

Alderman Bolton Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133677
Local authority	Warrington
Inspection number	381530
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2011
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	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	247
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Smith
Headteacher	Lyndsey Glass
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2009
School address	Longdin Street Latchford Warrington WA4 1PW
Telephone number	01925 633262
Fax number	01925 633612
Email address	aldermanbolton@warrington.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors who observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 10 teachers. Meetings were held with groups of parents and carers, pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at national assessment data and the school's assessments, policies and governing body minutes, curriculum and safeguarding documentation, and samples of pupils' work. Also taken into account were 57 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those completed by pupils and staff members.

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

- Is the progress of pupils good enough and has the school increased the challenge for its more-able pupils?
- What action has school taken to improve attendance and especially to reduce the number of pupils who are persistently absent?
- Has the quality of teaching strengthened since the previous inspection?
- How effectively do leaders evaluate the school's work and plan improvements?

Information about the school

The very large majority of pupils in this larger than average-sized primary school are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is double the national average. An above-average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. A breakfast club is provided by the school.

Pupils' advances in their use of information and communication technology (ICT) are recognised in national awards gained in 2009 and 2010. The school has also achieved National Healthy School status.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Pupils' learning and their good personal development thrive under the outstanding care, guidance and support provided. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe. Their behaviour is good and they are polite and considerate toward others. Attendance is average, having improved considerably since the previous inspection.

Pupils enjoy school because of the interesting and varied curriculum on offer and activities and lessons which they say are fun. A good example is the opportunity, taken by a group to be part of a creative planning and design project in which a mini-motorbike was transformed into a 'cow' which they named their 'mootorcycle'. This not only gained competition awards, but had a good impact on some pupils' attendance.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage from levels of development on entry which are well below those typical for their age. The good progress is maintained in Years 1 to 6 because of good and at times outstanding teaching. Attainment rises as pupils move through the school and at the end of Year 6 it is average. The most recent national test results show improvement in English and mathematics. However, some pupils with higher ability in writing when they were at Key Stage 1 did not attain their predicted levels in writing at Key Stage 2. Senior leaders rightly recognise this as a focus for school improvement. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided for well. Precise individual learning plans and skilled intervention by staff ensure that these pupils make good progress.

Effective leaders and managers have brought a good measure of improvement since the previous inspection. Incisive self-evaluation has resulted in a rise in attainment. For example, the rigorous evaluation of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics has led to teachers' gaining a detailed knowledge of what every pupil throughout the school should achieve. This has been a powerful tool in improving lesson planning and driving up attainment. However, this good practice has not been used by all subject leaders to evaluate and drive up standards across the whole curriculum. Stronger leadership in the Early Years Foundation Stage, better systems for checking pupils' progress and teachers' use of them, and higher quality teaching, provide ample evidence of the school's good capacity for continued improvement.

Senior leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's work and are committed fully to its further success.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that more-able pupils are always challenged by their writing tasks and that they achieve as a minimum their predicted levels at the end of Year 6.
- Strengthen the leadership of subjects by extending the good practice used to evaluate and improve pupils' progress and learning in English and mathematics to all subjects.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils learn well in lessons because they behave well and are attentive to their teachers. The clear guidance they receive through their marking, and the way teachers make sure that every pupil is aware of the learning that is expected especially in literacy and mathematics, also adds to pupils' capacity for good learning. Pupils enjoy the challenges provided and particularly like the opportunities to discuss problems with their partners because it helps to clarify their thinking and enables them to make progress. The increasing use of personal mobile computers, which can be taken home by pupils, enhances both interest and learning opportunities significantly.

There has been recent good improvement in attainment at both key stages and especially in reading and writing at Key Stage 1. This is because the good preparation in Early Years Foundation Stage is now having a positive impact on learning in Years 1 and 2. School assessments show that progress from year to year is good. The reason for this is that the school is quick to identify potentially weaker groups and give them additional support. For example, no Year 3 pupil is currently underachieving in mathematics because of the timely and successful provision of the Every Child Counts programme (a scheme to improved basic number skills) while they were in Year 2. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have made good progress in mathematics from earlier starting points. Nevertheless, the school has recognised a shortfall in the number of pupils who were expected to reach the higher level in writing due to the lack of challenge in the writing tasks planned for them. Good progress for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is ensured through early identification of their needs, strong contact with parents and carers and precise planning.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They are mindful of one another and generally tolerant of their differences. Pupils are strongly opposed to bullying and racist behaviour and say that such incidents are uncommon in school. They have a good understanding of issues relating to healthy lifestyles and are acutely aware of potentially dangerous situations including those linked to the use of the internet. Pupils make a strong contribution to the life of the school via school council activities, being play leaders and running their own lunchtime football and dance clubs. They take part in local religious and arts festivals and work hard at their charitable fund raising. Their good personal skills, improving attendance and

increasing competencies, especially with ICT, prepare them well for the future stages of their education.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

In most lessons, pupils are engaged in lots of activity and there is good pace to their learning. Teachers make sure that pupils know what is expected of them by the end of the lesson and that they have the right resources to achieve their lesson targets. Teachers know their pupils' abilities well and use assessment and marking effectively to plan and point out the next steps for pupils to take in their learning. Teachers question pupils well, using their good subject knowledge to challenge thinking and get the best out of them. Good links across subjects help pupils to build up skills purposefully. Pupils in Year 2, for example, use computers in the ICT suite to investigate graphs made up of pictures before moving on later to learn of other ways of presenting information and answering questions about block graphs. Pupils' confidence with technology led to outstanding learning in a Year 6 lesson when all pupils became engrossed in the process of improving multi-media presentations using their individual personal computers.

Well-trained and skilled teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They contribute to planning and the evaluation of progress and manage pupils sensitively in lessons and in small-group work. There are a small number of occasions when learning is less effective because there is too much talk from the teacher and too little activity for the pupils. Interest wanes when this happens, and progress slows. In these lessons, objectives are not always clearly shared, so pupils are uncertain about what is expected of them.

There is an engaging curriculum which pupils enjoy and through which they achieve well. Provision for literacy and numeracy is planned well. Strong emphasis on developing speaking and listening skills has benefits for learning in other subjects. This was particularly noticeable, for example, in a French lesson where Year 4 pupils'

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

good listening skills led to some impressive conversational French speaking. Music also has a high profile and good instrumental provision results in some pupils' excellent personal achievement in music. A good range of activities outside lesson time enable pupils to nurture some of their favourite interests such as volleyball, dance or martial arts. Visits and visitors enrich learning by giving additional insight into topic work. Pupils' sporting skills benefit from productive links with the local high school.

Parents and carers overwhelmingly endorse their children's view that they are very well cared for in school. The provision of care, guidance and support is very much at the heart of what the school does. Care and support for pupils and families who may be considered potentially the most vulnerable is exceptional. Home-school links are very effective in reducing absenteeism and removing other barriers which may hinder pupils' learning and achievement. Highly-effective work with outside agencies ensures the best possible targeted support for pupils. Most parents and carers are very happy with the helpful arrangements for pupils joining the school and transferring to the next and feel that they are very well informed about their children's progress.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Determined leadership from the headteacher and active support from the governing body has established a cohesive staff team that shares strong commitment to school improvement. Senior staff members are an effective critical friend. They challenge the headteacher to test ideas rigorously and ensure that all staff, through the self-evaluation process have ownership of school improvements. Robust evaluation of attainment and progress in English, for example, has given all staff a sharp insight into the effective use of assessment. This has had a very positive impact on planning and expectations for varying groups of pupils leading to improved attainment. Leaders now recognise the value of extending this good practice in order to bring about improvement in all subjects. Teaching and learning are managed effectively. Astute appointments and regular monitoring and discussion have contributed to an improved picture overall.

Governance is good and discharges its statutory responsibilities efficiently. Members of the governing body provide good measures of challenge and support and hold the school to account for its academic performance and other areas for improvement. Its members are very much aware of the school's context and closely monitor provision for the potentially most vulnerable pupils as well as that for the more-able. All forms of discrimination are strongly challenged and there is common determination that all pupils have the opportunities they need to achieve well. Measures taken to safeguard pupils are good. All adults are well trained and fully aware of their responsibilities.

Pupils' views are taken into account and have led to decisive action being taken by the governing body to make improvements. Community cohesion is promoted satisfactorily. Strong links are established with local schools' groups and the school is a culturally harmonious community where pupils form good friendships. Nevertheless, pupils' first-hand experiences do not extend beyond the local area and this limits opportunities for wider cultural awareness. The school is aware of the need to strengthen further its contribution to this element of community cohesion.

These are the grades for the leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account:	
The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy their learning and make good progress because of the well-organised and well-planned provision for them. Their welfare and safety are given high priority. As a result, children settle quickly into routines, gain in confidence and learn to work well in groups. Children are courteous and behave well. Procedures for observing and recording children's individual progress are good and provide clear guidance when staff plan next steps in their learning and development. Good provision for children's development of early literacy skills and their use of ICT enables them to tackle these areas confidently and become good independent learners. Teaching is both supportive and encouraging. Activities are punctuated with questions and prompting to ensure children get the most from their play. There is a good balance between those activities led by adults and those which children choose for themselves. Resources are used well to set up stimulating play both inside and in the outdoor area. The recently appointed phase leader has gained the full confidence of the staff, as well as parents and carers, and has established strong teamwork throughout Nursery and Reception. There is a clear plan for continued development including some strengthening of provision for children to develop numeracy skills. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A small minority of parents and carers returned completed questionnaires. Of those, the vast majority expressed highly positive views about most aspects of the school. A very small minority expressed concerns about the school's management of behaviour and about communication with the school. Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour and scrutinised the school's policies and records of how incidents are handled. The findings are reflected in the report. All concerns brought to inspectors' attention were discussed with school leaders while ensuring that parents' and carers' anonymity was always protected.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Alderman Bolton Community Primary School 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 57 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 247 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	38	67	17	30	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	33	58	21	37	1	2	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	32	56	22	39	2	4	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	30	53	23	40	4	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	33	58	20	35	2	4	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	56	22	39	1	2	1	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	33	58	21	37	0	0	1	2
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)	30	53	22	39	2	4	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	53	22	39	4	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	29	51	21	37	1	2	4	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	26	46	22	39	6	11	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	61	18	32	2	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	63	16	28	3	5	1	2

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 is for the period 1 September 2010 to 08 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.



21 October 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Alderman Bolton Community Primary School, Warrington
WA4 1PW**

Thank you very much for the warm welcome you gave me and the inspection team when we came to inspect your school recently. We enjoyed talking to you about your school. You told us a lot about the things you enjoy and how some of your lessons are really exciting. We also found out a few good things for ourselves. We noticed, for example, how polite and well-mannered you are and that you behave well. We could tell from your enthusiasm that you are proud of your school. Well done also, for helping your attendance to improve. All of those things are very important so do keep them up. We also agree with you about your lessons being fun.

Yours is a good school and some good things have happened since it was last inspected. The standards you reach in English and mathematics are average, but they are improving. You make good progress in your work. Your teachers do a really good job and sometimes your lessons are outstanding. The grown-ups in school take excellent care of you. That is why you take such good care of each other, enjoy school and achieve well.

Despite all of these good things your school leaders would like it to be even better. To help that to happen we have suggested two things for them to work on. The first is to make sure that all of you are challenged fully by your writing tasks, especially those of you who are more-able. Second, we have asked those in charge of subjects to help raise standards across the whole school by using the same practices that have been used to improve your skills in English and mathematics so successfully.

Yours sincerely

Kevin Johnson
Lead Inspector

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