

# Inspection of a good school: Bolton Primary School

Bolton, Appleby-in-Westmorland, Cumbria CA16 6AW

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Inspection dates:

22 January 2020

## Outcome

Bolton Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending the school. The values of 'caring, excelling, inspiring and enjoying' run through all aspects of school life. Pupils are proud when teachers notice them living out these values.

Staff and parents that we spoke to say that behaviour in the school has improved. Teachers have high expectations of behaviour. Everyone understands the school's behaviour policy. Most pupils behave well. Pupils know what is expected of them. Adults provide effective support to a small number of pupils who find it hard to concentrate. Pupils enjoy winning team points for good behaviour. Each half term, the team with most points wins the trophy in celebration assembly.

Pupils we spoke to say that bullying is rare. They know that if they tell an adult bullying will stop. Pupils say they feel safe, because everyone takes good care of each other.

Leaders have prioritised pupils' personal development. Parents and carers we spoke to appreciate the opportunities that pupils have for learning, both during and after school. Pupils enjoy activities such as gymnastics or delivering an assembly. This helps pupils develop their individual talents and interests.

Governors and staff share an ambition to improve the curriculum. Work to develop the curriculum has only recently begun. There is much to do if pupils are to know and remember more in subjects other than mathematics, early reading and physical education (PE).

## What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Subject leaders have only recently ensured that all national curriculum objectives are covered in long-term plans. In most subjects, leaders are at an early stage of developing

curriculum plans that set out what knowledge and skills pupils should learn and when they should learn them. As a result, in subjects other than mathematics, early reading and PE, pupils do not always know and remember as much as they should. Governors have not kept enough oversight of how the curriculum is developing.

Until recently, reading has not been a high enough priority in key stage 2. Leaders are developing their plans for reading from Year 2 onwards. Pupils' comprehension skills are not developed systematically. Some pupils choose their own reading books, without enough guidance. Reading books are often too difficult. Pupils do not always understand what they are reading. By the end of key stage 2, the proportion of pupils that achieve the expected standard is in line with the national average. However, pupils do not always enjoy their reading.

In the Reception Year, pupils have a daily phonics lesson. Children learn letters and sounds quickly. Adults check the progress that children make through the well-planned phonics programme. They make the most of opportunities to link phonics to handwriting. Children read books that are well matched to the sounds that they know. This allows children to practise their developing reading skills. If children fall behind, they receive good support and catch up quickly. Adults are well trained. By the end of Year 1, nearly all pupils achieve the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. However, some pupils who achieve the expected standard in Year 1 do not achieve the expected standard in reading in Year 2.

In mathematics, the curriculum plan clearly sets out what to teach and when to teach it. Teachers ensure that pupils are fluent in basic operations such as addition and multiplication. Pupils recap previous learning in each lesson. They apply their knowledge of number operations to a wide range of problems. Most pupils achieve the expected standard by the end of key stage 2.

In PE, the specialist leader has a well-ordered plan that shows what pupils need to learn and when. Younger children build on previous learning and perform confidently. Many pupils succeed in beating their personal best in exercises to improve fitness. Pupils understand the benefits of exercise on their physical and mental health. The leader uses her expertise to teach across the school and support the work of other staff.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive effective support. Leaders ensure that personalised plans are reviewed, so that new learning builds on previous learning. Pupils with SEND make progress rapidly through the targets on their plans. Parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, say that they would like more information about how their children are progressing.

Pupils enjoy taking on positions of responsibility, such as members of the school council or buddies for younger children. They take these responsibilities seriously. Older children listen to their buddy read. They care for their buddy over lunchtime. Older pupils thrive with the responsibilities they have.

Staff say that leaders and governors are mindful about their workload. They care about their well-being. Those who responded to the staff survey said that they are proud to work at this school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff care deeply about the well-being of their pupils. This reflects the school's caring nature. Staff know their children and families well. Staff are appropriately trained. They are vigilant to any possible signs of abuse or neglect. Leaders ensure that the right checks are made on governors, volunteers and those that work at the school. Records of these checks are complete and up to date.

Leaders teach pupils how to stay safe. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe when they walk down to the village hall for PE. They know about cyber bullying and know how to keep themselves safe online.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The curriculum is not coherently planned in subjects other than mathematics, early reading and PE. While long-term plans ensure that national curriculum objectives for all subjects are covered term by term, the school is at a very early stage in developing sequential planning that sets out a framework of learning to meet the objectives of the national curriculum. Leaders must ensure that all subjects are planned and sequenced, so that pupils acquire new knowledge and skills that build on what has been taught before. Governors should ensure that they keep oversight of curriculum plans and their impact as these develop.
- The reading curriculum from Year 2 to Year 6 is not well planned. The school's strategy for teaching reading comprehension is not delivered consistently well. Pupils do not always understand what it means to infer or retrieve information from texts. Leaders should ensure that the reading curriculum is well planned and that there is a consistent approach to its implementation for pupils from Year 2 onwards.
- When pupils are learning phonics, the books that they read are well matched to the phonic knowledge that they have been taught. This helps their fluency and enjoyment of their reading. However, some pupils choose their own reading books with little guidance from adults. These books are often too difficult, and pupils cannot understand what they are reading. As a result, this hinders their fluency and enjoyment of reading. Leaders should ensure that reading books are well organised to help children choose a book that is right for them.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 14 December 2011.

## How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	112176
<b>Local authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	10122090
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	54
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Mike Innerdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Elstone
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bolton.cumbria.sch.uk">www.bolton.cumbria.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The current headteacher was appointed in 2017.

## Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we met with the headteacher, curriculum leaders and other members of staff, including the school bursar.
- We spoke with a group of governors, including the chair of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- We looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including the single central record. We met with the headteacher who is responsible for safeguarding to discuss how the school keeps pupils safe.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. We spoke to staff responsible for the leadership of subjects. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work and spoke to them about their experience of the school.
- We considered the views of 48 pupils who responded to the pupil survey.
- We considered the views of 10 members of staff who completed Ofsted's staff survey.

- We spoke to several parents at the start of the school day. We considered the views of 18 parents who responded to Ofsted’s online questionnaire Parent View.
- We observed pupils reading and spoke to many pupils about their reading.

### **Inspection team**

Garry White, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Joan Williamson

Ofsted Inspector

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