

Bolham Community Primary School

Bolham, Tiverton, EX16 7RA

Inspection dates 6–7 May 2015

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The headteacher, supported by other staff and governors, has improved teaching and achievement substantially since the previous inspection.
- Attainment in reading and mathematics has improved, particularly at Key Stage 1, where it is now above average.
- Teaching is of good quality. Pupils achieve well over time.
- All groups of pupils, including the most able, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make better than expected progress.
- Pupils behave well and feel very safe in school. Attendance is above average.
- Pupils greatly enjoy both lessons and the visits, such as those made to Parliament, the Tate Gallery and other attractions in London.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning systematically and has developed increasingly effective methods of assessing pupils' progress.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also strengthens pupils' appreciation of British values well.
- Children in the early years are taught well and make good progress.
- Pupils enjoy a good range of high quality opportunities in music, art and sport.
- Parents support the school and recognise the improvements made since the previous inspection.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Progress in writing is less strong than in reading and mathematics. Their writing skills are not developed well enough in subjects outside of English in Years 5 and 6.
- Teachers' planned activities occasionally do not ensure that pupils achieve to their full potential.
- Teachers, when marking work, do not consistently give pupils precise enough information on how well they have done and how they can improve the work.
- Pupils do not consistently respond directly to their marking.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed pupils' learning in five lessons, taught by four teachers. Four of the lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher. The inspector heard pupils read and looked in detail at pupils' work.
- The inspector held meetings with pupils, staff and the Chair of the Governing Body. He also held a meeting with three other governors and had a telephone conversation with a representative of the local education authority.
- The inspector took account of 37 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 10 questionnaires returned by staff.
- The inspector looked at a range of documents, including minutes of governing body meetings, the school's view of its own effectiveness, its planning for improvement and data on pupils' current attainment and progress. The inspector looked at information relating to safeguarding.

Inspection team

John Laver, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Bolham Community Primary is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is well below average and there are none in Year 6. The pupil premium is additional government funding to support pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- There are four mixed-age classes. Children in Reception attend full time in a class alongside some Year 1 pupils.
- The school hosts a breakfast club and an after-school club. Both are run independently of the school and did not form part of this inspection.
- There have been significant changes in personnel in this small school since the previous inspection. There have been several changes to the governing body. Three members of the teaching staff joined the school at the beginning of this year. There have also been recent changes in middle leadership at subject leader level.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching and pupils' progress by:
 - ensuring that the activities which teachers plan for lessons always have the right level of challenge, so that all pupils consistently reach their potential
 - spreading the best practice in marking throughout the school so that pupils know how well they have done, act upon the marking and know exactly how to improve their work
 - ensuring Years 5 and 6 pupils improve their writing in subjects other than English.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has made rapid improvements to the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement. Staff, most of whom are quite new to the school, strongly support the drive for improvement, as evident from discussions and their questionnaires returned during the inspection. Governors also strongly support the leadership in moving the school forwards, although the school is not yet achieving outstanding outcomes.
- The leadership, because it has the strong backing of staff, governors and parents, has successfully created a culture in which good behaviour has been sustained and teaching has been improved. Teachers welcome the strong and supportive leadership which the headteacher provides.
- The headteacher checks the quality of teaching and learning regularly. Since the previous inspection, subject leaders have also become much more closely and effectively involved in analysing pupils' achievement in their subject areas and are helping to raise attainment and improve progress.
- The headteacher rigorously manages staff performance. She expects staff to produce positive results. Staff are aware that the school links pay to progress.
- There are now many opportunities for staff to develop their expertise. This comes partly from working with schools in the local learning community and from opportunities which the local authority provides.
- The local authority maintains close links with the school, providing useful support and advice for the headteacher, other staff and governors.
- The leadership is actively putting the new National Curriculum in place and well advanced in developing a new system to assess pupils' progress.
- Pupils enjoy a wide range of high quality opportunities to learn, and enjoy their time in school. Music is one of the school's strengths, with all pupils learning to play a musical instrument. The school choir has a high reputation in the local community and beyond.
- The school employs specialist sports and art teachers. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the sporting opportunities. The leadership has spent the additional primary sport premium on improving staff expertise in teaching sport and providing a wider range of sporting opportunities for pupils. This has resulted in increasing pupil participation in sport, higher standards and more success in competitions.
- The leadership has used pupil premium funding to increase the support it gives to the very few eligible pupils, who consequently make good progress.
- The school's commitment to equal opportunities for all is evident in the good progress made by all pupils, regardless of ability or background, as well as in the provision of the wide range of activities for pupils both inside and outside school. The school does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.
- The school makes good use of its relationships with other local schools. For example, staff meet their counterparts elsewhere to support their own practice. Pupils benefit from participating with pupils from other schools in activities such as the Jaguar project, which encourages pupils to construct a vehicle as part of a national competition; and the Exmoor Challenge, which provides a demanding physical challenge on the nearby moor.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, pupils raise funds for charities. The school arranges for its pupils to visit the Houses of Parliament and the Exeter mosque, and these visits have improved pupils' understanding of British democracy and how other religions operate in Britain.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain and the school gives them a clear understanding of British values. Because the General Election was taking place during the inspection, pupils discussed the concept of democracy and how this related to their own experience of electing members of the school council and making decisions about school procedures.
- The school meets all safeguarding requirements effectively. Both staff and pupils are well aware of safety procedures. The leadership regularly updates staff about their responsibilities. The school checks attendance carefully so that it can follow up any concerns.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governing body is very effective in carrying out its responsibilities. It has undergone several changes of personnel since the previous inspection. Governors are knowledgeable about all aspects of the school, including the quality of teaching, the progress of all groups of pupils and how well they do in comparison with other schools. Governors' knowledge comes from their extensive involvement in the life of the school. In addition to governors' meetings, governors go into lessons, talk regularly with staff and pupils and take part in activities such as school outings and residential visits. Governors make sure that they carry out their responsibilities for safeguarding and get appropriate training. They have good

training opportunities, both from the local authority and from within the local learning community of schools. Governors understand the positive impact which pupil premium funding is having on pupils' performance, both in terms of progress and the opportunities these pupils have to join in events outside of lessons. Governors also check the impact of sport funding. Governors challenge the leadership to justify decisions made on matters such as resourcing and pupils' progress. They also supervise the procedures by which the leadership manages and rewards staff performance. Governors have supported the leadership well in tackling previous underperformance, particularly in teaching. The governing body ensures financial stability for the school. Governors now play a valuable role in supporting and further promoting continued school improvement.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Attendance is above average and pupils enjoy coming to school. They told the inspector that they liked everything about the school, including the interesting lessons and other activities such as sports coaching and competitions. Parents confirm that behaviour is good most of the time. Most pupils are very keen to learn.
- Pupils behave well in lessons, although behaviour is not outstanding because there are a few pupils who do present challenges and whose behaviour has to be carefully managed. Behaviour around the school is good. Pupils say that the occasional incidents are dealt with quickly.
- The older pupils like responsibility. They talk enthusiastically about the school council and the process of being elected. They enjoy acting as mentors and prefects. They like helping younger children in the playground. Some pupils have formed a 'friendship club' to help pupils who are on their own to join in activities.
- Pupils very much enjoy the range of clubs and trips, including the residential experiences.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils and their parents believe that the school is a very safe place, and the inspector agreed. The school is a harmonious community in which pupils get on well with each other and with staff.
- Pupils understand how to keep safe. They understand about different types of bullying. They insist that bullying is not an issue in the school. The school reinforces messages about safety in lessons, assemblies and through visitors. In recent years there have been no racist or homophobic incidents, nor any exclusions for bullying.
- There are secure procedures in place, for example to check on attendance.
- There are good links with outside services to meet the needs of vulnerable pupils when necessary.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The teaching staff relatively new to the school have quickly settled in. The improvements are evident from the evidence of assessment, from the leadership's record of its checks on teaching and the evidence of progress in pupils' work over time.
- Teachers ensure that phonics sessions (teaching letters and sounds) have a good impact on developing pupils' language skills. Staff also teach reading effectively. Pupils read regularly and teachers encourage parents to support reading at home. Pupils enjoy a good selection of books.
- Staff teach mathematics much more effectively than at the time of the previous inspection. There has been a concentrated and rapid focus on raising standards and improving progress in mathematics, for example by introducing more problem-solving activities.
- Staff teach writing more effectively, particularly in some classes where writing is linked with different subjects in the curriculum, for example in history. In Years 5 and 6, pupils do not write more extensively in a range of subjects other than English and so increase the rate of progress in writing further.
- The school makes sure that some other subjects are taught very well. These include sport, art and music, and specialist teaching ensures that pupils learn well in these subjects.
- Staff teach the few disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs well, sometimes in lessons and sometimes in individual or small group work outside the classroom. This has boosted the progress of these pupils well in English and mathematics.
- The very few pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding are also taught well, benefiting for example from

some of the additional reading resources which the school has purchased.

- Most of the time, the most-able pupils learn well, and this is evident in their results. However, occasionally teachers do not plan activities effectively for the mixed-age classes and the wide range of ability, which restricts pupils' achievement in those particular lessons. This occurs, for example, when the most-able pupils spend unnecessary time on relatively easy work before getting on to more demanding and interesting activities which they already have the confidence and ability to handle.
- Staff have benefited from good training. Teachers use assessment well to set targets for pupils and apply them to improve their learning at an appropriate rate for most of the time. Teachers also frequently mark pupils' work conscientiously and accurately. Training carried out with teachers from local schools has given teachers more expertise in assessment. However, there are still some inconsistencies in the quality of marking. Whilst often helpful, sometimes it does not give a clear indication of how well pupils have done and precisely how they can improve their work. There is also variable practice in getting pupils to act upon teachers' marking in a way that would reinforce their learning effectively.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children get off to a good start in Reception, where they are taught well and make good progress. This good progress is maintained through the rest of the school. The progress of pupils between Years 3 and 6 has improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- There has been a trend of good achievement in Key Stage 1 over time. In Key Stage 2, progress in the past has been more uneven, as evident in test results. This has been partly due to deficiencies in teaching. However, results have also been affected by the small cohorts of pupils, which have varied from year to year in ability. This means that statistical data have to be used with caution. What is clear is that overall progress has improved considerably for pupils of all levels of ability, and particularly for the most able, many of whom now make much better than expected progress.
- Attainment and progress in reading are strong. Many pupils in all year groups read fluently and confidently, at an above average standard. Often these pupils are also confident and fluent speakers, as is evident from their responses in class.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics have improved considerably over the last year, and pupils of all abilities are making good progress overall.
- Attainment and progress in writing have improved, but at a slower and more variable rate than in other subjects. Pupils' written work shows pupils taking pride in their work and writing with a good range of vocabulary and accuracy, particularly in Years 3 and 4. Progress in writing is slower for some pupils in other subjects apart from English, particularly in Years 5 and 6. This is partly because not all older pupils have enough opportunities to write in depth and at length when studying particular topics.
- Previously there had been significant gaps in the attainment and progress of different groups, for example between boys and girls. These gaps have narrowed. Although they have not completely disappeared in some year groups, the school has targeted resources for use with particular pupils to continue narrowing the gaps.
- The most-able pupils achieve well. Although occasionally they do not reach their full potential in lessons, over time they do well, and increasingly pupils attain at a level which is well above average. Across the school, many more pupils are on track to attain the higher Level 5 and Level 6 than in the past.
- The numbers of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, and of disadvantaged pupils, are so few, and non-existent in some year groups, that evaluating their progress as groups is not meaningful. However, as individuals, nearly all of these pupils achieve well, often benefiting from additional support.

The early years provision is good

- Because this is a small school, there are sometimes variations in levels of skill and knowledge year on year when children join Reception. However, these levels are usually at least in line with what is typical for children of this age, and often higher.
- Children in Reception are taught well, sometimes together with some Year 1 pupils. Children make good progress. Data from previous years and current performance data show that the majority of both boys and girls reach a good level of development, above what is usually expected by the end of Reception.
- Staff usually set appropriately challenging tasks, whether teaching the children directly or arranging for them to both play and learn on their own. Several of the children are confident learners, for example

telling visitors clearly what they are learning and why. Children also show good personal and social development, although occasionally they need to be reminded how to listen quietly to each other and take their turn. Behaviour is good because the children do want to learn.

- Staff assess children regularly and their learning journals and classroom displays show their progress, for example in developing early writing skills.
- There is good leadership in early years. Staff encourage parents to be involved in their children's learning. For example, parents are encouraged to look at, and comment on, their children's work. There is a good range of resources for children, and good displays in their learning areas.
- Because progress is good in all key areas, including language, literacy and numeracy, children are prepared well for entry into Year 1.

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	462493

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	104
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Moakes
Headteacher	Denise Woodgate
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 July 2013
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