



# The Gates Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 133926  
**LEA** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 282388  
**Inspection dates** 16 March 2006 to 17 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms Susan Clipson-Boyles HMI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Bristle Hall Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		Westhoughton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Bolton BL5 3QA
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01942 634734
<b>Number on roll</b>	228	<b>Fax number</b>	01942 634735
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr G Firth
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not applicable	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr D Clegg

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an additional inspector.

## Description of the school

The school was formed by the amalgamation of St John Wingates C of E and Fourgates schools three and a half years ago. The attainment of the pupils on entry is broadly average. A low number of children are eligible for a free school meal and the number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is slightly lower than average. The majority of the children are of white British background. There are many more boys in the school than girls.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Inspectors judge that the school provides a satisfactory standard of education and the school agrees. The amalgamation in September 2002 caused much instability and the settling down period has taken longer than it should. Improvements have started to show recently as the result of a new and enthusiastic leadership team. This is already having a positive impact on learning. Teachers and teaching assistants are highly committed and optimistic about the future. They work together closely under the leadership of the headteacher and his new deputy. Self-evaluation is honest and accurate, but needs to have a tighter focus on standards.

Teaching and learning and pupils' progress are satisfactory. However, assessment of children's work does not always inform teachers' plans. As a result, children are not challenged enough and lessons are not sufficiently based on what they need to learn next. Standards are average except in writing where they are below average. Writing needs to improve throughout the school. Boys are not doing as well as the girls. Teachers are starting to plan lessons that appeal more to boys. Teaching is good in the Foundation Stage and the provision in the nursery is a strength of the school.

Children are cared for well. Most enjoy school, and behaviour is usually good. Children's attitudes to learning are mainly positive. However, more guidance and support are needed with learning so that children have a better understanding of what they need to do next.

The governing body is supportive as well as holding the school to account. Money is carefully spent. The school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the rate of improvement with a clear focus on raising standards, particularly in writing.
- Plan lessons that build on regular and accurate assessments.
- Ensure that lessons are planned to develop understanding, skills and knowledge for children of different levels of attainment.
- Provide better support and guidance for children on the next steps in their learning.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Achievement and standards are satisfactory. Most children are making progress and the standards are broadly average. However, the inspectors believe that some children are not reaching their full potential, particularly the more able.

Many children enter the school with average learning skills and they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. The nursery, in particular, provides a stimulating and fun environment that encourages children's curiosity and promotes good learning. Children make satisfactory progress during Key Stage 1 and by the end of Year 2 their

results are slightly above the national average for mathematics. Standards in writing and reading improved last year.

Standards in reading reached the national average but standards in writing were still slightly below. Last year's results for Year 6 showed a fall in standards. Although pupils performed on a par with other schools in mathematics and science they did less well in English which declined for the third year. However, the inspectors found that standards have improved this year though boys are still doing less well than girls. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meet appropriate targets which are reviewed regularly.

The leadership team agrees that children could be making better progress throughout the school, particularly in English. They have started to address this in a variety of ways including setting more challenging targets. Improvements are already starting to show.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Most children enjoy school and have favourite subjects. History is very popular and outside visits, for example, to Smithills Hall, help to bring learning alive. Events, such as 'French Day' and learning about a variety of religious traditions widen children's understanding of European links and multicultural life in Britain. Children's behaviour is usually good, although it is better in lessons than on the playground. Some children do not enjoy outdoor playtimes. However, the school council's suggestions about improving the outdoor play areas are leading to changes. Children have a good understanding of the need to keep themselves safe and healthy. They can explain the importance of eating and drinking healthily, and of taking regular exercise. Children make positive contributions to the local community such as singing carols at Christmas for shoppers in a local store. They develop satisfactory skills to contribute to their future economic well-being. For instance, the school council manages its own budget, and some classes have been finding out about the benefits of recycling waste materials. Attendance was similar to the national average last year but rates have fallen slightly since then.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The needs of most children are met by a satisfactory quality of teaching, and in the nursery this is good. Throughout the school, teachers and well trained classroom assistants are hard working and enthusiastic. They work together well, and relationships are good. This creates a friendly, happy and purposeful atmosphere in classrooms, and children are keen to learn. However, the school knows that children could be making even better progress. Improving teaching and learning is now a priority for all staff.

Inspectors saw that staff development has already made a difference. The marking of children's work has improved and is now good. There is still much to do: for example, matching children's work more closely to their differing levels of ability. Teachers have made a good start on this but there are still some lessons where the more able children are finishing quickly because their work is not challenging enough. Also, the least able children sometimes struggle to complete work that is not meaningful to them. Children know that they have to meet learning targets, but they rarely know how well they are doing and what they must do next to reach a higher level. Teachers are starting to design different types of activities that appeal to boys so that their learning can catch up with that of the girls. Teachers plan suitable work for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and this enables them to make progress at the same pace as other children.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactory and fulfils requirements. It is sufficiently broad and balanced to meet the needs of most learners with a firm emphasis on English and mathematics. Lessons are enriched by out of school visits, and children often work with visitors such as local fire officers. Speaking and listening opportunities are provided across the curriculum. The curriculum for personal, social and health education and citizenship makes a good contribution to raising children's awareness of health and safety matters, such as learning that drugs can be both safe and unsafe. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is good, and very good in the nursery. This is because teachers use appropriate approaches to learning for young children. They also plan carefully in ways that build on children's previous learning. The school has plans to make lessons more meaningful and interesting by linking learning across subjects. Extra-curricular activities provide additional opportunities after school, particularly sport.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory and good in some respects. However, staff need to give children more individual guidance on their progress and what they need to do next to improve their learning. The deputy headteacher is already starting to plan how this will be developed throughout the school. All the staff are very committed to providing a good quality of care for children's welfare. Children say that they feel safe and happy at school, and always have someone to turn to if they have a problem. Health and safety are promoted well throughout the school and children talk sensibly about how to stay safe and make healthy choices. Risk assessments are completed and there are thorough procedures for child protection.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the opening of the new school there has been prolonged instability due to several senior staff leaving. These disruptions have had a negative impact on learning and parents expressed their concerns about this. The headteacher manages the day-to-day running of the school efficiently but the pace of overall improvement has been too slow. However, there is now an enthusiastic new management team. The professionalism and forward thinking of this team have demonstrated to the inspectors that the school has the capacity for improvement.

The new deputy headteacher has been an inspiration to the senior team. She has quickly started to make changes. There are early signs that new systems such as tracking children's progress to identify where extra support is needed are making a difference. Likewise, the subject leaders for English and mathematics are supporting teachers effectively in improving children's work.

The school consults everyone widely and evaluates its own performance carefully. Staff are accurate in identifying current strengths and weaknesses.

However, there is an insufficient focus on raising standards. As yet, there are no accurate procedures for evaluating the improvements following staff training and development.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors fulfill their roles conscientiously. However, some have not taken part in sufficient training. Governors are careful with the budget, ensuring that money is wisely spent. The school provides satisfactory value for money.





## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	3	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	NA	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	3	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	3	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

You may remember that Mrs Sharpe and I visited your school recently to see how you are getting on. You were helpful, friendly and polite and very good at holding open the doors for us and for each other! We really enjoyed watching your lessons and listening to your opinions about the school. Thank you very much for all your help.

We think that your school gives you a satisfactory education. Since the two schools joined together there have been a lot of changes and some teachers have been leaving each year. It has taken quite a long time for things to settle down again. Mrs Forshaw, the new deputy headteacher, is now helping Mr Clegg to change things and we think the changes are going to help the school to improve quickly.

We saw lots of things that we liked, especially the way that children were having fun and learning a lot in the nursery. Most of you worked sensibly in your lessons and often you were enjoying your work. However, we think that many of you could learn even more each week! The boys need to catch up with the girls, and writing could be better for everyone. You behaved very well inside school, although one or two children were a bit too rough in the playground. We have asked your teachers to do some things a bit differently to help you improve even more.

- First of all, we would like them to give you work that builds on what you already know. This will help everyone to feel they have learned something new each day. To do this they will need to keep a careful check on what you achieve so that they can plan what you need to learn next. Some of you need harder work!

- Secondly, we think WALT ('We are learning today.') should tell you what you are going to learn rather than what you are going to do. This will help you to remember how to use skills you have learned in different situations in the future.

- Finally, we would like your teachers and teaching assistants to talk to you more often about how well you are doing with your work, so that you can decide together what you need to learn next. This will help you to become more responsible for your own learning which will also help you when you are grown ups!

We have asked Mr Clegg to work with all the staff and governors firstly on the things that are going to make the biggest difference. You will need to help them by working hard especially with your writing. We know that you will want to do your best, and we feel sure that things are going to improve. We wish you every success for a happy future and we hope that our points will help you to make The Gates an even better school.