

Boldmere Infant School and Nursery

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103342
Local Authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	376881
Inspection dates	15–16 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Mark Sims HMI

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

Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	322
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Anne Darby
Headteacher	Nicola Bell
Date of previous school inspection	5 December 2006
School address	Cofield Road Sutton Coldfield B73 5SD
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Age group	3–7
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 12 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Inspectors also held meetings with the headteacher, staff, members of the governing body, pupils, and the School's Improvement Partner. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation including safeguarding documents, improvement plans, progress reports, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' progress. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 114 parents and carers and took account of staff questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How good is pupils' achievement in mathematics, particularly for girls?
- How effective are the monitoring and evaluation of trends in the performance of different groups of pupils?
- How consistently good is the quality of teaching?
- What is the school doing to raise the level of attendance?
- How well does the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils, particularly in writing?

Information about the school

Boldmere Infants is larger than the average primary school. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is broadly in line with the national average and there is a small but increasing number of pupils who speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school’s capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Boldmere Infants is an outstanding school. Children enter the school with broadly the expected levels of attainment for their age, but by the time they leave at the end of Year 2 attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is well above national averages. This has been achieved under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher and senior leaders. They have ensured that the quality of teaching is consistently at least good and often outstanding, and that care, guidance and support are outstanding, particularly for pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. As one parent said, summing up the views of many others, ‘Boldmere is a lovely school, very welcoming and supportive. It strikes the perfect balance between education and pastoral care.’ A very strong partnership with the junior school is at the heart of much of the school’s work, focused on developing the role of senior and middle leaders. Rigorous and accurate monitoring of teaching has led to significant improvements in the quality of provision. Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school’s strengths and areas for development through a highly effective self-evaluation process. As a result, the school has an outstanding capacity to improve.

The school promotes equality of opportunity extremely well, and within an increasingly diverse school population the pupils get on with each other very well. The governing body supports the school and has acted strategically to bring it closer to the junior school as a federation, but the extent to which it can challenge robustly the performance of the school is reduced by its members’ availability and level of training.

Attainment by Year 2 has been consistently very high over recent years. Pupils make outstanding progress in reading, writing and mathematics in lessons taught by well-qualified, well-trained teachers who demonstrate a very high level of commitment to their work. Achievement data are analysed thoroughly to ensure all pupils are doing well and that there are no significant differences between boys and girls or other groups. Effective support is provided early and monitored to ensure that it is making a difference. Consequently, all groups of pupils make equally rapid progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are very well supported and are set work that challenges them to do as well as they can.

Children get off to an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. From the Nursery onwards pupils have a very strong awareness of the importance of healthy living and eating through their ‘grow to learn’ project where they grow, eat and sell

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their own vegetables. Pupils overwhelmingly enjoy their learning because lessons are stimulating and challenging, and their behaviour in lessons and around school is outstanding. Pupils have the opportunity from a very early age to take on responsibilities and consequently their contribution to the school and local communities is outstanding. Pupils report overwhelmingly that they feel safe in school and this view is supported by parents and carers. Attendance is good and improving, although too many pupils arrive late. The school and governing body have worked successfully with parents and carers to reduce absence during term time for holidays. The creative curriculum is very well suited to pupils' differing needs and teachers are skilled at ensuring activities challenge pupils of all abilities. Safeguarding arrangements are good and the record-keeping arrangements are exemplary. Overall the school provides exceptional value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that the governing body is well informed to monitor all aspects of the work of the school by:
 - meeting with senior leaders more regularly and formally to review the work of the school
 - developing a programme of training so that its members are well informed to ask challenging questions of the school's performance.
- Ensure that all pupils arrive punctually at the start of the school day.
- Provide greater opportunities for pupils to learn about and experience diversity in the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**1**

Pupils' learning in lessons is outstanding because teachers consistently plan activities that stimulate and interest them. Pupils thrive on the challenges they are set and want to do well. They work very well with each other in pairs or small groups to support each other and are able to work independently. They respond well to teachers, and their relationships with each other are very good. Pupils know what they are trying to achieve in lessons as teachers regularly share learning intentions with them, and regularly refer to them as the lesson progresses. The work seen in Year 2 confirmed that the trend of very high attainment in reading, writing and mathematics is continuing. All groups of pupils are doing very well in lessons, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and the small number of pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Pupils are enthusiastic in lessons and take the initiative in making choices about their learning. Pupils have been involved in choosing their own rewards for good behaviour and play an active part on the school council in making suggestions. They take responsibility to apply for positions of responsibility and have to provide references as well. They are confident about reporting incidents if they occur, that

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they will be listened to, and that the school will take swift action to resolve any issue raised. Pupils are prepared well for the next steps in their education and later life. Key academic skills are very well developed and attendance is improving and is now above average, workplace skills are not yet fully developed because a small proportion of pupils arrive late for school. Pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Despite some outstanding features, pupils’ cultural development is relatively weak in terms of their understanding of differences within the United Kingdom, although a number of events have been held to celebrate world food day and to introduce pupils to a wider variety of world music.

These are the grades for pupils’ outcomes

Pupils’ achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils’ learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Lessons have excellent pace and engage pupils in their learning. Teachers’ subject knowledge and planning are often exemplary, setting a sure foundation for delivering high-quality lessons. In all lessons, strong teacher/pupil relationships and classroom management create an environment that pupils enjoy and where excellent learning can take place. Teachers use questioning and assessment skilfully to check the level of pupils’ understanding and to set challenging but realistic targets. Praise is used effectively to reward pupils’ work and efforts. The school has developed an outstanding academic monitoring and assessment system. This allows teachers to assess areas of weakness and set targets which foster high levels of success. The quality of marking is excellent and this contributes to pupils’ overall progress by providing them with clear ways to improve their performance.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

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The outstanding curriculum fully meets the needs of pupils, both at group and individual level, because it concentrates on developing and educating all as widely as possible. It emphasises the development of good social skills, and develops individuals with enquiring minds who are capable of managing their own learning. This stimulates pupils to ask questions around the topics they are studying. Pupils enjoy a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities. The 'Busy Bodies Before and After School provision' caters for up to 90 pupils and are particularly successful in giving them opportunities for constructive play, sporting and learning activities both indoors and out. Literacy and numeracy are taught very well, as demonstrated by pupils' outcomes. All pupils receive a taught lesson of information and communication technology (ICT) a week.

Very well-focused support to enhance the learning and progress of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that their overall progress is outstanding. Regular, up-to-date tracking ensures pupils' needs are identified early on so they can be fully met. Senior leaders review data on pupils' progress closely in order to take follow-up action where necessary. Learning mentors also help to ensure that their various needs are addressed. Transition arrangements are outstanding, both on entry and in transition to the junior school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Inspired by the headteacher, the school has developed a culture of rigorous monitoring and challenge by all leaders to hold staff to account. Challenging targets are set for all pupils. Senior leaders make an outstanding contribution to the improvements that have led to the consistently high quality of teaching. Staff are fully supportive of the drive and ambition of the senior leadership team and there is a shared sense of purpose within the whole school community, including the junior school. Very close working between the two schools leads to significant benefits, particularly in terms of joint training and efficient use of staffing resources. Work with other agencies, particularly for those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress. The headteacher's role as a trainer for leadership and management within the local cluster brings additional expertise to develop other leaders within the school. Community cohesion is good overall. Despite the clear strengths in terms of cohesion within the school, local communities, and international links with financial support for a school in Liberia, pupils do not yet have enough first-hand experience of the lives of others within the

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wider United Kingdom.

The governing body is fully supportive of all the headteacher is seeking to achieve and was instrumental in bringing the two schools together, although on a day-to-day basis it is not sufficiently informed to fully challenge the school. Relationships with parents and carers are very good, as indicated in the numerous positive comments in their questionnaires. Communication with parents and carers is highly effective through email, newsletters and regular drop-ins between termly scheduled meetings. The school is highly responsive to their feedback. The ‘inspire’ afternoons where parents and carers work with their children are highly regarded by them. Safeguarding is good. There are clear and comprehensive policies and procedures. Training for staff is updated regularly. The governing body’s awareness of safeguarding issues, however, is less well developed. The school promotes equality of opportunity exceptionally well. All pupils achieve at the same high level, and close monitoring and tracking ensure that no group is left behind. Reported racist incidents are exceptionally rare.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school’s engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make outstanding progress across all areas of learning as a result of high-quality teaching. From average starting points in Reception they reach an above average level by the time they move into Year 1. Children also make outstanding progress in the Nursery but over a quarter have to transfer to other schools as they are not eligible for a place in the school. Children understand about healthy eating from an early age and are involved in growing and eating their own vegetables in school. They have excellent attitudes to each other, sharing and cooperating. They are active, inquisitive learners. Children behave well, understand and follow rules,

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and know how to keep themselves safe.

The nursery environment offers high-quality provision with free-flow opportunities between inside and outdoors, but the building places more limitations on the reception classes where there is less space and no direct access to outside. Adults support children’s learning exceptionally well. Activities are very well planned, building on prior learning and meeting children’s needs. Detailed assessment enables adults to tailor next steps to individual needs. Questioning is highly effective in challenging children. There is a good balance of adult-initiated and child-led activities, although they are more restricted in Reception by the learning environment. Behaviour is excellent as a result of clear rules and expectations and very positive relationships.

Leadership and management are outstanding. There are very clear procedures for engaging with parents and carers and encouraging their involvement in their children’s learning. Learning journals are used very well. Staff, children and their parents and carers contribute to them, and they inform parents and carers how well their children are progressing. Leaders work well with adults to monitor the quality of provision and seek improvements. Leaders have an ambitious vision for developing the Early Years Foundation Stage provision which is not impeded by the constraints of the building.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

Views of parents and carers

Almost all parents and carers who responded to the survey said that their children enjoyed school and felt safe, and that the teaching in the school was good. A very large majority agreed with all of the other statements. A very small minority disagreed that the school kept them informed about their children’s progress, met their children’s particular needs or took account of their suggestions and concerns. Inspectors investigated these concerns and spoke to a number of parents and carers at the school gate. They found that overall the school’s engagement with parents and carers is outstanding and that it provides an exceptional level of care, guidance and support to meet pupils’ individual needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Boldmere Infant School and Nursery to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 114 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 322 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	74	28	24	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	82	71	32	28	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	53	46	51	44	4	3	4	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	71	62	38	33	2	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	79	69	33	29	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	68	59	43	37	2	2	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	59	40	35	2	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	60	52	39	34	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	63	55	45	39	4	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	54	47	54	47	1	1	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	49	43	53	46	3	3	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	64	56	46	40	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	78	68	33	29	3	3	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 8 April 2011 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



17 November 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Boldmere Infant School and Nursery, Sutton Coldfield, B73 5SD

You will be aware that we recently came to inspect your school, and we have judged it to be outstanding. It is exceptionally well led by your headteacher and other leaders. They make sure that you have a very high quality of lessons so that you make as much progress as you possibly can. By the time you leave at the end of Year 2 you are doing really well in your reading, writing and mathematics. The school's very close partnership with the junior school is bringing many benefits to both schools.

You play your part in the way you behave so well in school and get on so well with each other. You have told us how much you enjoy school and feel safe, and the school does a fantastic job of looking after you and making sure that those of you who need extra help or support receive it. You are closely involved in making decisions about the school through the school council and about your learning. We were very impressed with the range of topics and subjects you study and the chance for you to be involved in extra activities such as 'busy bodies' or 'growing to learn.' You are keen to take on extra responsibilities and this is reflected in the high number of you who apply for jobs in the school.

There are three things we have asked the school to do to help it improve further. The governing body is responsible for checking that everything in the school is as it should be, and it should meet more regularly with the other school leaders and become more informed, so that it can help the school get even better. We have also asked the school to make sure that you all arrive on time – you can help here – and that you have more opportunities to develop a good understanding of the wide range of cultures and beliefs represented in the United Kingdom.

I would like to thank you all for making us so welcome, and especially those of you who took the time to talk to one of us. I wish you every success in your future.

Yours sincerely

Mark Sims
Her Majesty's Inspector

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