

Bexton Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	111232
Local Authority	Cheshire East
Inspection number	337645
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2009
Reporting inspector	Judith Tolley

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	407
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Cllr A Ranfield
Headteacher	Mr Paul Dolan
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at the school's records of pupils' progress, school improvement plans and 118 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the progress pupils make
- the use of assessment information
- the effectiveness of leadership and management at all levels.

Information about the school

Bexton Primary School is much larger than average. The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. About half come from the immediate area but the parents of the other half have chosen to send their child to this school from further away. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is low. The school has a lower than average percentage of children eligible for free school meals. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Bexton is a good school with some outstanding features. The vast majority of parents are pleased with the way the school supports and encourages their children.

Pupils are proud of their school. They typically say, 'I love my school because it is a great place to learn.' This is reflected in their excellent behaviour, their very positive attitudes towards their learning and their high attendance rates. Pupils value the help they get from all staff and the opportunities they have to pursue their interests in extra-curricular and sports activities. However, some say they are not sure how well they are getting on and would like more guidance about how to improve. Pupils contribute well to the school and the wider community. This is demonstrated by the active school council, fund-raising activities and groups such as the Eco group and 'playground helpers.'

Many pupils start school with standards that are above average for their age. They make good progress as they move through the school and by the end of Year 6 their academic standards are high and their achievement is outstanding. Although pupils reach high standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6, their progress in writing lower down the school is slower. Opportunities to practise their skills across other subjects are often limited. Good teaching enables all pupils to make good progress. Lessons are well planned and engage pupils' interest. However, opportunities are missed to challenge the more able pupils to reach their full potential and for all pupils to work together to solve problems and to explore ideas for themselves.

Pupils' progress is tracked closely. Any difficulties are identified rapidly and this triggers support, closely tailored to individual needs in the intervention programmes. However, this information is not always sufficiently taken into account in day-to-day lesson planning.

Good care, guidance and support and an increasingly exciting and imaginative curriculum contribute significantly to pupils' progress. As a result of the excellent support they receive pupils with special needs and/or disabilities are able to participate fully in whole-class activities and make the same good progress as their classmates. The school's commitment to, and pupils' involvement in, the local community is good.

Leadership and management are good. The focus on improvement, combined with an accurate evaluation of the school's work, has ensured that standards have risen rapidly and significantly over the last two years and achievement has improved. This indicates that there is a good capacity for further improvement. Middle leaders and managers are not yet fully involved in the school's monitoring and evaluation procedures. They do not have all the information they need to be able to be effective in improving the quality of

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teaching and learning in their subject areas. Governors are well informed and are developing their role as critical friends satisfactorily. The school provides good value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing:
 - by increasing opportunities for pupils to practise writing in a variety of contexts across the curriculum
 - by informing pupils about how they are getting on and how to improve their work.
- Ensure the more able pupils are adequately challenged to achieve their potential:
 - by improving the use of assessment to better meet their needs
 - by increasing opportunities for pupils to explore ideas for themselves and work independently in whole class activities.
- Improve the quality of teaching so that more is outstanding:
 - by improving the capacity of middle leaders and managers and involving them more fully in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

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

Pupils join Year 1 with standards that are above expectations for their age. Over the past three years standards in reading have been well above average and above average in writing and mathematics at the end of Year 2. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. Over the last three years they have reached high standards in science and above average standards in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Standards in English and mathematics improved significantly in 2009 to match those in science. Work seen during the inspection confirms pupils reach high standards. Pupils are articulate, have a good range of vocabulary and a very good understanding of how to communicate clearly and effectively. Their writing, however, does not always reflect this in Years 1 to 5.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and are very keen to do well. They apply themselves diligently and often enthusiastically in lessons. Behaviour is exemplary. Pupils are confident that any concerns they have are taken seriously and say they feel very safe in school. They have a very good understanding about how to keep healthy and safe. They value the range of opportunities they have to take part in physical activities and talk about the importance of 'warm up' activities and a balanced diet. They are thoughtful towards one another and have excellent relationships with adults in the school. Pupils make a good contribution to their school and the local community, for instance, through activities such as tree planting and public speaking competitions. Pupils' high standards in basic skills, combined with their ability to work collaboratively in problem solving activities and their clear enjoyment of learning, means that they are very well placed for future success. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good. Although they

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have a good understanding of their own heritage and culture and participate enthusiastically in cultural activities, their knowledge of other cultures is more limited.

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	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	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

There is some outstanding teaching but the quality of teaching varies across the school. In the more effective lessons activities immediately engage pupils' interest and challenge them effectively. The teacher's enthusiasm is contagious and when pupils are given the opportunity to work together and to use a range of skills to solve problems or to explore ideas for themselves they do so with enthusiasm. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, for instance, pupils were completely absorbed in planning their purchases for setting up a chicken farm. The debate was lively and pupils worked very effectively together to find information, work out how to stay within the budget and make the most profit from their enterprise. A Year 1 class worked enthusiastically in pairs and small groups to decide what combinations of coins they needed for shopping activities. Information and communication technology enhances learning to enable pupils to undertake research or to work at their own pace. Teaching assistants provide skilful and

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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well targeted support. In some lessons opportunities are missed to enable pupils to work independently or collaboratively. Questioning does not always challenge pupils effectively and the more able pupils are not always sufficiently challenged so the pace of their learning slows. Although some marking gives good guidance about how to improve, this is not always the case.

The 'creative' curriculum is in its infancy, but is already beginning to promote the development of a wide range of skills. It is beginning to provide imaginative and effective opportunities for learning through a broad range of experiences which build on pupils' interests and enthusiasms. Pupils are confident learners and clearly enjoy the opportunity to practise their skills of literacy and numeracy in a variety of different contexts. Provision for information and communication technology is good and enhances learning very effectively. Similarly, the provision for art, music and sport is strong. Pupils benefit from working with local artists and specialists in modern languages and sport. A good variety of extra-curricular activities, including a very wide range of clubs, visits and visitors, further enrich pupils' experience.

The school cares for its pupils well. They say they feel very safe and are well supported by adults. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and excellent provision is made for them. Safeguarding procedures are good. Risk assessments are acted upon to make effective improvements on the large school site and safety and safeguarding play a large part in the school curriculum, ensuring pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe. The school works very effectively with outside agencies, such as speech therapists and other specialists, to meet individual needs. However, provision for gifted and talented pupils is at the early stages of development. Good links with the High School ensure pupils make a smooth transition.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and the senior leadership team have been successful in securing rapid improvement in standards and achievement over the last two years. Self-evaluation and improvement planning accurately reflect the school's work and clearly identify priorities for improvement. Pupils' progress is tracked closely and target-setting is realistic and challenging. The school works hard to promote equal opportunities and is particularly successful in supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. It recognises the need to improve its provision for

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the more able and the gifted and talented pupils. Although middle leaders and managers work effectively alongside teachers in planning the curriculum, they are not sufficiently involved in self-evaluation procedures or in the monitoring of teaching and learning to be effective in spreading good practice or in improving the quality of teaching and learning in their own subject areas.

The school serves its local community and promotes community cohesion well, through its work with the sports clubs for example. The school's engagement with parents is satisfactory. Parents are well informed about events at the school and are given regular reports on pupils' progress. Strategies such as the mathematics workshop help parents support their children's learning. The school plays a full part in the local network of schools and works with other institutions to improve its work further, for example, through science days with the local High School.

These are the grades for 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	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	3
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception class with skills above those expected for their age. They make good progress and begin Year 1 with skills well above those expected in all areas of learning except writing, which is in line with expectations. They enter Year 1 confident and enthusiastic learners, very well equipped to continue their learning.

The quality of teaching is good and children are provided with a rich, stimulating environment in which to learn. There is a good balance between activities chosen by the children and those led by adults so that children gain in confidence and independence. Nevertheless, snack times sometimes interrupt their activities and continuity is lost.

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There is scope to develop further children's independence by allowing them to choose the best time themselves to take snacks. Procedures to ensure children's welfare are good. Children have good relationships with adults and play well with each other, taking turns and listening to one another. There are good links with pre-school settings and induction procedures are good. Children, therefore, settle quickly. Similarly, because Reception and Year 1 staff work closely together, children make a smooth transition from one stage to the next.

Rigorous assessment procedures are used to measure children's progress and plan activities that move their learning on. Children who find learning more difficult than most are quickly identified and very effectively supported. Children's progress is closely monitored and photographs and observation notes record steps in their learning. Parents contribute to this process through 'The Little Book of Gems' and children's homework diaries. Access to outdoor play is satisfactory. The school recognises the need to improve this further. Good leadership and management have created an effective team who are continually striving to improve the provision further.

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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The great majority of the parents who responded to the questionnaire are happy with the school. A small number of parents would like to be better informed about their child's progress and some parents had concerns about the level of challenge provided for the more able youngsters. On the whole the parents' views concurred with that of the inspectors.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Bexton 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 118 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 407 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	70	59	43	36	4	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	67	56	47	39	4	3	1	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	40	34	66	55	14	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	35	57	48	16	13	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	45	38	64	54	6	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	37	61	51	11	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	40	34	73	61	1	1	1	1
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)	25	21	70	59	17	14	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	45	38	56	47	15	13	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	23	74	62	8	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	24	58	49	19	16	11	9
The school is led and managed effectively	33	28	59	50	14	12	9	8
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	41	58	49	7	6	3	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.



18 November 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Bexton Primary School, Knutsford WA16 9DB

I would like to thank you, on behalf of the inspectors, for making us so welcome when we visited your school. Your behaviour is excellent. The inspection team really enjoyed talking to you all and listened very carefully to what you had to say. You told us how much you enjoy your learning and how proud you are of your school. We agree with you. You go to a good school. You told us how much you appreciated the help you get from teachers, but some of you said you were not sure how well you are getting on or how to improve. We have asked the teachers to make this clearer for you.

We enjoyed listening to you talk about the good work done by the ECO committee and the school council, who have done some great work in improving the school and the environment. We think that you make a really important contribution to your school.

Younger children get off to a good start in the Reception classes and you are all making good progress. By the time you leave the school standards are high. We think you can do even better in your writing so we have asked the school to give you more opportunities to practise this. We also think those of you who find tasks easy can do even better. We have asked the teachers to make sure your work really challenges you so that you can do your very best. Your teachers work very hard and their teaching is good, some is outstanding. We have asked them to try to make all teaching as good as the best. We noticed how much you enjoyed exploring ideas for yourselves and solving problems. We have asked your teachers to make sure they give you more opportunities to do this in lessons. You told us that the staff look after you well and we agree.

The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better.

We wish you every success for the future and hope that you continue to enjoy your learning.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Judith Tolley

Lead inspector

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