

Inspection of a good school: Bolton by Bowland Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Gisburn Road, Bolton-by-Bowland, Clitheroe, Lancashire BB7 4NP

Inspection date:

3 February 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their small village school. They enjoy coming to school and they get on well with each other. New pupils, including the youngest children who join the Reception class, are made to feel welcome and they settle in quickly. Across the school, pupils feel safe. They trust their teachers to sort out any issues quickly, including bullying.

Pupils are kind to each other. They offer each other support and encouragement. Pupils are quick to celebrate each other's successes. They are polite and respectful to staff and visitors. The school is calm and orderly throughout the day.

Pupils enjoyed the trips, visitors and clubs that took place before the start of the COVID-19 pandemic. They are pleased that these extra-curricular activities are starting up again. Pupils said that they particularly enjoy finding out about the history of their village.

Pupils enjoy learning. They like the range of subjects that they are taught. Staff have high expectations of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Even so, the curriculum is not sufficiently well thought out in some subjects. This means that some pupils do not achieve as well as they should.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Since the previous inspection, some aspects of the quality of education at the school have declined. Governors have brought in some external support to help them better understand and resolve the emerging issues. This support is helping leaders and

governors to make the improvements needed. For example, leaders took urgent action to ensure that the school's safeguarding policy and procedures are effective.

Leaders have not thought through their curriculum in sufficient detail, including in the early years. In some subjects, they have not established what they want pupils to learn, and by when. While leaders have identified the broad themes to be taught in each subject, their curricular thinking lacks clarity. As a result, some curriculum leaders have adopted published schemes of work for teachers to follow. Teachers use these schemes to help them plan lessons that build on what pupils already know and can do. However, they are not fully adapted to meet pupils' needs. While pupils study a broad curriculum, the weaknesses in the school's curriculum mean that pupils do not learn as much as they should.

In some subjects, teachers successfully use assessment systems to check that pupils have understood and remembered new learning. Teachers use this information appropriately to address pupils' misconceptions. However, in other subjects, because leaders have not been as clear about the important knowledge that pupils need to learn, teachers do not know exactly where pupils are in their learning. This makes it difficult for leaders and teachers to check that pupils know and remember everything that they should.

Pupils, including children in the early years, love listening to the stories that their teachers read to them. Older pupils enjoy the books that they study in their English lessons. This helps pupils, including children in the early years, to develop their vocabulary.

Leaders have recently introduced a new programme to teach phonics. Children start on this programme at the beginning of the Reception Year. Daily phonics lessons help the youngest pupils get off to a good start in learning to read. The reading leader helps and supports the other adults who teach phonics. Pupils who struggle to keep up have additional support. This helps all pupils, including those with SEND, to learn to read confidently and fluently.

Leaders and teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Well-established routines help the school day run smoothly. Children in the early years are kind to each other, take turns and share. Older pupils told inspectors how they are taught the importance of offering forgiveness. Across the school, pupils work and play well together.

Leaders are starting to reintroduce a full programme of wider personal development for pupils. This includes enrichment activities. Pupils take part in events to raise money for different charities.

Leaders and staff work together to identify pupils who may have SEND. They work well with other professionals to ensure that these pupils get the specialist support that they need. Teachers think carefully about how they deliver the curriculum for pupils with SEND.

Leaders have started to take action to reduce staff workload and support their wellbeing. Leaders are redistributing staff roles and responsibilities. Governors have secured counselling support for staff. Staff appreciate the external support and training that they

are beginning to receive to help them do their jobs well. This is helping to raise staff morale.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that reading, history and science may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have recently reviewed the school's safeguarding procedures. They have updated the school's policy so that it complies with the most up-to-date statutory guidance.

Leaders ensure that staff have the training that they need to understand and carry out their roles and responsibilities to safeguard pupils. Leaders follow up on any concerns to ensure that pupils and their families get the help that they need.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. They trust the adults in the school to listen to, and act on, any worries that they may have. Staff and parents and carers agree that pupils are well cared for and safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders' and governors' curriculum thinking lacks clarity in some subjects, including in the early years. Leaders have not determined exactly what pupils need to learn and by when. This means that some pupils do not learn as much of the curriculum as they should. Leaders and governors need to plan a curriculum that identifies all of the essential knowledge that pupils must learn across all subjects, including in the early years.
- Some teachers do not use leaders' assessment systems effectively enough to check that pupils have remembered new learning. This is because leaders have not identified the essential knowledge that pupils must learn in some subjects. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as highly as they should. Leaders should define the essential knowledge that pupils must learn in all subjects so that teachers can use assessment systems to address pupils' misconceptions and to check whether pupils have learned the intended curriculum.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in April 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	119688
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10204417
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	34
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jeanne Bishop
Headteacher	Paul Holden
Website	www.bolton-by-bowland.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- A new headteacher has been appointed since the previous inspection. The school is being led by an associate headteacher during the current headteacher's temporary absence.
- A new chair of governors has been elected to the governing body since the last inspection.
- The school is a voluntary aided Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in January 2017.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- During the inspection, inspectors held meetings with the associate headteacher, executive headteacher and members of the teaching staff. Inspectors spoke with

representatives of the local authority. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors.

- Inspectors considered the responses from parents to the Ofsted Parent View survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.
- Inspectors met with the people responsible for safeguarding in the school. Inspectors scrutinised a range of documentation in relation to safeguarding. They spoke to staff, parents and pupils about safeguarding.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and playtimes. They spoke to pupils about bullying, behaviour and leaders' expectations of pupils' behaviour.
- As part of this inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, reviewed curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, met with teachers, spoke with pupils about their learning and reviewed samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

Pippa Jackson Maitland, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Linda Griffiths

Ofsted Inspector

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