

# Boxmoor Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	117107
<b>Local authority</b>	Hertfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379350
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 April 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Philip Mann HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	238
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Sue Markham
<b>Interim Headteacher</b>	Chris Krona
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 January 2008
<b>School address</b>	Cowper Road Boxmoor Hemel Hempstead HP1 1PF
<b>Telephone number</b>	01442 402244
<b>Fax number</b>	01442 399704
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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	18–19 April 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	379350



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Philip Mann

Her Majesty's Inspector

Nicola Southall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed 13 teachers teaching a total of 18 lessons, of which nine were joint observations with the interim headteacher. In addition the inspection team made short visits to other lessons to look at pupils' work and to review the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), literacy and numeracy skills. They also listened to pupils of lower ability in Year 2 read. Meetings were held with pupils in the school council, senior staff, middle managers and members of the governing body. Several discussions took place between inspectors and parents before school. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents including the school improvement plan, those related to self-evaluation, the monitoring of teaching, safeguarding and minutes of meetings of the governing body. Also, they analysed 137 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and others completed by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size for its type. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the proportion from minority ethnic groups is small. A few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who leave or join partway through their primary school education is below the level found nationally. A small minority of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in mathematics and English by the end of Year 6.

At the time of the inspection the school was led by an interim headteacher who had been in post for two days following the retirement of the previous headteacher. A substantive headteacher is due to take up the post later in the summer term.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>4</b>

## Key findings

- In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a notice to improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the ability of leaders and managers to take effective action in securing improvement in the quality of teaching and overall provision across the school.
- The school provides an acceptable standard of education. Its overall effectiveness is not better because the rate of improvement in teaching has been too slow to ensure all pupils make good progress from their above-average starting points. As a result, attainment in English and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 fell to broadly average levels in 2011. However, through the endeavour of middle leaders and good support from the local authority, provision has improved this year and attainment is now above average in Year 6. This means pupils are making satisfactory progress.
- The quality of teaching is satisfactory but inconsistent. Some inadequate teaching was observed, and little that was good. Too often tasks lack challenge for the most able pupils, and little use is made of information and communication technology (ICT) to engage pupils in their learning. However, in the Early Years Foundation Stage, teaching and learning are vibrant and consistently good.
- Behaviour is satisfactory overall, and good when teachers plan exciting and challenging activities for pupils. Pupils are keen to learn and play happily together. They know who to go to if they have a concern or feel bullied, because they are confident staff will help them.
- Leadership and management are ineffective. The monitoring of teaching lacks rigour and insufficient use is made of assessment data to track pupils’ progress, inform self-evaluation and challenge poor performance. As a result, the governing

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body is not able to ask challenging questions of school leaders. Improvement plans place insufficient emphasis on raising expectations, improving achievement and tackling areas of weaker performance. However, school leaders have created a positive climate for learning through a satisfactory curriculum and the appropriate promotion of the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the quality and consistency of teaching to accelerate progress and improve achievement in Key Stages 1 and 2, by ensuring that:
  - tasks are carefully matched to the different needs and abilities of all pupils and especially those who are more able
  - stimulating activities are planned in lessons that excite pupils, make best use of ICT and engage pupils fully in their learning.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - teaching and learning are monitored with greater frequency and rigour
  - action plans include clearly identified areas for improvement that can be successfully measured against outcomes for pupils
  - achievement data are monitored with rigour to support accurate self-evaluation
  - the role of the governing body in asking challenging questions of school leaders is strengthened.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The vast majority of parents and carers are pleased with the progress their child is making in English and mathematics. However, a small minority rightly express concerns that in the past the school has not placed sufficient emphasis on maintaining high achievement. The 2011 national test results confirmed that attainment in English and mathematics has fallen to broadly average levels since the previous inspection, when it was judged exceptionally high. This is because past weaknesses in teaching and learning were not tackled successfully by school leaders. However, inspection evidence confirms that the declining trend has been reversed during this academic year, and the attainment of pupils in Year 6 is now at above-average levels. This is because middle managers and subject leaders have implemented effective strategies such as weekly booster classes and effective marking to accelerate pupils' achievement. As a result, attainment is now above average and just above a third of the Year 6 pupils are predicted to achieve the higher Level 5 in English and mathematics this year in national tests. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is above average.

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This trend of improvement is also reflected in Year 5, where boys are now performing as well as girls in English and mathematics. The progress of other groups of pupils is satisfactory overall. This is because appropriate support is provided in class or small groups for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. Support of similar quality is provided for those who speak English as an additional language. Those known to be eligible for free school meals make similar progress to their peers nationally.

The effective teaching of phonics and early literacy skills in the Early Years Foundation Stage is built on appropriately to ensure attainment in reading is above average by the end of Key Stage 1. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make satisfactory progress in developing their reading and literacy skills. Older pupils write with accuracy and are able to write at length in a neat, cursive style. They are keen to improve their work, especially when the activities prepared for them are challenging. However, in several lessons the work for more-able pupils was too easy or teachers had not ensured that pupils had access to well-matched resources to extend their learning. For instance, in a lesson for Year 5 pupils to develop their use of more complex vocabulary as part of their work on *Treasure Island*, more-able pupils were not able to locate specific words because the dictionaries were not comprehensive enough.

Children in the Nursery Year make good progress in all areas of learning as a result of effective provision and good leadership. This good progress continues in the reception class. By the time they start in Year 1 over a third of the children exceed nationally expected levels in all areas of learning. For instance, they can complete simple additions up to 10 and read simple words with confidence. Personal and social skills are particularly well developed.

### **Quality of teaching**

The quality of teaching for all pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, is satisfactory overall. However, there is not enough good teaching to ensure pupils achieve well in all classes. The vast majority is satisfactory and there are some examples of inadequate teaching. In these weaker lessons teachers talk too much, and do not match work effectively to the needs of all pupils to ensure good progress. Furthermore, teaching assistants are not always used to best effect to support pupils' achievement and too often ICT is not used to support pupils' learning effectively. This was an issue identified at the last inspection. In the better lessons teachers make effective use of time and resources to engage pupils in their learning. They also review learning with pupils, either during or at the end of the lesson. This was demonstrated effectively in a literacy lesson for pupils in Year 3 where the teacher invited pupils to share differences and similarities about the stories read during the lesson. Such activities facilitate a good pace to learning. These judgements are mirrored by the views of some parents and carers, who expressed concerns about inconsistencies in teaching especially when a class is taught jointly by teachers. However, in contrast, a number valued the good teaching

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of other members of staff and noted the positive impact it has on their child's progress. For instance, many parents of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are particularly pleased with the quality of teaching for their child.

The positive relationships between staff and pupils, and among pupils themselves, are noticeable throughout the school. Furthermore, teachers endeavour to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding within all lessons. This is particularly successful in the teaching of music and personal and social education, where pupils feel confident to express themselves either on their own or in small groups.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour over time is satisfactory in lessons and around the school. Pupils respond well to clearly understood behaviour management procedures and say that they feel safe in school. However, pupils report that some low-level disruption occasionally occurs in lessons and specifically when teachers talk for lengthy periods. This was observed by inspectors in some lessons. The vast majority of parents feel that behaviour in, and around, the school is good but some feel that incidents of boisterous behaviour in the playground go unnoticed. Pupils say that instances of bullying such as name-calling and teasing do happen. However, they are infrequent and pupils say that when they do occur the staff deal with them promptly. Pupils are keen to come to school and attendance is above average. There have been no exclusions during the last reported school year.

During lessons pupils demonstrate respect and courtesy towards each other and adults. They respond particularly well to opportunities for small group work when asked to solve a problem, as seen in a lesson in Year 6 when preparing to write a biography of a sports personality. They respond well to opportunities to use initiative when learning independently, for example when using a computer for research. Such opportunities are limited in some classes. Pupils demonstrate an ability to listen well and this was exemplified by the whole school during an inspiring assembly led by the interim headteacher. All pupils sat in rapt silence while he told a story from the *New Testament* to emphasise the importance of friendship and tolerance.

The pupils respond well to the promotion of social development. They cooperate with their peers and adults well, and older pupils can give examples from the past where 'peer mediators' have found ways to resolve disagreements between pupils. Pupils are developing a willingness to reflect on their experiences and demonstrate an interest in their local community through charity work such as delivering harvest gifts. Their understanding of their place within a multicultural society is less well developed.

### **Leadership and management**

The impact of leadership on pupils' achievement since the previous inspection has been inadequate. This is because, although appropriate professional development

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opportunities have been made available to staff, weaknesses in teaching have not been tackled with rigour and determination and the rate of improvement since the previous inspection has been too slow. Issues related to the installation of ICT resources have been resolved but too often in lessons teachers make insufficient use of ICT to engage pupils in exciting and worthwhile activities. Self-evaluation in the past has been overgenerous and not fully informed by a rigorous analysis of data to identify trends and patterns in the performance of all groups of pupils. Expectations have been too low and consequently pupils' attainment fell over the three years up to 2011. Although there is an appropriate long-term plan for school improvement it neither effectively identifies how this decline is to be addressed nor how success is to be measured. The current group of senior and middle leaders works effectively as three established core curriculum teams. Led by the deputy headteacher, they meet regularly to identify further areas for improvement in the curriculum and tackle areas of underachievement. With the support of the local authority they have successfully implemented strategies to raise achievement at the end of Key Stage 2. Inspection evidence confirms that this has been successful. For instance, boys now demonstrate a greater willingness to write and standards have risen. However, these improvements are recent and have yet to be sustained under new leadership.

The curriculum is broad and balanced with satisfactory levels of enrichment through visits, visitors and cross-curricular theme weeks. There are some activities beyond lessons such as the school choir. However, a number of parents and carers expressed a wish for more extra-curricular activities. The pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enriched by well-led assemblies and opportunities to sing and make music. The tackling of discrimination and promotion of equality of opportunity are satisfactory. The leadership team tracks the progress of each pupil through several different formats to identify any underachievement. This information is not held in one comprehensive database, and this limits the ability of the school's leaders to analyse the data by groups to identify trends and patterns in performance.

The governing body is supportive of the school's work. It has established some useful links with the core curriculum teams, but governors' role in monitoring and challenging the work of the school is limited. Some policies are out of date and have not been reviewed. The governing body ensures that procedures for safeguarding are secure and applied with rigour.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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 April 2012

Dear Pupils

### **Inspection of Boxmoor Primary School, Hemel Hempstead, HP1 1PF**

Thank you for being so helpful and friendly when we visited your school, and for telling us your views in person and through the questionnaires some of you filled in. You work well with each other in class and play happily together even when it is wet outside! Many of you take a pride in your work and write neatly in your books. Your behaviour is satisfactory but some of you find it difficult to behave well when the teacher talks for too long in lessons. However, a number of you told us that teachers deal with this misbehaviour appropriately and any bullying is tackled quickly by the staff.

Good teaching in the Nursery and Reception Years gives you a good start in your reading and number work. However, some of you do not make the same good progress in other classes because teaching is not always good enough. In these lessons work is sometimes too easy and not enough use is made of computer work and other interesting activities to provide good levels of challenge. We have asked the teachers to make sure that the work planned provides plenty of challenge for all of you in all lessons. You can play your part by always trying your best in all you do and continuing to tell your teachers when you find the work too easy or too hard.

In the past, not enough has been done to make sure teaching is always good or better, in which means that the numbers of Year 6 pupils gaining Level 5 in English and mathematics before going on to secondary school has fallen. This is a significant weakness and as a result, the school has been issued with a 'notice to improve'. However, senior staff and middle managers have tackled these weaknesses well this year and improvements are already becoming evident. The governors are supportive of the staff in what they do. We have asked the governors to become more involved in monitoring the school's work so that they can be sure that improvements are taking place and that all of you achieve well during your time at the school.

Thank you again for welcoming us to your school and we send you our best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

Philip Mann  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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