

Bollington Cross CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111252
Local authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	395355
Inspection dates	10–11 July 2012
Lead inspector	Kathryn Dodd

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	122
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Smith
Headteacher	Julie Downing
Date of previous school inspection	20 May 2008
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Age group	5–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Kathryn Dodd

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by five teachers. The inspector held discussions with staff, groups of pupils and with members of the governing body. The inspector observed the school's work and reviewed documentation, including improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils, and a sample of pupils' work. The inspector analysed questionnaires completed by pupils and staff and analysed 64 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

Information about the school

Most of the pupils at this smaller than average-sized school are White British. Since the previous inspection, the number of pupils on roll has increased. Between the Reception class and Year 2, pupils are taught in single-age classes and between Years 3 and 6 they are taught in two mixed-age classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average, as is the proportion of pupils supported by school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs. The school meets the current floor standard, which sets the government's minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has been accredited with Artsmark, Activemark and the Inclusion Quality mark.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	1
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. It is not yet outstanding because the quality of the teaching of reading is variable and so progress, particularly of the more-able pupils in Years 1 and 2, is inconsistent.
- Achievement is good. When children start in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their skills are usually similar to the levels expected. By the end of Year 6, attainment is above average. That represents good progress. In English, pupils' current attainment in Year 6 is higher than last year. Attainment in reading and writing by the end of Year 2 is also improving, but the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading lags behind writing.
- The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. In writing and mathematics, teachers use their assessments to provide challenging tasks that meet pupils' needs and ensure pupils know how to improve. Pupils are less clear about how to improve their reading skills. In Years 1 and 2, progress is limited when activities for more-able pupils are insufficiently challenging.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Pupils are extremely polite, courteous, well mannered, and respectful. Their knowledge of how to keep themselves safe is impressive.
- Leaders ensure pupils' progress is assessed regularly and accurately. They use the information skilfully to pinpoint improvement priorities or any variances between pupil groups, year groups and subjects. The achievement of the more-able pupils is not reviewed as effectively as other groups', however. Leaders manage performance effectively by monitoring the quality of teaching regularly and accurately. The improved quality of teaching of writing, for example, has resulted in pupils' improved achievement. Efforts to monitor the impact of initiatives aimed at improving pupils' achievement in reading, especially in Years 1 and 2, are still developing.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels of attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 by:
 - ensuring staff make consistently good use of assessment information to plan and provide activities that challenge pupils, particularly the more-able
 - making sure pupils are clear how to improve their reading skills
 - improving the rigour with which leaders monitor the quality of teaching of reading
 - ensuring leaders track and analyse the progress of the more-able pupils more carefully, so they always reach their full potential.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Achievement is good. Small numbers of pupils in each year group means that attainment can fluctuate widely each year. Nevertheless, attainment by the end of Year 6 is usually above average. Pupils, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage and disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make good progress. That view is endorsed by all parents and carers in the inspection questionnaires and pupils fully agree.

In lessons, pupils behave extremely well. They are very keen to learn, responding eagerly to teachers' questions. Pupils enjoy their lessons, especially when activities are exciting, challenge their thinking, when working collaboratively, or discussing learning with their 'shoulder partners'. In an outstanding English lesson in Year 5/6, pupils reflected continually on whether their written work met their agreed 'success criteria'. They considered carefully how they could improve their work, suggesting improvements to one another. That contributed extremely well to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Pupils' progress slows occasionally when they work independently because they are not always clear about what they are intended to learn or how to be successful.

By the start of Year 1, an above-average proportion of children, usually, reach the expected levels of development. By the end of Year 2, an above-average proportion of pupils reach the nationally expected level of attainment in reading, writing, and mathematics. The proportion reaching the higher levels of attainment is higher in writing than in reading. Pupils' progress in reading, particularly of the more-able pupils in Years 1 and 2, is inconsistent. Nevertheless, a whole-school initiative aimed at improving achievement in reading is well under way. Older pupils demonstrate a clear enjoyment for reading books. That, along with good opportunities for pupils to practise their reading comprehension skills, contributes well to their good and improving achievement. Current attainment in Year 6 in reading is above average and, in Year 5, most pupils are already working at the levels expected at the end of Year 6.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching is good and some is outstanding. All parents and carers agree. They say they 'cannot praise the staff enough' and that staff are 'always helpful, approachable and flexible'. Teachers' enthusiasm, thoughtful organisation, and very positive relationships make a strong contribution to pupils' good progress. Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported well in lessons because activities are tailored closely to their needs and they receive effective guidance from teachers and support staff.

Teachers' ongoing encouragement for their pupils to develop resilience, confidence and independence contributes extremely well to pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Outstanding teaching is characterised by very high expectations, fast-paced, skilful, challenging, and well-targeted individualised questioning that keeps pupils on their toes. Occasionally, expectations of what younger more-able pupils will achieve are not always high enough to ensure they make consistently good progress.

In writing, teachers provide creative, challenging and motivating activities. The quality of marking in literacy is good, informing pupils precisely whether they are reaching their targets and suggesting precisely how pupils can improve. In mathematics, teachers provide a good range of practical activities that enable pupils to use and apply their mathematical skills. Pupils say they enjoy solving their 'maths mysteries'. Staff have undertaken training recently to strengthen their skills in teaching reading. Improved procedures to assess pupils' skills more regularly and carefully are now in place. However, teachers do not always make effective use of the information to identify next steps for the pupils, or plan activities to match their learning needs, especially to enable the younger more-able pupils to reach their full potential.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils' outstanding behaviour and awareness of safety enable them to enjoy their education to the full. Analysis of school behavioural records indicates that incidents of poor behaviour are extremely rare. Pupils are highly adept at managing their own behaviour. Their mature self-discipline and awareness of others creates a very happy environment, in which pupils grow in confidence, self-esteem and belief. Pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development shows in their exemplary behaviour and in their continual encouragement of one another to demonstrate key personal strengths, for example in perseverance and kindness. Pupils say that 'there is no racism, name-calling or bullying of any type'. They say that any unkindness is tackled swiftly and very effectively. Pupils are continually encouraged to share any issues, concerns, or worries and to resolve their own conflicts. Pupils say that their teachers are 'like really good friends whom they can trust and rely on'. Pupils say they come to 'a great school'. That is reflected in their wonderful attitudes and thirst for learning and in their attendance, which is consistently above average. Parents and carers, overwhelmingly, agree that good behaviour is usual and that their children feel safe. Pupils are extremely clear about how to keep themselves safe, both within and beyond school. Children in the Reception class talk maturely about how to keep themselves safe when they cross busy roads nearby as they walk to

their swimming lesson. Older pupils relish opportunities to make their school a safer, happier and healthier place to learn, such as by being part of the 'strength SCRUM', or as 'sports ambassadors'.

Leadership and management

This extremely caring, safe and supportive school reflects the commitment and enthusiasm of everyone to ensure pupils achieve well and to uphold strong, Christian-based 'core values'. Staff say 'every child really does matter'. That view is endorsed by parents and carers, who are overwhelmingly supportive of all aspects of the school's work. They say, for example, that their children 'come on in leaps and bounds and their confidence grows more than they could have imagined'.

Over time, the headteacher has provided a positive steer, maintaining a clear vision of where and how to improve achievement. Pupils' attainment in the current Year 6 has improved significantly, particularly in English. That demonstrates the school's commitment to promoting equality of opportunities by making sure that any gaps in attainment with national expectations are narrowed. It demonstrates also that there is a good capacity to improve. An accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness stems from a regular review of pupils' attainment and progress. Leaders use the outcomes from such activities astutely to influence improvement planning. Consequently, a concerted effort to boost pupils' attainment in reading is now under way. Even so, efforts to monitor the quality of the teaching of reading and to track the performance of the more-able pupils carefully are not yet fully effective. Leaders and the governing body collectively place a high priority on the professional development of staff, providing continuing opportunities for staff to share good teaching practices and for less-experienced subject leaders to develop their skills. Through effective performance management, staff are also held to account for making sure pupils make good progress. The governing body makes an effective contribution to driving improvement. It, too, strives continually for excellence and allocates funds to support improvement where it is most needed, such as in reading. The school's safeguarding procedures meet requirements.

The curriculum is good. It has outstanding enrichment opportunities. Extensive partnerships beyond school, for example, enhance the curriculum successfully in areas such as music and sport. The quality of artwork displayed throughout the school is of a high standard. An excellent range of clubs, trips into the locality, visitors into school, and residential visits, which start at a very young age, are offered. Pupils say the 'strengths' programme makes a 'huge difference', enabling pupils to develop a deep awareness of the feelings of others and to support and encourage one another. In writing, the curriculum provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to write creatively and at length, across the curriculum subjects and to write for a real purpose. Recent adaptations to the curriculum for reading are already under way. The 'reading passport' initiative, along with visits from local librarians, for example, is helping to encourage pupils to read more regularly and to develop a love of books. A new reading support programme aimed at accelerating the progress of pupils with the lowest levels of attainment in Years 1 and 2 is already paying dividends. Further curriculum adaptations are required to ensure that more-able pupils in Years 1 and 2 make consistently good progress in reading.

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).

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.



12 July 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bollington Cross CofE Primary School, Macclesfield, SK10 5EG

Thank you so much for the extremely warm welcome you gave me when I inspected your school. I enjoyed my time with you thoroughly. I was amazed at how polite, well-mannered, and courteous you all were, to me, your teachers, to one another, and other visitors in school, like the staff from the local library. You go to a good school. By Year 6, your attainment is above that expected for your age and you make good progress. These are just a few of the things that really impressed me:

- seeing your excellent behaviour
- finding out just how many of you have already travelled around the world with your 'reading passport' and that you are now reading more often
- hearing about how the 'strengths' programme and 'SCRUM group' helps you to support and encourage one another and that you feel totally safe
- seeing pupils in Year 5/6 class making excellent progress in writing and checking so very carefully whether you are reaching your writing targets
- seeing how grown up, sensible and confident Reception-Year children are already. Going swimming and on a residential trip at your age is very impressive!

I have asked that some improvements be made. These are to make sure that:

- more of you reach higher attainment in reading by the end of Year 2 and that you are always given activities that make you think very hard
- you are as clear about how to improve your reading skills as you are in writing
- adults with special responsibilities check more carefully whether you are making equally good progress and that you are taught equally well in reading.

You can help by making sure that you know what you need to do to improve your reading. You should always tell your teacher if the work you are given is too easy for you and, of course, keep reading and enjoying lots of books! I wish you all the best for a very bright and successful future.

Yours sincerely

Kathryn Dodd

Lead inspector

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