

Inspection of a good school: Bolton-on-Swale St Mary's CofE Primary School

Bolton-on-Swale, Scorton, Richmond, North Yorkshire DL10 6AQ

Inspection date: 20 November 2019

Outcome

Bolton-on-Swale St Mary's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Christian values are at the heart of this school. Leaders promote the school's mission statement of 'developing the whole child'. Pupils speak with confidence about respect, forgiveness and hope. Pupils are proud of their school.

Pupils say they enjoy learning. Their favourite subjects are mathematics, science and art. Every pupil learns violin or cello, with other instruments offered. The choir members love to perform at various events. Pupils benefit from the wide range of enrichment activities. By the end of Year 6 every pupil has represented their school in sporting events. Year 6 pupils enjoy their 'buddy' role where they support children in Reception.

Pupils are confident that they are safe. Older pupils attend safety events organised by the local police and fire service. Pupils say staff do not allow anyone to bully others. They say that if bullying occurred staff would sort it immediately. Pupils say behaviour systems help them to behave well.

The vast majority of parents and carers are very positive about the school. In particular, they appreciate the breadth of the curriculum and strong 'family' atmosphere. Some parents work away from home for long periods of time. They praise the stability and emotional support that their children receive.

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

The headteacher has developed a strong team of competent leaders. Senior leaders assist leaders in other schools. They provide leadership training and support through the Swaledale Alliance partnership of schools. Local authority and diocesan officers hold leaders in high regard. Teachers and teaching assistants have secure subject knowledge. They match the work in lessons to pupils' abilities. They make children think hard and challenge them in their learning. As a result, pupils achieve well.

Leaders have designed a creative and enriching curriculum for all pupils. Christian values weave through all aspects of school life. This promotes pupils' personal development well, through spiritual and moral experiences. Disadvantaged pupils, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive. Leaders ensure that the curriculum meets their needs.

In mathematics, pupils use problem solving and reasoning with confidence. By the end of Year 6 pupils' attainment in mathematics, over time, has been above average. This includes at the higher standard. Pupils make average progress across key stage 2. Teachers plan work which builds on what pupils know or can do. For example, pupils practise their multiplication tables every day. This helps them to complete their long-multiplication problems with ease.

Leaders plan science around knowledge and skills. Planned work builds on what pupils already know and can do. Teachers make sure that pupils revisit work to check their understanding. Pupils can talk with confidence about scientific knowledge. They can explain how to carry out a fair test or science investigation. This prepares them well for secondary school. In 2019, all pupils attained the expected standard by the end of Year 6.

Leaders recognise the need to embed the curriculum design across all curriculum areas. They prioritise further development of how teachers assess pupils' learning in different subjects. They are doing this without burdening teachers' workload. Governors and local authority officers agree with this priority.

Children get off to a strong start when they join Reception. They settle quickly, behave well and form strong friendships. The learning environment allows children to be curious and to follow their interests. Children whose language skills are low are helped to access learning. Children enter Year 1 with the skills they need to be successful in key stage 1.

Leaders place high priority on teaching children to read. Teachers instil a love of reading in pupils. Leaders have made sure that teachers are trained well in teaching phonics. Pupils' phonic knowledge at the end of Year 1 is high. If pupils struggle, staff help them to catch up to their peers through extra phonic sessions. The books that pupils read match the phonic sounds that they know. This helps pupils to feel like confident readers.

By the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards expected of them in reading. In 2019, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher standard declined to below average. Pupils' progress in reading was lower than in mathematics and writing. Leaders wasted no time in finding out why. Leaders increased opportunities to teach the relevant reading comprehension skills. They check that the curriculum is aiming high for most-able pupils. This is making a positive difference to current pupils in upper key stage 2, including the most able.

Governors bring a wide range of skills to their role. This helps them to support and challenge school leaders. They understand the curriculum design for each subject. Governors are aware of school strengths and next steps for future development.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The designated safeguarding lead places the highest priority on keeping children safe. She has set a strong culture of safeguarding across the school. Staff and governors are all aware that safeguarding is the responsibility of everyone. They access the most up-to-date safeguarding training. This helps them to be aware of any signs and symptoms relating to children's welfare. The staff are clear on how to follow the systems if they have any concerns. Systems and policies relating to safeguarding are thorough.

Parents agree with their children that the school is a safe place.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have designed a curriculum which has extensive content and sequential coverage across each year group. The implementation and impact of the curriculum are better developed in some curriculum subjects than others. Leaders should continue to embed all curriculum developments and assessment practices so that they are secure and consistent across the school.

Background

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

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

How can I feed back my views?

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

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

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

Further information

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

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

School details

Unique reference number	121604
Local authority	North Yorkshire
Inspection number	10097594
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	106
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Clare White
Headteacher	Nicola Dobson
Website	www.bolton-on-swale.n-yorks.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	December 2015

Information about this school

- This school is a voluntary aided Church of England school within the Diocese of Leeds. The most recent section 48 inspection was in November 2016.
- The school is smaller than the average primary school.
- This school works in collaboration with the Swaldale Alliance partnership of schools.

Information about this inspection

- During this inspection, we met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, early years leader, the special educational needs and/or disabilities leader and the school business manager. We spoke with all teachers and most teaching assistants during the inspection.
- We looked at reading, mathematics and science in detail. This included meeting curriculum leaders of these subjects. We visited lessons, talked to teachers and pupils about the lessons we saw and looked at work in pupils' books.
- We spoke to pupils formally and informally throughout the inspection to gain their views. We observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. We asked pupils about their views on behaviour and bullying.

- To inspect safeguarding, we spoke to the designated safeguarding lead, checked the single central record, considered policies and documents relating to safeguarding and spoke with pupils, staff and parents.
- I met with governors, including the chair and vice chair of the governing body. I met with the school improvement officer from the local authority. I spoke with the director of the Church of England Diocese of Leeds in a telephone conversation.
- We considered 25 free-text responses sent by parents, 42 responses to the online Ofsted Parent View questionnaire and questionnaires completed by nine staff. Parents also gave their views at the start of the school day during the inspection.
- We examined a range of documentation. This included the school's self-evaluation and school development plan. We examined published information about the school's performance in national assessments. We considered documentation relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. We scrutinised the information published on the school's website.

Inspection team

Alison Aitchison, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

David Hodgkiss

Ofsted Inspector

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