

Bolton Parish Church CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105229
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	308801
Inspection dates	7–8 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Jim Crouch

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	217
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Wallington
Headteacher	Mrs C Jones
Date of previous school inspection	12 January 2004
School address	Kestor Street Bolton Lancashire BL2 2AN
Telephone number	01204 333433
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This smaller than average school serves a community in the centre of Bolton. The governors provide childcare services before and after school. The pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups. The majority are of White British, Pakistani or Indian heritage. There is a small number of children from traveller/showman families and a small number of asylum seekers. English is not the first language spoken by half the pupils and a significant number are at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is average. The proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. There is no pupil with a statement of special educational need. A small number of pupils are in public care. The school is an Investor in People and holds a wide range of awards including the Quality Mark, Activemark, Eco-school Silver Award and Healthy Schools Award.

Between 2004 and 2006 the school was housed in temporary accommodation on another site. It has now returned to the original site and is recovering from the financial and educational costs of this instability.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good school that provides outstanding care, guidance and support for its pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Behaviour is very good and pupils show a real enthusiasm for learning. They are proud of their school and are very keen to converse with visitors. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities as play leaders and have contributed to school improvement, particularly through the work of the school council and the eco-team. They show good community awareness, working to improve the school environment and holding charity fundraising activities. Pupils show a clear understanding of how to live healthily. They join in a range of sporting activities and take advantage of the school's breakfast club and healthy tuck shop. This is recognised by the Healthy Schools Award. The majority of pupils attend well. However, the extended absence of a small number of pupils means that despite the school's intensive support for these pupils and their families, overall attendance remains just below the national average.

Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Children's skills on entry to the Nursery are below and sometimes well below the levels typical for children of this age. They make outstanding progress in the Foundation Stage so that they enter Year 1 with skills above those expected for their age. Pupils make good progress through Key Stage 1. In recent years there has been a gradual improvement in attainment at Key Stage 2, so that it is now above average, with pupils' achievement being satisfactory. The school's own very detailed tracking system confirms that most pupils are now making at least good progress, although in the case of Years 5 and 6 this involves some catching up on the slower progress made during the school's temporary move.

The curriculum meets the needs of most learners effectively, particularly in the Foundation Stage. Subject leaders are developing cross-curricular topics which make learning more enjoyable and meaningful at Key Stages 1 and 2. Teachers have high expectations. Pupils know what is expected of them and the excellent relationships in lessons mean that they are confident and keen to contribute to their own learning. Most lessons are taught at a brisk pace and use a good range of activities and resources to maintain pupils' interest and involvement. Lessons are planned in detail, but at Key Stage 2 some pupils are not challenged sufficiently. Teachers monitor pupils' work very well and give clear guidance on what needs to be done next in order for pupils to make good progress. Pupils whose first language is not English, particularly those at the early stages of learning English, make very good progress because of the very effective support. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make similar progress because of their good individual education plans and the very effective deployment of teaching assistants.

Well established links with outside agencies make a significant contribution to the school's outstanding care of pupils and the excellent support it provides for vulnerable pupils. The school broadens pupils' experiences and increases their enjoyment of education through a developing programme of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities.

A committed and well informed governing body is fully aware of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. It gives the school good support and provides challenge when necessary. The headteacher and governors have created an inclusive school that embraces and celebrates the cultural diversity that pupils bring. This is illustrated by its celebration of festivals from a number of different cultures. The school communicates well with parents and community leaders to support the harmony within school. It has successfully addressed issues from the last

inspection and has a clear view of the improvements made. However, it overestimated the effectiveness of some aspects of its work, because it has not taken full account of the time needed for these to boost pupils' achievement. The school gives good value for money and has good capacity to improve.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The outstanding provision in the Foundation Stage ensures that children get off to an excellent start. On entry to the Nursery, the skills of many are below and in some cases well below those typical for children of this age, with children showing particularly poor social skills and language development. Children are well cared for and staff's expectations for their progress are high. As a result, they make outstanding progress and by the time they complete the Foundation Stage they are all working well within or beyond the early learning goals. Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language are identified early and work is targeted to ensure that they make rapid progress, particularly in their basic skills and communication. The Foundation Stage coordinator provides excellent leadership, and teaching from all staff in the department is outstanding. The very good balance between teacher-led and child-initiated activities means that children quickly grow in confidence and interact well together. They are happy and respond well to the range of interesting and exciting classroom activities and the opportunities for learning through play in the well provided outdoor area. As a result, their personal and social development is very good. The good arrangements for induction into the Nursery and for transition to Year 1 contribute well to meeting the needs of learners.

What the school should do to improve further

- Make sure all lessons provide pupils with sufficient challenge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards by the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils start Year 1 with skills and abilities which are above those typical of children of this age. Good teaching and high levels of support mean that they make good progress through Key Stage 1. In recent years progress at Key Stage 2 has been broadly satisfactory. However, weaknesses in writing have meant that attainment in English has not been as good as in mathematics and science. Improvements in the tracking of pupils' progress have led to much more accurate identification of areas of underperformance. As a result, the school has set challenging targets, matched teaching more closely to pupils' needs and supported individuals and groups of pupils effectively. Consequently, older pupils are now making up lost ground at Key Stage 2 and achievement in writing is improving. The increased levels of support mean that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable pupils now make very good progress across all key stages.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils respond well to the spiritual atmosphere of this school and think hard about moral issues. They are very supportive of each other; for example, older pupils act as play leaders and help younger ones with their reading. The school council contributes well to the life of the school,

with ideas for improving the play facilities and in dealing with the rare incidences of bullying. Class representatives on the eco-team talk proudly about the garden they are developing and keep the school grounds tidy through their recycling work. Pupils show concern for others outside the school by supporting a range of charities, but contributions to the life of the local community are less evident. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding. Pupils say they feel safe because everyone gets on really well and there is always someone to turn to in times of need. Pupils understand healthy lifestyles, joining in a range of sporting activities, the school's breakfast club and healthy tuck shop. The majority of pupils show their enjoyment of school through their good attendance. However, a small number of pupils have significant amounts of absence, particularly as members of the traveller/showman community or through extended visits abroad. As a result, overall attendance is slightly below the national average, but the school continues to work closely with parents to improve it. Pupils are making good progress in developing the necessary skills for their future economic well-being and older pupils say that they are looking forward with confidence to secondary school.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes outstanding. Teachers set high expectations and use their good subject knowledge well to plan interesting and enjoyable lessons. However, at Key Stage 2 activities do not always provide sufficient challenge for all groups of pupils, limiting their progress. In most lessons there is a good pace because of teachers' confident approach and good rapport with pupils. Teachers use a wide range of questions and are good at using pupils' responses as teaching points. Good use of 'talking partners' helps pupils to generate ideas and ensures that everyone is involved. Resources are used effectively to make topics more meaningful and enjoyable. Pupils use computers with confidence. For example, in a topic on healthy lifestyles, they used computer software to design an advertising poster to help market their product. Teaching assistants work effectively to provide sensitive, well focused support for groups and individual pupils, who, as a result, make good progress. Teachers and subject leaders generally make good use of assessment data to plan lessons that build on what most pupils already know and can do. Marking is used effectively to celebrate progress and identify areas for improvement, although opportunities for pupils to contribute to the assessment of their own work and that of their classmates are sometimes missed.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum enables pupils to enjoy their education and achieve well. It places a strong emphasis on developing literacy, numeracy and other basic skills. Subject leaders work together to explore the ways in which subjects can be linked to enhance pupils' learning and enjoyment of lessons. The good personal development programme helps pupils to develop mature attitudes towards healthy lifestyles, their future well-being and relationships with others. The curriculum gives good opportunities for learning through first-hand experiences; for example, in science lessons that use the school grounds. It is also enriched through visitors to school, such as members of the fire service. Good provision for pupils who have additional needs, combined with well focused intervention, contributes to their good achievement. A growing range of popular after-school activities, such as chess and football, enrich the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils and parents appreciate the outstanding care and support provided by the school. Parents say that the school is very caring and that they feel comfortable talking to staff about any issue that might affect their children's progress. Good safeguarding arrangements and the before- and after-school provision are examples of the school's commitment to supporting pupils. School rules are clear and the system of rewards motivates pupils extremely well. This is evident from comments such as, 'We try really hard for a certificate and are really excited when we get one, and everyone says, "well done".' Very close monitoring of pupils' progress means that those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and other vulnerable learners are identified early and receive high levels of support so that they develop confidence and progress very well. Pupils know their learning targets and what they need to do to improve and achieve them. The school works closely with parents and the local authority to raise levels of attendance; where an absence is foreseeable resources are provided so that learning can continue when pupils are away from school.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The school is well led and managed. The headteacher and her senior leaders provide outstanding leadership. Their vision shows a determination to do the best for all the pupils and to make them aware of what they can achieve. The headteacher and senior leaders have created a strong sense of common purpose among staff, who feel well supported and fully involved in the life of the school. Subject leaders have clear roles and responsibilities. They provide good guidance through their schemes of work and are becoming increasingly involved in whole-school improvement. The school's leadership is aware of the strengths and areas for improvement of the school. They have the confidence and support of parents, who are keen to play an active role in their children's education. Improved monitoring of the work of teachers and pupils and the setting of ambitious targets have raised expectations and standards. A well planned approach to developing teachers' confidence and competence means that the resources of the school are used well. Governors support the school well and hold senior leaders to account. They are hard working and well informed through detailed headteacher reports, training and direct links with class teachers.

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Annex A

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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

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.

Annex A

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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

I would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were really impressed with your very good behaviour and the way you all get on so well. You made it very clear to us that you are proud of your school and enjoy learning because it is such a happy and safe school. We found that your school gives you a good standard of education that is getting better all the time. Some of the things we judged to be especially good are:

- your excellent attitudes to school, your respect for each other and your enthusiasm for learning
- the excellent way in which the adults in the school care for you and do all they can to help you make good progress
- the outstanding way in which your headteacher has worked to improve the school
- the outstanding teaching and help that you receive in the Nursery and Reception classes which gets you off to a really good start at school
- the way in which you, and the school council in particular, contribute to the life of the school.

There are two important things that could be better and so I have asked the school to:

- make sure that all lessons challenge you to learn to the best of your ability.

Thank you again for making us feel so welcome.