



# Bolton Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 112176  
**Local Authority** Cumbria  
**Inspection number** 289191  
**Inspection dates** 18–19 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Brian Dower

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Bolton
<b>School category</b>	Community		Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11		CA16 6AW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01768 361511
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	47	<b>Fax number</b>	01768 361511
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Christine Taylor
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Judith Cotter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 June 2002		

<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Bolton Primary is a very small rural school. The area it serves is a mixture of both prosperity and rural deprivation and pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds. They are of mainly White British heritage. Attainment on entry to the school varies significantly from year to year and is broadly average overall. There are very few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are taught in two mixed aged groups, comprising of an infant class and a junior class.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Bolton is a good school with outstanding features in its care and support of pupils and in the leadership of the headteacher. The school enjoys the support of parents who are fulsome in their praise of what it achieves. Teachers, their assistants and the pupils enjoy working together and the care and support they afford each other are exceptional. This sense of a small community working harmoniously together stems from the headteacher's excellent leadership and the support she receives from able colleagues and governors. Morale is high. Pupils feel safe and secure, confident that their welfare and safety come first. They contribute well to the life of the local community through fund raising activities and charitable work. They have the personal qualities to make the most of their education and future employment opportunities. The school's mission statement speaks of children who will 'leave our school with knowledge and skills for life, high self-esteem, an understanding of right from wrong and an awareness of their place in the world, whilst retaining their individuality and a zest for life'. They do.

Standards are above average and achievement is good. Pupils have good basic skills. Their speaking, listening and reading skills are more highly developed than expected for this age group. Basic writing skills are also good but some older pupils have difficulty adapting their writing for different purposes. Numeracy skills are good. Pupils achieve well in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress and reach the standards expected of them by the end of the Reception Year because they are well taught and very well cared for.

Pupils' personal development is good, as is their social, moral and spiritual development. Cultural development is satisfactory. Pupils do not fully appreciate the cultural diversity of the wider local community. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, as are their attitudes to work and their consideration for each other. Pupils say there is no bullying in the school. The rate of attendance is above average and there is no unauthorised absence.

Teaching and learning are good. The adaptation of learning activities to meet the diverse needs of the mixed age groups is a strength. The efficient tracking of pupils' progress enables teachers to spot underachievement quickly and take effective action to remedy weaknesses. Curriculum provision is good and pupils speak highly of the enjoyment they get from extra-curricular activities, visits out of school and visitors who come to speak to them. Computers and educational software are not used extensively enough by teachers to broaden pupils' learning experiences. There are limited indoor opportunities for play activities and physical education (PE) because of cramped space.

Leadership and management are good and there are aspects of leadership which are outstanding. In particular, the headteacher has ensured that the school is now at the centre of the village and wider community. Her leadership is responsible for parents' increased confidence in what the school achieves for their children. Governance is good and there is effective financial management and deployment of the school's resources. The school gives good value for money. At the present time, there is no senior leader to deputise for the headteacher and this reliance solely on the headteacher

is a management weakness. The school has made significant improvements since the previous inspection. It is strongly placed to raise standards further because of the effective teamwork and the cohesion of staff.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the ability of older pupils to write for different purposes.
- Extend the use of computers and educational software as learning aids in the classroom to help broaden pupils' learning experiences.
- Improve accommodation to enable pupils to play together and do physical education indoors.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good and standards are above average. The number of pupils taking the formal tests in any one year is very small and so national comparisons have to be treated with caution. The trend over time has been for standards to be average or above average. Children start the Reception Year with markedly different levels of ability and overall are broadly in line with the nationally expected levels of development. They make good progress and achieve the levels expected of them by the start of Year 1. The 2005 results in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2 were average. In English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6 standards were above average. Such standards were maintained in 2006. Pupils make good progress, including the very small number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In 2006, the school met its targets in mathematics and English. The school has correctly identified as a priority the need for older pupils to improve their ability to adapt their writing for different purposes.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development, including their social, spiritual and moral development, is good. Cultural development is satisfactory. Significant progress has been made since the last inspection in improving pupils' understanding of the cultural and religious diversity of the wider world. Pupils have a limited awareness of such diversity in the broader local community. Behaviour is excellent in class and around the school and pupils report that there are no incidents of bullying. As a result, they feel safe and secure. Pupils work and play together well. There are opportunities for the older pupils to look after the younger members of the school and they do this sensibly and with sensitivity. Pupils make a very good contribution to the local community through fund raising and charitable work. They enjoy coming to school and attendance levels are above average. The school is good at listening and responding to pupils' views and concerns. Pupils are aware of what they must and must not do to stay fit and well and they adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils have the basic skills and personal qualities to make

the most of the next stage of their education and to provide for their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Teachers understand the learning needs of every pupil in the school. Their lesson planning is very good, providing a range of learning activities that challenge and stretch the various age and ability levels in each of the two classes. Working relationships throughout the school are warm and supportive, instilling confidence in the pupils and encouraging them to want to learn. Pupils know how well they are doing and they receive excellent guidance on what to do to get better. They have targets for improvement and they use them constantly to make sure they are making the progress expected of them. The marking and assessment of pupils' work are very good and are used to plan future lessons and to target support where it is most needed. Every effort is made to make learning fun and to involve pupils actively. The school is making good use of the interactive whiteboards. Apart from this, however, there is insufficient use of computer technology and educational software to broaden pupils' understanding and improve the quality of their work.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is good. It is relevant to pupils' needs and prepares them well for the next stage of their education. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors to the school extends pupils' understanding and enjoyment of their work. All statutory requirements are met. There is good provision for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. Excellent links with the nursery school ensure continuity in pupils' learning and a smooth transition to the primary phase. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the required areas of learning and there is good outdoor space and equipment for the children to play and learn together. Indoor space is restricted, however, and this limits the play activities for the youngest children when the weather is inclement. It also restricts the physical education curriculum for the older pupils when weather is bad. Very good use is made of community resources and links with other schools to develop the creative aspect of the curriculum, in particular music and art.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

This aspect of the school's work is outstanding because of the very high quality of care and support each pupil receives. The emotional, social and learning needs of every child are understood by all who work in the school and those needs are met. The staff are committed to pupils' welfare and to helping them develop into confident and responsible young people. The school's procedures for child protection are in place

and arrangements to keep pupils safe follow current national guidelines. The school is conscientious in addressing risks at school and when pupils are out on activities. Pupils say they feel safe and well supported by trusting relationships. The few pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported by staff and they therefore make good progress. The school makes effective use of assessment data to guide pupils' academic progress, identify underachievement and set appropriate learning targets.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The school's standing in the community and its popularity with parents has improved greatly since the previous inspection because of the excellent leadership of the headteacher. She is supported by able and committed colleagues and governors. Together they succeed in giving equality of opportunity to each boy and girl. The result is the good progress and achievement made by every pupil. There is no senior leader to provide management support to a teaching headteacher or continuity of leadership if the unexpected arises. The school is rigorous in its evaluation of performance and in taking action to remedy weaknesses. Forward planning is good. The priorities for development are appropriate and centre on providing high quality care and education, leading to improved standards. The governors know the school well and play their part in shaping its future direction. The school is well staffed. There have been significant improvements since the previous inspection, particularly in the tracking and assessment of pupils' progress and in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning. There is an appropriate range of high quality resources to support pupils' learning but insufficient use is made of computers and educational software to broaden pupils' learning experiences. The school's capacity to improve further is good.





## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The attendance of learners	2
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1

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

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

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

Bolton Primary School

Bolton

Appleby-in-Westmorland

Cumbria

CA16 6AW

18 January 2007

Dear Pupils

Thank you for the welcome you gave me during my recent visit. You impressed me with your courtesy and the way you work well together. You are confident young people who enjoy your work and take full advantage of the wide range of activities available outside of lessons. Many of you said that the trips away are exciting and that you look forward to having visitors in school.

You are reaching the standards expected for your age and you make good progress and achieve well. You have much better speaking, listening and reading skills than most other boys and girls. You write clearly and accurately but there are some older pupils who have difficulty adapting their writing style for different purposes. Your numeracy skills are good and many of you use computers at home for recreational purposes. You are not making sufficient use of computers in lessons, however, to help you to learn. As you know, our weather is often so bad in winter that outside play and physical activity are impossible. The school does not have sufficient indoor space to enable you to play together and do PE when this happens.

There are many things in your work to be proud of. You have the skills and personal qualities which will enable you to succeed in your education. Your behaviour is excellent and you tell me that you greatly enjoy being at school. Your parents have written to say that they are pleased with the quality of the education you are receiving and the progress you are making. You live in a beautiful part of the country and benefit from the small, close knit learning community that is your school. Even in the short time I was with you, your interest in all around you shone through.

My best wishes to you and the adults working with you.

Yours sincerely

Brian Dower

Lead Inspector