areas requiring improvement with rigour, such as improving pupils' writing, while building on the school's existing strengths. With the strong support of senior colleagues and middle leaders he is leading the school down the right path.

The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well. Senior leaders are constantly alert to any variation in achievement and are very effective in improving pupils' life chances and in tackling discrimination. As a group they are very committed to removing the barriers to learning and celebrating the achievements of all pupils whatever their circumstances. The school's work on developing pupils' awareness of other faiths and diversity demonstrates its good contribution to community cohesion. Links have been made with a school in Uganda and a school in very different circumstances in Manchester. Senior leaders correctly recognise that the next challenge is to fine-tune their procedures for judging the impact of these initiatives.

The school meets all statutory requirements to ensure that pupils are safe and free from harm. Safeguarding is given high priority and procedures are good. Leaders pay very close attention to checking the suitability of adults to work with children and staff are vigilant in identifying and responding to any potential dangers that pupils may encounter.

Governors play an effective role in supporting the school and in holding senior leaders to account. They are committed to see the school improve further and are confident to act where necessary to support improvements or to question proposals.

These are the grades for the 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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
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	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

When children start school what they know and what they can do varies but overall are broadly typical for their age. The outstanding provision gives them an excellent start and ensures that they make great strides in their learning with carefully crafted activities that are very well targeted on key learning goals and match well with their stages of development. For example, the atmosphere buzzed with excitement as children investigated the 'witch's soup'. Elsewhere, the curiosity of the boys in particular, was aroused in the 'dark den' outside. Staff are enthusiastic, well organised and have an excellent understanding of how young children learn best. As a team they are highly skilled in knowing when to intervene and how to interact with children to enhance their learning. For example, they develop children's language through effective questioning and commentary in a range of practical activities both inside and outside. As a result children become absorbed in their learning as they play and have the confidence to initiate activities for themselves as well as follow clearly established routines.

Staff continually assess how well children are achieving and use this information to plan further challenges. This means that by the start of Year 1 children have exceeded the levels expected of them and have made excellent progress from their starting points. Parents and carers are heavily involved in their children's learning and feel welcome to pop in at any time. Leadership is excellent. Staff are forward thinking and reflective. There is clear agreement on the strengths in provision and where further improvements can be made.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

A very large majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire declared themselves to be extremely satisfied with the school. There is overwhelming agreement that the school keeps their children safe and that teaching is good at the school. A very small minority of parents and carers expressed a few concerns regarding the special needs provision in the school, particularly the process of individual education plans for their children. Inspectors discussed this in detail with senior leaders who correctly recognise that information to parents and carers surrounding this issue requires greater clarity. Similarly, a few parents and carers raised some anxieties about how the school deals with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school, held discussions with staff and pupils and scrutinised behavioural records. Their findings are in the report.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Boughton Heath 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 79 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 210 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	75	16	20	1	1	3	4
The school keeps my child safe	59	75	17	22	2	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	33	46	58	4	5	2	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	38	41	52	6	8	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	38	48	39	49	0	0	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	41	52	34	43	3	4	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	42	53	34	43	2	3	1	1
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)	35	44	31	39	1	1	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	47	37	47	2	3	3	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	28	35	36	46	4	5	4	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	34	36	46	4	5	3	4
The school is led and managed effectively	36	46	36	46	3	4	2	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	50	63	23	29	3	4	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 is 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.

20 October 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Boughton Heath Primary School, Chester, CH3 5RW

Thank you so much for helping the inspectors when we visited your school recently. We really enjoyed chatting to you in lessons, in the playground and in the pupil interview. You expressed your views very clearly and they were very helpful to us. You told us how much you love your school and having spent the two days with you we can understand why. Some of your mums told us that you that you cannot wait to get there in the mornings.

You go to an excellent school and are well taught. It is such a safe place to be. Everyone takes really good care of you and your parents or carers told us this too. We were very pleased to see how well you behave and how you help one another in class and around the school. You told us that your lessons are interesting and often fun. We could see this with our own eyes when those of you in Years 5 and 6 were using the 'RUCSAC' method to solve problems, when those of you in Year 3 were making a space station and when the boys and girls in Year 1 were making and decorating cakes using play-dough and sequins. I hope Mr Ellis came back with his money after buying one. Ninety pence looked a bargain to me.

Your teachers work very effectively to make the school as good as it can be. To help them we have asked that even more of your lessons are like the very best ones we saw when you had lots of opportunities to work on your own and take charge of what you did. You can help by telling your teachers what makes your lessons interesting and what helps you to learn. Keep trying hard. We can see why your teachers love working with you every day.

Yours sincerely

Steve Isherwood
Her Majesty's Inspector

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