

Bowness Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105197
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	336446
Inspection dates	3–4 February 2010
Reporting inspector	Brian Holmes

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	100
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Andrew Gallimore
Headteacher	Mr Peter Sturgess
Date of previous school inspection	6 March 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors spent 80% of their time looking at learning, visiting nine lessons, observing five teachers, looking at pupils' work and observing their behaviour at playtimes and lunchtimes. Inspectors held discussions with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at its assessment data, evidence of activities and events, information about the curriculum and monitoring and evaluation documents. Inspectors analysed 37 parents' questionnaires and 60 pupil questionnaires.

- the effectiveness of strategies to improve attainment and progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2
- the rates of pupils' progress in writing across the school
- the effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' levels of absence and persistent absence
- the effectiveness with which assessment for learning, including marking, is used to improve the progress of pupils in all classes
- the extent to which the curriculum is impacting on pupils' achievement through the embedding of opportunities to apply key skills in all subjects.

Information about the school

Bowness Primary is small school on the outskirts of Bolton. The proportion of pupils eligible to take a free school meal is higher than average. Early Years Foundation Stage provision consists of a mixed-age class for children of Reception-age with Year 1 pupils. At the time of the inspection, the school was awaiting local authority approval to implement plans to improve its outdoor provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage. The majority of pupils are White British with an above average proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils for whom English is not their first language is broadly average, although very few of these pupils require specialist support. The school serves a traveller community, with an above average number of pupils from Gypsy Roma Traveller families at the school. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much higher than average, including those with statements of special educational need, and has increased significantly since the last inspection. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to the teaching staff. The school has gained a number of awards including the Healthy Schools award and the International School's Award Foundation level.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

Bowness has a number of strengths related to its ethos which places provision for pupils' care, guidance and support at the heart of its work. This good provision results in an inclusive school where pupils are happy and enjoy their experiences in a safe environment. Pupils are very enthusiastic about their school. 'It is like a family', was a typical comment from pupils.

Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points to reach standards that are below average overall by the end of Year 6. Standards in writing are not as high as those in reading and mathematics. Teaching is satisfactory with examples of good practice but the use of learning targets to help pupils know what they are aiming for, is not consistent in all classes. The curriculum satisfactorily supports pupils' achievement. It is enriched well with activities to support learning and personal development. However, opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills across all subjects are not planned systematically enough. Pupils' behaviour, in classes and around the school is a strength and contributes well to their learning. Pupils from different backgrounds get on well with each other in a close-knit community. They have a good understanding of how to live healthily and make a good contribution to the school and the community.

In spite of significant staffing and leadership changes, the school has successfully maintained the quality of pupils' education. Senior leaders have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through accurate self-evaluation, which is leading to steady improvements in pupils' outcomes. Rates of progress are improving in all classes, and more quickly in Years 1 to 3, because of recent improvement in the quality of teaching. With a more stable staff and leadership team in place, there are indications that the school has a satisfactory capacity to improve its performance further. However, governors and subject leaders are not fully involved in checking that the actions the school takes have the desired impact in all aspects of its provision.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve pupils' attainment in writing by:
- - ensuring that there is a consistent approach across the school to using learning targets so that pupils have clear goals to aim for
- - ensuring that there are consistently planned opportunities in all classes for pupils to apply their writing skills.
- Improve the effectiveness of governors and subject leaders by ensuring that they are fully involved in checking the impact of actions taken to improve pupils' outcomes.

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- About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged to be satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit from an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils show positive attitudes to their learning and, when teaching is good, show high levels of interest. For example, pupils in the Year 2/3 class worked enthusiastically to 'make adventurous word choices', discussing their ideas in pairs and working in groups to improve their use of adjectives and adverbs. In some lessons, opportunities to engage pupils in these activities are missed and learning slows because too much time is spent explaining the task at hand.

Across the school, pupils make satisfactory progress to reach standards below the national average by the end of Year 6. Standards are improving across the school, particularly in reading. In writing, pupils' attainment is lower than it is in reading and mathematics. Evidence from lesson observations and pupils' work shows that most pupils make satisfactory progress from their different starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who are Gypsy Roma Travellers make good progress against their targets because of the consistently good levels of support that they receive in lessons from teaching assistants.

Pupils are clear that they feel safe, that there is no bullying and that they know which adults to go to if they have problems. Pupils show good levels of respect for one another. They have a good understanding of living healthily through their participation in sports and organised games, such as the House Groups every lunchtime and the Flicker Trail in the school grounds. They like the healthy 'tuck' the school provides at break times. They contribute well to the school through the work of the school council and through their collective responsibility to look after each other. They were involved in the organisation of a community event, the 'Light Fantastic', with park rangers at Moses Country Park. Attendance is improving and is average, taking into account the attendance of all pupils who are persistently absent. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education through the skills they develop in their learning and the opportunities they are given to develop their cooperative skills through working with other pupils. Pupils develop good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. They engage enthusiastically with the sporting, artistic and cultural opportunities they are provided with and develop their understanding of other cultures and faiths, as when Year 4/5 pupils wrote letters to a school in India.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

How effective is the provision?

In the best lessons, pupils make good progress because they are fully engaged and enjoy their learning and are given good opportunities to work with other pupils in pairs and small groups. Planning is thorough and teachers use information from assessments to match work effectively to the needs of all pupils. Teaching assistants are deployed effectively and provide good levels of support, particularly to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils. The pace of learning slows occasionally when teachers do not make clear to pupils what they are looking for by the end of the lesson. Comments in marking make clear to pupils what to do next to improve their work, although some pupils are unsure about the meaning of the symbols that teachers use to mark their work. The use of learning targets to give pupils longer-term goals to aim for is implemented inconsistently across the school.

The contribution of the curriculum to pupils' achievement is satisfactory. A focus on writing and mathematics is leading to improved progress for most pupils, although progress is slower in writing. Teachers make appropriate links between subjects and pupils undertake a satisfactory range of writing activities, but opportunities for them to apply their writing skills are not used systematically in all subjects. Pupils' learning is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities such as the Kiwi Clubs and Shining Stars and additional activities in the curriculum. There is widespread take-up of opportunities to learn a musical instrument and all classes undertake an arts project, including the opportunity to work with professional musicians.

Pupils are well cared for. Staff respond to pupils in a calm, caring and reassuring manner which results in good relationships that help pupils develop their confidence and

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self-esteem. Clearly targeted support for vulnerable pupils helps pupils, who find learning difficult, to enjoy school. The school has effective procedures in place for monitoring pupils' attendance which are leading to improvement in this aspect of its work.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a clear focus for raising achievement and improving pupils' well-being. There are effective systems for checking the quality of teaching and tracking the performance of pupils. As a result, teaching is improving. The school has a clear understanding of its priorities, although subject leaders are not as consistent as senior leaders in ensuring that actions taken raise pupils' achievement. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties satisfactorily and ensures that pupils are safe. Governors are involved in school self-evaluation, although not fully in checking the effects actions have in raising standards. Safeguarding procedures are good with clear policies and guidelines. These meet all current requirements. Equality of opportunity is promoted well. The school has worked hard to ensure that all its pupils are included in all activities. As a result, the gap between the performance of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and other pupils is closing. The Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils are valued members of the school community. There is good engagement with parents and carers and with a wide range of partners to support pupils' learning and well-being. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. The school is a harmonious community and, through International School status, it has prioritised working with groups beyond the local area, although these plans are at an early stage in terms of their effect on pupils' understanding.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2

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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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

There is a high priority on children's safety in a secure learning environment. As a result, children settle quickly and happily and enjoy good relationships with staff who know them well. Children show good levels of independence in choosing activities and in other ways, such as self-registering each morning. Parents are positive about the provision their children experience and these good relationships have a positive effect on children's learning. Children respond to their learning with good behaviour and enthusiasm. Staff use assessments appropriately to plan a good range of activities that respond to children's needs. Children are excited when undertaking a 'treasure hunt' to find objects beginning with the letter 'm'. In child-initiated activities they play together well and share resources in the role-play and sand areas, eagerly making 'gingerbread' men using play dough, linked to their story in literacy.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactorily led and managed. The leader and manager is enthusiastic and has identified the correct priorities to improve provision, including daily writing and calculation activities to improve progress and planned activities to overcome the current lack of dedicated outdoor provision. Children make satisfactory progress from starting points well below those expected in all aspects of their learning. By the end of Reception, their attainment is well below that expected nationally.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

Inspectors' findings agree with the views of the very large majority of parents who

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express positive views about the school. They are happy with their children's experiences at school. Parents typically commented on the 'family atmosphere' at the school and the hard work of staff to meet their children's needs.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bowness 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 37 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 100 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	28	76	8	22	0	0	1	3
The school keeps my child safe	25	68	11	30	0	0	1	3
The school informs me about my child's progress	18	49	15	41	3	8	1	3
My child is making enough progress at this school	16	43	16	43	3	8	1	3
The teaching is good at this school	18	49	18	49	0	0	1	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	18	49	15	41	3	8	1	3
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	57	15	41	0	0	1	3
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)	16	43	16	43	2	5	1	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	21	57	15	41	0	0	1	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	19	51	13	35	2	5	1	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	43	20	54	0	0	1	3
The school is led and managed effectively	16	43	19	51	0	0	1	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	59	14	38	0	0	1	3

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 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 inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

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 were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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 pupil's 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.



5 February 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bowness Primary School, Bolton, BL3 1BT

Thank you for being so welcoming and friendly when I visited your school recently. I enjoyed my time at Bowness Primary, particularly the discussions I had with you. I know that you like your school a great deal and that you are rightly proud of it.

I think that Bowness Primary is a satisfactory school with several strengths. I was impressed by your good behaviour and by how well all the pupils get on with each other. You told me that you like the small size of the school because everyone knows each other and it is easy to make friends. You said that you like your teachers and told me they are kind. You enjoy your lessons and all the activities like Yoga and the Kiwi Clubs. You make a good contribution through the jobs you do and by helping each other. As a result of everything the school does for you, the standards you reach are not quite as high as in other schools but you make satisfactory progress in your learning. All the things the school does for you are made possible because your headteacher, the governors and all the adults work hard to do their best for you.

I am asking the school to do a number of things to improve. First, I have asked the school to help you to improve your writing by making sure that all of you know the targets you are aiming for and giving you more opportunities to use your writing skills in all your subjects. Second, I have asked staff in charge of subjects and governors to check what they do so as to make sure they keep improving your education. You can help by continuing to work hard, behaving well and doing your best to help the school improve further.

With very best wishes for the future

Yours sincerely

Mr Brian Holmes

Lead inspector

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