



Bolsover Infant School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 112511
Local Authority DERBYSHIRE
Inspection number 289305
Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006
Reporting inspector Joanne Harvey

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

Type of school	Infant	School address	Welbeck Road
School category	Community		Bolsover, Chesterfield
Age range of pupils	3–7		Derbyshire S44 6DE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01246 823181
Number on roll (school)	240	Fax number	01246 826308
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Father T Hicks
		Headteacher	Mrs C M Holmes-Elener
Date of previous school inspection	2 July 2001		

Age group 3–7	Inspection dates 21–22 November 2006	Inspection number 289305
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors over two days.

Description of the school

This is an average size school serving a mixed community in Bolsover. The proportion of pupils entitled to claim free school meals is higher than in most schools. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is lower and virtually all pupils speak English as their first language. The number of pupils with a learning need or disability and with a statement of special educational need is higher than in most schools. Pupils start school with levels of knowledge and skill that are below those of young children in schools nationally. The school has received the Basic Skills Quality Mark, and Anti-Bullying Award and a Healthy Schools Award. It is part of the Derbyshire Coalfields Excellence Cluster and the Behaviour Improvement Project.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors agree with the school that it is effective and gives good value for money. Leadership and management are focussed and very effective. The strong leadership by the headteacher along with the support of a hardworking and committed team of staff ensures that the needs of the children are at the forefront of all its work.

Underpinning the school's success is the outstanding caring ethos and excellent support for pupils that the head, with her staff and governors have established. This values all individuals and creates a positive nurturing environment in which children thrive and become well rounded individuals who achieve well academically and personally. Adults get to know each child very well so that their academic and personal needs can be met. Consequently, this is a very happy and harmonious school where staff and pupils really do reach their stated aim which they sing joyfully together, 'Happy, happy, that's how we like our school to be, one big family'.

Behaviour and relationships are good, so rarely a moment is lost maintaining discipline in lessons or around school. Playtimes are happy and sociable occasions. A carefully planned programme to promote pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education is integrated into all that they do. Consequently pupils enjoy working and playing together, helping each other and helping others in their community. They are well aware of how to keep safe and how to make healthy lifestyle choices. The combination of well developed personal, social and emotional skills with good basic academic skills equips pupils well for the next stage of their education and their lives beyond school. Parents and pupils are very supportive of the school and feel it takes their views into account. In response to the parents' survey, one wrote, 'Each of my children who have had the privilege of attending this school have been treated with care and valued as individuals'.

It is no surprise therefore that good teaching helps to ensure pupils make good progress whilst they are at the school. Often from below average starting points, most pupils reach standards which are above those expected for their age by the time they leave at the end of Year 2. However, there are inconsistencies within and between age groups. Where teachers rely too much on tasks that do not develop pupils' thinking skills and ability to work with little help, progress is slowed, particularly for more able pupils. Exceptional provision is made by able teaching assistants for those who are identified as needing additional help with their academic or personal development. Consequently, pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities make excellent progress. A good curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to experience a range of subjects and there is plenty to do out of lessons to extend pupils' skills, interests and enjoyment. The curriculum is most effective where teachers embrace opportunities to be creative in how they link subjects together to make learning more meaningful and stimulating for pupils, giving them chance to practice what they have learned in different ways. Pupils are not yet offered enough of these opportunities. The success the school has had in the past, and the sense of urgency and rigour and determination to do even better, mean that the capacity for sustained improvement in future is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of teaching and learning by ensuring all lessons move at a good pace, providing pupils with more challenge and more opportunities to develop their thinking and independent working skills.
- Increase the cross curricular links between subjects and provide pupils with more opportunities to practice what they have learned in a range of contexts.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make a good start to their education in the nursery. Therefore, by the time they enter the Reception class children's standards have improved to be at least in line with those expected for their age. Children's standards are maintained in the Reception classes where pupils make satisfactory progress. Standards reached in the teacher assessed tests at the end of Year 2 have been above average for the past five years. At the time of the inspection standards in Year 2 are above average, representing good progress for these pupils. Because of the excellent provision made for pupils with a learning need or disability or for whom English is an additional language, these pupils make excellent progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through the curriculum and the clear expectations adults have for pupils' behaviour. As a result pupils behave well, work hard and develop positive attitudes towards their learning. Pupils really enjoy their time at school and are keen to be involved in its improvement. Some pupils have the opportunity to be involved in the school council or in looking after the playground equipment. However, there are not enough opportunities for pupils to make decisions or to take on responsibilities. Though attendance is below average, the school has been active in its drive to convince parents of the importance of good attendance.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils learn well because the impact of teaching is typically good. However, there are inconsistencies between and within year groups. All teachers plan carefully, have good subject knowledge and manage pupils well. This leads to well focused lessons where pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn. In lessons that move at a brisk pace and where the questions asked of pupils and tasks given make them explain their thinking, the progress they make is good. In these lessons pupils are well challenged,

well motivated, and have the confidence to tackle difficult tasks with little help. Progress is slower in lessons where there is too much teacher talk and the development of pupils' independent working and thinking skills is limited. Teaching assistants work very closely with teachers and provide excellent support for individuals and groups of pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is enriched by a variety of activities that support and extend pupils' skills, interest and enjoyment. For example, the fun yet purposeful lunchtime clubs, visits out into the community and visitors to school support pupils' personal and academic development well. Very effective use is made of the school's extremely good links to other organisations in the community, for example, the community policeman is a regular and popular visitor to assemblies and friend to all in school. Where good links are beginning to be made between subjects that bring learning to life and give them opportunities to practice what they have learned in other subjects, pupils' learn more quickly. Pupils were excited and proud to share their topic work which involved them making lanterns to take to the Bolsover Castle lantern parade. However, not enough planning for pupils learning is organised in this way.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

There are extremely good procedures to ensure the safeguarding and protection of pupils which are understood and implemented by all staff. Systems for checking how well pupils are doing personally and academically are very thorough and records are meticulously maintained. Staff really do get to know pupils well and set them challenging personal and academic targets. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for and nurtured as individuals. Pupils trust the adults they work with and in this very positive environment most make good progress. The school provides exceptionally good support for pupils who require help to make the most of their time at school. This help provided by teachers, teaching assistants and the learning mentor increasingly involves parents working in partnership with the school. The school promotes very productive links with a wide range of outside agencies that contribute significantly to pupils' personal development. Representatives of these agencies were keen to comment very positively to inspectors about the work of the school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides strong and very effective leadership, giving clear vision and direction to the work of the school. Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school and tracking pupils' progress have a sharp focus. Consequently, the recently reorganised senior management team has a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses, helping to make sure that challenging targets are met.

Leadership and management of special educational needs provision is highly effective in securing excellent provision for these and other vulnerable pupils. The governing body receives good quality information from the headteacher, which allows governors to have a good understanding of the school's work and to hold it accountable, ensuring it gives good value for money. The school has a proven track record of maintaining above average standards and ensuring good progress for its pupils, giving confidence that it can improve still further.

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Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
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

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ 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	1

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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

22 November 2006

Dear Pupils,

Bolsover Infant School, Welbeck Road, Bolsover, Chesterfield, Derbyshire, S44 6DE

We were pleased to meet you and all the staff. We enjoyed the time we spent with you. Thank you for making us so welcome, talking to us and helping us to find out so much about you and your school.

You go to a good school where all the adults work hard and take such outstanding care of you. They make sure you are happy and that your lessons are fun. Your teachers help you to do well in your personal development. It was lovely to see you behaving and working so well. We were very impressed that you know so much about how to keep safe and healthy. We especially enjoyed hearing you proudly talk about your school and the work that you do and hearing about how you help others. I loved listening to your school song which you sang so beautifully and joyfully together in assembly, leaving me in no doubt that you are happy in your school family. You enjoy visits out of school and have many interesting visitors come and work with you that make your learning more interesting.

You make better progress than many children in other schools whilst you are in the Nursery. You make satisfactory progress when you are in Reception. Then in Years 1 and 2 you make faster progress than most children. We think you could do even better. All the adults at school are keen to help you do as well as you can so we have asked them to do some things to help you. It is important that you do your bit to help too. Mrs Holmes-Elener has told me how much better most of you are at coming to school on time every day. Well done! This is very important so keep up the good work.

The teachers are going to make sure that you are all given things to do and questions that make you think more carefully and then they are going to get you explain clearly what you are thinking. They are going to make sure there are more times when you can practice the things you are learning in lots of different ways.

We would like to wish you the very best for the future.

J Harvey and A Cogher

Lead and team inspectors