

Bolham Community Primary School

Bolham, Tiverton, Devon, EX16 7RA

Inspection dates 3–4 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils' progress and achievement in mathematics and writing are inconsistent and not yet good.
- In 2012, pupils, and particularly boys in Year 6, did not make enough progress from their starting points in Year 3 in English and mathematics.
- Teaching requires improvement because planning is not sharp enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Sometimes work given is too difficult or too easy and this limits pupils' progress.
- The pace of pupils' learning in lessons slows, for example, when teachers do not cover sufficient work, or do not expect pupils to do enough in the time available.
- Pupils are not always given enough help to enable them to set their own learning targets and judge for themselves the progress they make.
- Leadership and management require improvement because checks on the quality of teaching and professional development have not been sufficiently effective to rectify weaknesses identified.

The school has the following strengths

- Although the school was previously judged to be good, and standards have slipped, it is currently improving. Action taken by school leaders, through better teaching, is improving progress and closing the gap in performance between boys and girls.
- School leaders have taken effective action to improve the way young children learn letters and the sounds they make (phonics) so they are becoming more confident readers.
- Improvements introduced by leaders to encourage reading are strengthening pupils' progress. Older pupils read widely and often.
- Pupils feel safe and secure in school and free from bullying. Pupils say there are rarely any disputes or bad behaviour.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work, answer questions keenly in lessons and work together well. As a result, relationships are harmonious and respectful. Teachers manage classes well and treat pupils as individuals.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons and one part lesson, all of which were joint observations with the headteacher.
- Meetings were held with staff, members of the governing body and groups of pupils.
- A discussion was held with a representative of the local authority by telephone.
- The inspector took account of the 20 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View). Parents' views were also gathered from informal conversations.
- The inspector observed the school's work and looked at documents, including school improvement plans, school checks on teaching, records relating to attendance, and the school's data on pupils' progress. He also scrutinised samples of pupils' work.

Inspection team

Peter Clifton, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school with pupils attending mainly from the local area.
- The pupils are taught in four classes; Reception and Year 1, Years 1 and 2, Years 3 and 4 and Years 5 and 6.
- Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported by school action is average; the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in the care of the local authority, pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families, is below average. Currently, the school has no pupils who are in the care of the local authority or any children from service families.
- The headteacher started in the school in September 2011.
- Several new staff joined the school in September 2012.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school does not provide access to any alternative or specialised provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, so that pupils' attainment and progress, particularly in mathematics and writing, improve further, by:
 - making sure that the pace of learning in lessons is brisk at all times, for example, by increasing the expectations about what can be produced in the time available
 - improving teachers' planning so that activities in lessons meet the differing needs of all pupils in the class, particularly boys and more-able pupils, making sure that work is not too easy or too difficult
 - giving pupils more help so that they can set their own learning targets and judge for themselves the progress they make.
- Strengthen the impact of leadership and management by:
 - driving through improvements in teaching more robustly, for example, by closer checking on the learning and progress of different groups of pupils in lessons so they make good progress
 - giving opportunities for teaching staff to observe high quality practice and implement improvements in their own classrooms.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2012, pupils' achievement and progress in Year 6, from their different starting points in Year 3, were below expectations. Boys' attainment was below that of girls. The progress made by pupils eligible for the pupil premium was similar to other pupils. In Year 2, attainment in writing was weaker than in reading and mathematics.
- Pupils typically start school with the expected levels of knowledge, skills and understanding for their ages. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is average. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is also broadly average.
- Results in last year's Year 1 phonics screening check were well below national expectations. The school established a more robust and consistent system for teaching reading skills, so that now, pupils make better progress in developing reading and writing skills.
- The school's records show that, for all groups, pupils' progress is now strengthening, particularly in reading. This includes disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and those pupils eligible for the pupil premium. The gap in performance between boys and girls is closing. However, pupils' progress and achievement in mathematics and writing remain inconsistent and are not yet good.
- The progress of pupils in the current Year 6 is on track to be markedly better than it was in 2012. Their progress in reading, writing and mathematics is currently in line with, or better than, that expected.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage work well alongside those in Year 1. They listen well as a whole group and, for example, enjoyed learning about different historical characters in a story based on castles. This helped to develop their vocabulary.
- Older pupils are developing good reading habits; they express preferences for different authors and appreciate the broad range of e-books and books from the library. They say that they are encouraged to read different types of books and are introduced to new authors.
- Leaders have identified gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding in mathematics and are working to close these. There are plenty of opportunities for pupils to apply basic skills to solve problems. Pupils across Key Stage 2, for example, explored different ways to multiply numbers and find the most efficient method confidently.
- In 2012, there were insufficient numbers of Year 6 pupils eligible for the pupil premium to make any valid comparison about attainment.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- Teaching is not yet sufficiently strong to promote good progress across the school. Activities planned to promote learning are not always matched well enough to meet the needs of different groups of pupils. Sometimes work given is too difficult or too easy. This inhibits pupils' progress and occasionally pupils lose interest.
- There are times in lessons when the pace of learning slows, for example when teachers do not cover sufficient work in the time available. On a few other occasions, not enough is expected from pupils. For example, in Key Stage 1, more-able pupils are not always challenged enough to write at the higher National Curriculum levels.
- Pupils have targets on the front of their books, and marking provides information about what can be improved. However, targets and feedback are not used sufficiently well in some lessons, and as a result, pupils are not given enough support to rectify errors or make improvements. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to set their own targets for improvement and check on their own progress.
- There are examples of teaching assistants providing sensitive support to help pupils, including those who are disabled or have special educational needs, to stay focused on their work, solve

problems in mathematics and improve writing skills.

- Relationships between staff and pupils are strong and teachers manage pupils sensitively. Learning typically takes place in a very positive environment and as a result the pupils contribute their ideas confidently in lessons.
- Teachers promote independence in learning well. Pupils work together well in classes and learn from each other. This was a strong feature of learning in a mathematics lesson, for example, when the pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked together to solve multi-step problems.
- Talk is used well to help pupils to express and develop their ideas. Children in Reception readily say what they think and use new vocabulary well. A consistent feature of lessons across the school is the effective use of discussion which helps the pupils to clarify their thinking.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- The pupils' good behaviour and positive relationships reflect the school's care and sensitive management of pupils' behaviour. They know that discrimination is not tolerated. They play harmoniously together at break and lunchtimes showing concern for each other's well-being.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above average. The pupils say they feel safe in school and nearly all parents confirm this. There is very little evidence of bullying incidents from discussion with the pupils or in the school's records. Pupils are knowledgeable about different forms of bullying, including e-bullying, which has been a recent focus of attention for both pupils and parents.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and value the positive comments made by staff about their work. Pupils are keen to show what they know and understand and answer questions enthusiastically. They quickly get on with tasks when asked by teachers and other adults. They particularly like using 'tablets' to help with their work.
- Parents and staff are supportive of the school. All parents spoken to, and their responses in questionnaires, confirm that they would recommend it to others, and most indicate that their child feels happy. There are examples of additional help provided by staff to support individual pupils' emotional needs which have been particularly effective.
- Pupils say staff are helpful and that there are only a few occasions when their learning is interrupted by inappropriate behaviour. Behaviour is not outstanding because in lessons, some pupils, mainly boys, occasionally lose interest in tasks when they are not sufficiently engaged and need to be brought back on track. This inhibits their learning.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management have not ensured that teaching and achievement have improved enough to reach the required basic standard of being good. Observations of teaching provide staff with information about strengths and weaknesses, but this has yet to have the desired effect of ensuring that learning activities meet the needs of different groups of pupils equally well. Teachers do not have enough opportunities to observe best practice to help them to improve their teaching.
- There are appropriate plans to improve pupils' reading, writing and mathematics skills. To date, more rapid progress has been made in reading than in writing and mathematics. Staff are united in their support for change and improvement and are keen to learn from each other.
- The headteacher has improved the way the progress of individual and different groups of pupils are tracked. As a result, additional support has been well targeted to ensure that pupils do not fall behind. Meetings are held with staff to discuss the progress of pupils in their class and what can be improved.
- Topic work promotes extended writing activities. The topics chosen, and the use of information and communication technology, are helping to engage the interests of boys. Pupils are encouraged strongly to value each other's differences and they clearly understand the code of

behaviour. Music is a strength of the school and pupils sing together, in parts, with considerable assurance.

- The local authority has provided enhanced support following analysis of the school's results. This support has been well targeted and is helping the school to improve pupils' achievement.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors have undertaken an external review of governance in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved. As a result, they have recently attended training to strengthen their understanding about interpreting progress data and how pupils' achievement compares with national averages, including those pupils eligible for the pupil premium. They are now able to provide a greater challenge to leaders about the progress that pupils make in different classes. Their arrangements to hold teachers fully to account have only recently been developed, as have decisions about whether or not teachers should move up the salary scale. Governors monitor the budget well and the school has a small amount of money held in reserve. Decisions about spending are carefully evaluated. Governors make sure that they know and follow the required procedures about safeguarding children.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113337
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	413006

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	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Chris Lines
Headteacher	Denise Woodgate
Date of previous school inspection	26 November 2008
Telephone number	01884 253576
Fax number	01884 253576
Email address	admin@tiverton-bolham-primary.devon.sch.uk

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