

Bollington Cross CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111252
Local Authority	Cheshire
Inspection number	310543
Inspection date	20 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Kevin Johnson

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	92
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Ian Smith
Headteacher	Mrs Julie Downing
Date of previous school inspection	29 November 2004
School address	Bollington Road Bollington Macclesfield Cheshire SK10 5EG
Telephone number	01625 572138
Fax number	01625 576602

Age group	5-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

The inspection evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the following aspects were investigated: the standards reached by pupils in English, mathematics and science and the progress they make overall; the effectiveness of the Foundation Stage; safeguarding of pupils and the academic guidance and support which they receive; the curriculum; and leadership and management of the school. Evidence was gathered from: the school's self-evaluation, national published assessment data and the school's own assessment records, policies and minutes; observation of the school at work; discussions with staff, pupils and governors; and scrutiny of the parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail but the inspector found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in the self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average sized school. Almost all of the pupils who attend are White British. The proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. A smaller than average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school holds the Healthy Schools award and has achieved the Activemark and Artsmark awards, and is a leading SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) school.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

Bollington Cross is an outstanding school. Exemplary leadership and management have brought about significant progress since the previous inspection. This has resulted in excellent teaching quality throughout the school, continually rising standards and achievement, and outstanding care, guidance and support for pupils

Pupils' personal development thrives. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Attendance is well above average and behaviour is exemplary at all times. Pupils enjoy the richness and challenge of their learning and the opportunities to express their individuality through, for example, art, drama and sports. Pupils feel safe because relationships are excellent. They support each other in the playground and in lessons by solving problems together. Taking on responsibility is routine. Some pupils, for example, enjoyed a science topic so much that their chosen reward was to plan and teach a science lesson of their own to the rest of the class. Others enjoy sharing the mysteries of The Hollow (a wooded area of the school grounds) with its badger sett and other wildlife which they are keen to protect. All pupils are fully aware of the need to maintain a healthy lifestyle and of how that can be done. By the end of Year 6 pupils are very confident and well equipped with the skills needed to secure their economic well-being. As they put it 'We love our school but we have to move on.'

Standards have been above national averages at both key stages over the past three years and have shown continuous improvement over that time. Standards in English at the end of Year 6 in 2007 were exceptionally high, representing outstanding achievement. The school's assessment data for the current Year 2 and Year 6 indicate improved standards in all subjects, with more pupils than previously likely to achieve levels in national tests which are above those expected for their age. There has been particularly rapid progress in science at Key Stage 2 so that it now matches performance in English. Currently, all pupils are expected to achieve at least the nationally expected standard and a very high proportion to achieve beyond that level. From starting in Reception children make excellent progress overall throughout the school and their achievement, by the time they leave, is outstanding. A major factor in this is the outstanding quality of teaching. Pupils' excellent progress is underpinned by teachers' knowledge, not only of what pupils already know but how they learn best. Resourcefulness and independence are expected. Teachers plan challenges that give lessons purpose and fill them with activity and excitement. One of many examples was seen in Reception when children went themselves to find new batteries for their electronic toy rather than abandon their mathematics activity.

The outstanding curriculum planned for pupils supports them in achieving as well as they do. Pupils apply their knowledge and skills across all subjects to make learning meaningful and exciting. Writing skills are used extremely well. The outcomes of this are reflected in the standards reached in national tests. Laptops are a feature of many lessons, so much so that during a mathematics lesson Year 3 pupils confidently used spreadsheets to collate data they had collected and present information as graphs. The curriculum is enriched by an outstanding array of clubs, visitors, visits and links with other providers such as schools and businesses. These links provide exciting challenges for all abilities. For example, 'Chemistry with Cabbage' is suitable for the more able pupils, whilst there are opportunities for all to improve their knowledge of science, geography, French and the arts and come to terms with the world of industry. Personal, social, health education and citizenship are very well provided for.

Consequently, pupils are very well informed about the choices open to them with regard to their personal well-being and relationships.

The quality of care and support provided for pupils, and at times families, is exceptional. Parents overwhelmingly agree that their children could not be in better hands. Required safeguarding procedures are in place to ensure that it is so. Some parents comment on the outstanding additional support given to those who have specific needs. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are given all the support they need to make rapid progress in relation to their targets. Academic support and guidance for pupils is outstanding. Pupils discuss and agree targets with teachers who mark work accordingly so that pupils know when targets are met and that it is time to plan the next steps. This system is very well supported by the school's very effective tracking information which enables staff to raise targets or provide extra support to match pupils' progress throughout the year.

Leaders and managers at all levels have contributed to the school's past improvement and the resulting outstanding quality of education and care for its pupils. Self-evaluation effectively informs the school improvement plan although this shows occasional caution, reflecting the leaders' mindset that school development is a continuous process. The headteacher has resolutely led the drive for outstanding quality and has settled for nothing less. This has been achieved through highly effective management of the curriculum and assessment, which in turn has lifted teaching quality and raised standards and achievement. The school is on track to meet its challenging targets for the current year and has raised its aspirations for future attainment levels. Senior leaders play a crucial part in monitoring and providing an accurate overview of progress. Governors are very well informed about the school. They have a clear understanding of its strengths and provide strong support in helping to shape future challenges. Finances and other resources are managed very well to provide outstanding value for money. The school has excellent capacity to maintain its current high quality.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Foundation Stage provision is expertly managed. Provision is outstanding. Children make rapid progress. From starting Reception with skills broadly in line with typical expectations for their age, they enter Year 1 with almost all having achieved all of their expected goals in all areas of learning. Several children exceed those expectations. Personal social and emotional development is exceptionally good. Children are confident, curious learners and have high levels of independence. These qualities are developed through the provision of well planned, exciting learning activities which children can often choose for themselves. Use of the outside area is excellent. Activities are linked to learning that has taken place in the classroom so children can work imaginatively with each other to extend their language development and their understanding independently. Assessment is used extremely well to measure progress and plan the next steps in learning. There are excellent links with the on site pre-school provision. Parents are full of praise for the way in which their children are helped to settle in and make progress. They appreciate the warm welcome they receive and how they can be part of the process.

What the school should do to improve further

- There are no significant areas for improvement.

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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?	1
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	1

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1
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	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
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?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
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?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
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	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Thank you very much for making me feel so welcome when I visited your school recently to find out how well you are learning. I enjoyed talking to you because you are all so polite. You are obviously very proud of your school, just as you should be, and I found out why.

You have an outstanding school. You all make excellent progress because your teachers know exactly what to do to make that happen. I remember talking to some of you about my school days and how I wished they had been as much fun as yours.

There is an amazing range of extra things for you to do, and how exciting that you have badgers living in your Hollow! Your headteacher and governors are outstanding too. All of the grown-ups in school take extremely good care of you. And do you know that your parents love your school as much as you do?

Well done for having attendance levels which are well above average. That is very important, so keep it up as well as all the rest of the excellent work you do.