

Bolton Parish Church CofE Primary School

Kestor Street, Bolton, Lancashire, BL2 2AN

Inspection dates 10–11 September 2014

| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| | This inspection: | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Leadership and management | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Quality of teaching | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Requires improvement | 3 |
| Early years provision | | Requires improvement | 3 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Although leadership and management are improving, over time they have not been good enough to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is not sufficiently well-developed, nor is their understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Information on exclusions is not fully shared with appropriate staff or governors. The effectiveness of the school's work to improve behaviour over time is yet to be fully evaluated.
- Over the last two years, pupils' attendance has been below the national average.
- Not all pupils, including disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and disadvantaged pupils, make consistently good progress across Key Stage 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching does not always stretch pupils to achieve to the very best of their abilities. Work provided for the most-able pupils is not always challenging enough.
- The quality of marking is inconsistent and pupils are unsure about what next steps to take to improve their work.
- Activities provided for pupils in class are not always stimulating or engaging.
- By the time pupils left school at the end of Year 6 in 2014, their attainment in reading and writing was average. Given their starting points at the beginning of Year 3, this shows that their achievement requires improvement.
- A full programme of support is yet to be developed to enhance the work of the early years manager and staff. Children's performance in the early years is not assessed accurately enough.

The school has the following strengths

- The acting and executive headteachers have had a strong impact on recent school performance and have helped to secure the improved behaviour of pupils and good staff morale.
- Senior and middle leaders are very effective in their roles and within the past year have had a positive impact on improving teaching and thus raising standards.
- Governors are increasingly holding teachers to account for the achievement of pupils.
- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) is good. Pupils' performance in the phonics screening check has been above average for the last two years.
- The proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling is above average.
- Pupils say that they feel safe, and that the school is much improved this term.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 13 lessons or parts of lessons, as well as the teaching of small groups of pupils, and sessions aimed at helping pupils to learn to read. Two observations were carried out jointly with the acting headteacher.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6, and held discussions with pupils from across the school. Pupils' work in books was scrutinised during lessons and separately with the acting headteacher.
- Inspectors took account of 12 responses to the online questionnaire, (Parent View). A meeting was held with four parents, and discussions took place with parents at the start of the school day. Inspectors looked at 13 questionnaires completed by members of staff.
- Meetings were held with six governors, including the Chair and the vice-chair of the Governing Body and a local authority school improvement partner. A telephone discussion was held with the school's education consultant.
- Various school documents were examined. These included: external evaluations of the school's work, reports to the governing body by the local authority school improvement service and the school's independent consultants, data on pupils' progress, records of pupils' attendance, the school's review of its own performance, records of the school's checks on the quality of teaching, development plans, behaviour records and safeguarding documentation (information about keeping pupils safe and child protection).

Inspection team

Lenford White, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Clare Daniel

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is well below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils for whom the school receives pupil premium funding is well above average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals and those who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is more than twice the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the previous inspection, there has been a number of new appointments to the school, including three teachers and three teaching assistants. The deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher have both been appointed within the last year.
- Currently the school is led by an acting headteacher and an executive headteacher from St. Paul's Church of England Primary School. Over the last seven months they have supported the school in a number of ways through sharing good practice in teaching, providing support to implement a new curriculum and reviewing the school's systems for monitoring and managing pupils' behaviour.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is at least good and in so doing raise attainment and improve pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that activities in class always match pupils' skills and abilities, including those of the most able
 - ensuring marking provides pupils with clear guidance on how they can improve their work, and ensure teachers check that pupils have acted on their advice
 - ensuring that activities provided for pupils in class are always stimulating and engaging.
- Ensure the full development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in Key Stage 1 and 2 by:
 - providing greater opportunities for pupils to explore such issues through their learning
 - enhancing pupils' knowledge and understanding of life in modern Britain.
- Improve pupils' attendance so that it at least matches that of all schools nationally by stepping-up initiatives in this area, including working more closely with parents.
- Ensure that pupils' behaviour continues to improve by:
 - evaluating the effectiveness of actions taken to improve behaviour
 - making sure that all information on exclusions is shared with appropriate staff and governors.
- Improve the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the early years by:
 - fully implementing a programme of training and support for the early years staff
 - ensuring that the achievement of children is accurately assessed and shared with parents.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management requires improvement because over time it has not been good enough to ensure that pupils achieve consistently well. The school is led and managed by an acting headteacher and an executive headteacher. Both have been in post since the beginning of the academic year. However, they have had a much longer association with the school through the support that they have provided as part of the Deployment of Specialist Leader of Education programme since its previous inspection.
- New school leaders worked closely with staff over the summer holidays to ensure that the school's new curriculum was ready to be implemented at the start of term and to make a number of physical changes to the school building to ensure, for example, that classrooms in the early years were safe places for children to learn.
- The assistant and deputy headteachers have been in post for about a year. They are effective in their roles and have helped to secure the above-average attainment of the current Year 6 pupils in mathematics and punctuation, grammar and spelling.
- Middle leaders say that they are very appreciative of the professional development and training that they have received. They have worked successfully to help recently-qualified teachers to ensure that pupils' behaviour in class is good and have had an important role in organising and supporting teachers through regular pupil progress meetings.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is not as well-developed as it should be. Collective worship of a Christian nature takes place on a regular basis, and events such as Eid and Diwali are celebrated. However, pupils' understanding of life in modern Britain is underdeveloped and opportunities are missed to celebrate the rich religious and cultural diversity within the school.
- The school's systems for monitoring the quality of teaching are in the process of being revised. Up until recently, senior leaders' guidance to teachers on how they can improve has not been precise enough to ensure that all teaching was good. Similarly, performance management targets have not always held teachers closely enough to account for the performance of their pupils.
- The school's new curriculum has been fully implemented this term, after a trial period. Senior leaders have been trained to check its effectiveness in raising standards. However, only a limited amount of pupils' work was available to enable inspectors to fully assess how well reading, writing and mathematics are being promoted across the curriculum.
- The school currently offers a limited number of after-school clubs for pupils and is in the process of planning a programme of activities and educational visits, aimed at broadening pupils' experiences.
- A number of educational consultants have worked with the school to, for example, review the quality of teaching and learning. The local authority is currently helping governors to become more effective in their roles.
- Safeguarding procedures are followed closely and meet requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors know that the school is on a journey, and that while teaching and standards attained by pupils have improved in some areas, reading for example, they are not yet consistently good. Governors are eager to improve and have taken decisive action to recruit staff. The current senior leadership arrangement is proving to be an effective medium-term solution, while governors explore a number of options in order to secure a permanent headteacher.
 - Governors know that the small-group support offered to disadvantaged pupils is making a difference, and helping to improve their performance. They know that the quality of teaching is improving because they spend time in school talking to teachers and looking at pupils' work. Until recently, data presented to governors on pupils' performance was limited. This has improved, and they now have a better understanding of how the school's performance compares with others nationally.
 - Information presented to governors on teachers' performance is improving. Governors use this to help them to decide if teachers are to be awarded pay increases. Governors have taken advantage of a range of training opportunities and are increasingly keeping themselves up to date with new developments in education. They have ensured that the primary school sports fund is well spent and have enlisted the support of physical education specialists to promote pupils' health and well-being, improve participation in physical education activities and to coach teachers and improve the teaching of sports.

The behaviour and safety of pupils requires improvement

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Although they behave well in and around the school, over time pupils' behaviour requires improvement as demonstrated by the large number of exclusions recorded during 2013–2014. However, pupils are of the opinion that behaviour has recently changed and that it is now usually good.
- The school's new behaviour policy has had an immediate impact on pupils' behaviour, especially in class, where it is consistently good. All pupils know how the new traffic light behaviour system works and say that they like to obtain 'proud cards' for their good behaviour.
- Pupils are polite and courteous. They enjoy showing visitors around their school and are eager to talk about their work and share what they are learning. Pupils are orderly during assemblies and collective worship and behave sensibly during lunch and at break-times. Pupils are inquisitive and like to celebrate the achievements of their school mates.
- The school's work to ensure that pupils are safe and secure requires improvement.
- Pupils' attendance has been below average for the last two years. Senior leaders are well aware of this and are reviewing the effectiveness of actions aimed at ensuring that pupils and parents are fully aware of the importance of good attendance.
- Pupils are adamant that bullying is rare and say that they are confident to talk to any member of staff if they have concerns. They know that it is wrong, to treat anybody differently because of the colour of their skin, or because of what they believe in. However, their knowledge of the impact of different forms of discriminatory behaviour is still developing.
- Parents are of the opinion that their children are safe at school. They say that they have no concerns about their children's health and well-being because they are well looked after by school staff. Teachers manage behaviour well and ensure that school rules are consistently applied.
- Pupils know how to stay safe while using computers, electronic devices and mobile phones. They know that cyber bullying can take place on-line and define it as, 'When you are on a computer and someone says mean words to you or when you send bad texts'.
- Pupils understand some dangers well and say that visitors, for example fire-fighters, have come to school to talk to them about fire safety. However, too few opportunities are available for them to develop a comprehensive understanding of risks associated with drinking or smoking or of how to stay safe around the waterways that run close to the school.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- The quality of teaching has improved since the previous inspection. However, it is not yet good enough to ensure that all pupils make at least good progress across the school.
- Pupils have opportunities to gauge how well they have done by the time they finish their work. However, learning activities are not always set at the right level of challenge, and pupils are not always stretched to achieve to the very best of their ability. This is particularly the case with the most able pupils, and was exemplified in a mathematics lesson where pupils were assessing which of two sets of numbers was greater, or smaller. Although pupils were engaged in different activities, some comparing three-digit numbers and others four, activities were not challenging enough for the most able.
- However, tasks set for pupils are beginning to be more challenging, as in a Year 5 English class where all pupils showed an exceptionally good understanding of myths and legends as they skilfully compared and noted the similarities and differences between the story of Prometheus and the story of the Minotaur.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and is always up to date. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent and there is not always clear enough guidance to pupils on how they can improve their work. In addition, pupils do not always act upon the advice they have been given. As a result, not all pupils know how to improve their work.
- Teaching assistants are very skilled at working with disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who have English as an additional language. As a result, most of these pupils achieve well over time.
- Most pupils who spoke with inspectors said that they enjoyed learning. However, tasks and activities are not always stimulating enough to ensure that all pupils are constantly engaged in learning and improving their skills in reading, writing and mathematics.

The achievement of pupils requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because over the last three years pupils' attainment and progress have fluctuated at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. In 2014, standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and mathematics improved at the end of Key Stage 1. By the end of Key Stage 2, standards improved most in reading and grammar, punctuation and spelling and are better than at the time of the previous inspection.
- The teaching of reading has improved and the impact of this is evident in improving achievement in reading. Pupils can name a wide range of authors and discuss different writing styles. The less-able readers are skilled in using their knowledge to sound out and read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils make good progress in mathematics. A greater than average proportion of pupils attain the higher levels in this subject because mathematics is mostly well taught, and pupils understand how to apply their skills to problem-solving activities and to real-life situations, such as shopping.
- Writing is not as strong at the end of Key Stage 2 as it has been in previous years. While inspection evidence shows that pupils regularly engage in writing long pieces of work, advice and guidance on how they can improve are inconsistent.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well across the school. Previous gaps between the performance of boys and girls in 2013, in reading for example, no longer exist. This is because teachers regularly monitor the progress of all groups of pupils and provide additional support to any pupils who are at risk of falling behind.
- Well-targeted training for teachers and teaching assistants has been effective in ensuring that gaps are continually closing. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates in Year 6 for example, are narrower than gaps between similar groups of pupils nationally. In 2014, there were no gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their classmates in reading, writing, or mathematics and their overall performance was close to that of non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.
- Support for pupils from minority ethnic groups and those with English as an additional language is good. Once fully integrated into the school, the achievement of these pupils is at least as good as that of their schoolmates.
- Evidence from lesson observations, work in books and school data indicate that disabled pupils or those with special educational needs make varied progress across different year groups from often very low starting points. Training offered to the school special educational needs coordinator is helping to ensure that these pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Better teaching has helped to ensure that the progress of the most able is improving. In 2014, the performance of higher-attaining pupils improved at the end of both Key Stages 1 and 2 and particularly in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling at the end of Key Stage 2.

The early years provision

requires improvement

- The school was not able to provide reliable enough data for the inspection team to establish either the precise skills or abilities of children in different areas of learning as they enter the school's nursery, or the rate of progress that they make through the early years. However through a close scrutiny of children's work, as well as discussions and observations, a picture emerges which indicates that children enter the nursery with the skills and abilities typical for their age.
- While the majority of children, including those with disabilities and special educational needs and those for whom the school receives additional funding, progress well through the Nursery and Reception classes, not all, including the most-able children, make as much progress as they should. Approximately half of all children enter Year 1 with the skills and abilities typical for their age.
- After a period of instability, the leadership and management of the early years has improved. This is because the early years manager is now allowed the flexibility to apply her considerable knowledge and experience to ensure good teamwork between staff and an improved curriculum for the children. A full programme of training and support is in the process of being implemented for early years staff.
- Several changes have taken place this year to ensure that the physical environment of the early years provision is both safe and secure. During the inspection, staff were in the process of making indoor and outdoor learning areas stimulating and conducive to good learning.
- Children work very well together and enjoy their learning. Some activities are taught directly by adults and some are organised by the children themselves.
- Children learn in a happy and safe environment which helps them to develop a range of speaking, listening and communication skills. They are inquisitive, and have good skills in using information and communication technology.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils from a wide range of cultural and religious backgrounds work exceptionally well together, listen to each other and share books, toys and resources.
- Pupils with English as an additional language are very well supported. They enjoy their learning and make good progress through the early years.

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

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| Unique reference number | 105229 |
| Local authority | Bolton |
| Inspection number | 432108 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary aided |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 246 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Wallington |
| Headteacher | Debra Meekings |
| Date of previous school inspection | 31 January 2013 |
| Telephone number | 01204 333433 |
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