

Bolton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	112176
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	378438
Inspection dates	22–23 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Sue Sharkey

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	57
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Elizabeth Warburton
Headteacher	Judith Cotter
Date of previous school inspection	18 January 2007
School address	Bolton Appleby-in-Westmorland CA16 6AW
Telephone number	01768 361511
Fax number	01768 361511
Email address	admin@bolton.cumbria.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in five lessons taught by four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed pupils' work and looked at the school's system for tracking their progress. They looked at documents relating to the care and protection of pupils (safeguarding) and key school policies. Inspection questionnaires from 29 parents and carers, nine school staff and 30 pupils were also taken into account.

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

- The strategies the school has in place to raise attainment and improve achievement in mathematics, and how mathematics is included in other areas of the curriculum.
- How well pupils use a wide range of information and communication technology (ICT) resources and the impact this has on their work.
- Whether teaching is challenging for all pupils.
- How staff in the Early Years Foundation Stage plan for effective use of the indoors and outdoors.

Information about the school

This is a smaller than average primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible to free school meals is below the national average and most pupils are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. Pupils are taught in three classes: Reception with Year 1; Years 2 and 3; and Years 4, 5 and 6. An independent management committee provides a nursery on the school site each day as well as before- and after-school care. These settings did not form part of the inspection but a report about the quality of their provision can be found on the Ofsted website. The school has Healthy School status and the International School Intermediate award.

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

Bolton Primary School is a good school at the heart of its community. Pupils blossom academically and personally. Pupils are keen to talk about how much they enjoy school and this is reflected in their very high rates of attendance. The school's provision for care, guidance and support and its links with a wide range of partners are outstanding. Parents and carers value very highly the education their children are getting and the outstanding manner in which the school engages with them. A typical comment is, 'I could not praise this school highly enough, it offers children a safe and friendly environment where they are extremely happy and make great progress.'

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, responding well to its warm and welcoming environment. Effective use of the indoor and outdoor provision is planned for. However, the quality of outdoor provision is less stimulating than the indoor provision. The use of the outdoor provision is not used consistently well enough to develop fully children's independent learning.

Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 6 is above average, reflecting good progress from their generally expected starting points. Pupils achieve well across the school because of good teaching and an engaging curriculum. Teachers have a good understanding of how well pupils are doing and use data to plan suitably challenging tasks for them. However, there are occasions when higher-attaining pupils are not challenged in mathematics in order to accelerate their learning. Lesson-planning incorporates a wide range of activities. However, there are too few practical activities in mathematics to actively engage pupils in their own learning. Pupils talk enthusiastically about their contribution to school. Their involvement with the wider community through activities such as raising funds for local, national and international charities is excellent. The school council is proud of the role it plays and is delighted that its suggestions to improve playtime activities have been acted upon. Pupils' understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle is first class and they appreciate the many opportunities they have to take part in fitness activities.

The headteacher's strong leadership and dedicated support from staff and the governing body have helped the school to build on its strengths and maintain its outstanding quality of care, guidance and support. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection in improving provision and raising attainment.

Self-evaluation is accurate and the outcomes are used effectively to target actions for further improvement. The school's capacity to carry on improving is therefore good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress in mathematics by:
 - ensuring that higher-attaining pupils are consistently well challenged in lessons
 - ensuring that pupils are more actively involved in learning through practical activities.
- Improve the quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage outdoor area and ensure that it is consistently well used by children to extend their independent learning.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils say they enjoy lessons. They are active and eager learners who achieve well. Their enjoyment is evident in their supportive approach to each other, which helps to make school a safe and very welcoming place. For example, in a lesson for Year 2 and Year 3 pupils looking at a book they were reading about an owl, the teacher planned different activities for pupils in small groups to explore the owl's adventures. Pupils talked easily with each other and they all gathered to share their findings and discuss patterns that emerged throughout the book. The teacher's probing questions extended pupils' learning as well as their language skills.

Due to the small numbers in different year groups, there can be some fluctuation in children's skills and knowledge when they enter the Early Years Foundation Stage. Generally they are broadly in line with what is expected for their age. However, their reading, writing and calculation skills are usually lower. Pupils make good progress so that when they leave school in Year 6 attainment is above average and sometimes significantly so. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress as a result of well-planned programmes of support which run smoothly because of the skilled and sensitive support from well-trained teaching assistants.

Pupils' high levels of attendance reflect their enjoyment of school and the supportive relationships that have been forged with parents and carers. Pupils are polite and well-mannered. They are rightly proud of the responsibilities they assume in the school by, for example, representing their year group on the school council or by becoming house captains. Pupils talk passionately about their jobs in school, particularly the importance of playtime monitoring when older pupils help teachers by taking turns to look after and play with younger children. Pupils have an excellent knowledge of how to be healthy because the curriculum and teachers promote this extremely well. The very supportive family atmosphere and attention to personal, social and health education help pupils to understand the consequences of their actions and how to stay safe. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and reflected in pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour, good respect for

adults and their awareness of the needs of others. With the wide range of skills pupils acquire and their high attendance, pupils are well-placed to move on to their next stage in education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is typified by very good relationships with pupils and good questioning by all adults to extend pupils' language and learning. Teachers are adept at spotting, and intervening, when pupils make mistakes. They use these opportunities to ensure full understanding and a grasp of ideas and concepts. Teachers' planning incorporates a range of learning activities for pupils but there are not always practical activities in mathematics to ensure that pupils are actively involved in learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and technology is used effectively to help bring lessons to life. Targets in English and mathematics are valued by pupils, as are the prompt cards, which pupils say are very useful in helping them to check their work at the end of lessons.

The good curriculum provides a wide range of learning experiences and is used well by teachers to underpin pupils' learning. Last year the school changed the way they design and plan the curriculum. Staff and pupils were equally involved and, as a result, there are now stronger links between subjects that add interest, fun and enjoyment to learning. There is a wide range of enrichment activities offering pupils the chance to add to their skills and interest through visits, visitors to school and by learning to play a musical instrument, for example. Extra-curricular activities, such as hand bell ringing, chess and scrabble as well as a number of sporting clubs, are well attended after school.

Pupils' welfare is given the highest priority, reflected in the comment of one parent who wrote, 'The school does everything it possibly can to help and care for children and is very quick to accommodate their on-going individual needs.' A range of specific support programmes is highly successful in meeting the needs of pupils with

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

special educational needs and/or disabilities. The care given to pupils is exemplary and partnerships with other agencies are thoroughly embedded in the work of the school. These excellent liaisons help to support pupils' well-being, as well their learning. Arrangements when children start school are extremely comprehensive, and through the excellent links with other local primary schools Year 6 pupils start secondary school with a network of established friendships.

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 effective leadership and management of the headteacher promote well the inclusive ethos of the school and provide a strong lead in promoting pupils' personal development. There is a strong sense of community with excellent partnerships between school and parents and carers. Teamwork is strong and staff share a united ambition to ensure that every child achieves his/her potential. Close monitoring of lessons and the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress means that the headteacher is well aware of what needs to be done to raise achievement further.

The governing body is proactive and plays an effective role in shaping the school's direction. It has a good understanding of how well pupils are doing as a result of asking challenging questions of the headteacher. Members of the governing body are extremely committed and provide good monitoring, support and challenge. The safeguarding of pupils' welfare is good and supported by clear policies that are rigorously implemented and well-integrated throughout all aspects of the school. The school is a cohesive community within which all groups are treated equally and there is no room for discrimination. The school actively promotes community cohesion through involving pupils in a wide range of activities to develop their understanding of the world around them. Areas for future development aimed at promoting engagement with a range of groups beyond the school and the immediate community have been identified. Links with local schools and other organisations make a very significant contribution to the curriculum and to pupils' personal development. The school has a very welcoming approach which embraces the wider community by sharing its resources generously. The school has forged excellent links with parents and carers who play a key role in the life of the school. Their views are frequently sought. For example, when the school was developing its website, parents and carers were consulted and their suggestions were incorporated into its design and content. Newsletters are used successfully to ensure that all parents and carers are kept up to date with school information.

These are the grades for the 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

Children settle quickly into the school because of the high-quality care and support they receive as well as the very good induction process. Reception children work alongside Year 1 children and enjoy a wide range of activities, because good planning ensures they are well catered for and both age groups are suitably challenged. For example, children found building an aeroplane and selecting the most appropriate tools to connect the various parts together very testing. They used the tools well and enjoyed the challenge of finding the right parts to go in the right places. Discussion helped this decision-making and the aeroplane was gradually built.

Children learn how to play together and socialise, establishing a politeness and courtesy that leads to purposeful relationships with adults and other children. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are good and ensure that planning reflects an understanding about how young children learn. Children are well-taught and good use is made of assessment in helping identify what children need to do next. As a result, they make good progress during their Reception Year so that by the time they reach Year 1 most have reached the levels expected for their age in most areas of learning. However, skills in reading, writing and calculation are generally somewhat lower. Children enjoy working and playing both indoors and outside. However, outdoor provision is not as effective as indoor provision because it is not used with enough frequency to develop children's independent learning.

Children's personal, social and emotional development is good; they behave well and are keen to learn. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because early assessment highlights their needs and good teaching support is provided. Staff are vigilant in ensuring that children's welfare needs are catered for fully.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation stage	2
Taking into account:	2
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 in the Early Years Foundation Stage	

Views of parents and carers

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. They feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and they are pleased with their children's progress. All are happy with the overall quality of their children's experience. Inspection findings support their views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bolton 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 inspector received 29 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 57 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	18	62	10	34	1	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	72	8	28	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	19	66	9	31	1	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	15	52	12	41	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	66	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	59	9	31	2	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	45	14	48	1	3	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)	17	59	10	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	52	12	41	1	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	62	9	31	1	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	59	9	31	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	18	62	11	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	72	7	24	1	3	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 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.



24 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bolton Primary School, Appleby-in-Westmorland – CA16 6AW

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed talking with you and watching you learn in lessons. We found that you have an excellent understanding of the importance of keeping healthy, and were very impressed with all the activities you do in school to keep you fit and your excellent attendance. Your behaviour is good and raising money for various charities is just one way in which you make an outstanding contribution to the community. Overall, we found that your school provides you with a good education, so that you are able to make good progress in your work. The excellent partnerships the school has with your parents and carers and with outside agencies, contribute well to this and your learning. We were particularly impressed with how caring everyone is, not just how well all the adults in school look after you but also how well you look after each other. We thought your system of helping at break time was terrific! Well done!

There are some things that we have asked your teachers to do to help to make your school even better. Firstly, we want your teachers to make sure that they always challenge you enough in mathematics lessons so that you learn more; secondly we want them to make sure that there are more practical activities in mathematics so that you are always busy; and thirdly, we are asking the school to improve how the outdoor area for Reception children is used to give you more opportunities to try out your own activities.

Congratulations on everything you do with the community and with other schools. We were amazed to find out about all the clubs you have after school and how people in your village help you, such as with hand bell ringing. We were really delighted that you said that you enjoy coming to school. Remember always to do your best and help your teachers. Thank you for helping us and for being so polite.

I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Sue Sharkey
Lead inspector

