

Inspection of a good school: Boltons CofE School

Bolton Low Houses, Wigton, Cumbria CA7 8PA

Inspection dates:

11 February 2020

Outcome

Boltons CofE School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Boltons CofE School is a very happy school. Pupils like each other and enjoy playing and learning together. The pupils that spoke to us said that they sometimes fall out but always make friends again. Pupils feel safe. Bullying is not tolerated by pupils or staff. Staff deal well with any bullying that occurs.

Teachers have high expectations of pupils. Pupils enjoy their learning. They help each other when they get stuck. Behaviour is good. Any silly behaviour is sorted quickly so that it does not interrupt learning.

Pupils love to read. Older pupils enjoy picking their next book. There are bookcases filled with books all around the school for pupils to choose from. Although they like to read themselves, they still enjoy listening as books are read to them.

Most pupils participate in the after-school clubs that take place. During the inspection, pupils at baking club were making biscuits for the parents and carers that were coming into school the next day.

Pupils talked enthusiastically about the trips and activities that take place. They like the visits from older people in the community. They enjoy singing at the local care home. They particularly look forward to the outdoor pursuits trip for Year 5 and 6 pupils.

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

The experienced headteacher, together with the strong team of teachers, has continued to deliver a good standard of education to pupils in the school.

All teachers have high expectations of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) ensures that pupils receive the help that they need during their learning. These pupils do well at school.

Developing pupils to be fluent readers is a high priority. Children start learning phonics on entry to Reception. They quickly learn the basic letter sounds and blend these into words. The books that children read match the phonics they have learned.

The reading programme is ambitious. It is structured and sequenced to support pupils' reading. Regular assessment identifies gaps in pupils' reading skills. Pupils are promptly supported to catch up. All teachers are trained in early reading. They have a clear understanding of how young children and pupils learn to read. Teachers read to pupils every day. Teachers read stories with enthusiasm. Pupils enjoy rereading the books they have heard.

Pupils who are competent readers are encouraged to choose their own books to read. Teachers help them to pick a wide range of books. However, most of the books that pupils choose to read are from relatively recent authors. Consequently, pupils' reading does not have the depth and breadth exemplified by the national curriculum at key stage 2.

In other subjects, pupils' learning is matched to the national curriculum. Leaders effectively order the knowledge that pupils need to gain. New learning builds on the knowledge that pupils already have. Learning is revisited to help pupils remember more. Most pupils reach the expected standard in English, writing and mathematics by the time they go to secondary school.

Checks on pupils' learning in English and mathematics are used well. Teachers know what pupils have learned and the new knowledge they need. This assessment process has recently been started for other subjects. For these subjects, the process is not fully embedded. Hence, new learning sometimes does not build effectively on what pupils already know.

Pupils behave well around all areas of the school. They work hard during learning. Occasional disruption to learning is well managed. Pupils' attendance to school is above the national average.

Pupils learn about different cultures and faiths. They are taught to treat everyone the same regardless of their background or beliefs. Pupils learn how to stay healthy. They are encouraged to lead assemblies in the school. Older pupils can become a 'buddy' to help younger pupils in the school.

Staff feel that leaders are considerate of their workload. Any changes are discussed before introduction. Leaders have reduced marking and the length of staff meetings. Staff are very happy. They think being a member of staff is 'like being part of a family'.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All appropriate checks are in place to ensure that only those that are safe to work with pupils are employed by the school.

Staff are well trained and can recognise the signs of a pupil in need of help. Leaders act promptly to help pupils and their families. They have made strong links with the outside agencies to ensure that the support is appropriate.

Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe, especially when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have only recently started to assess pupils' learning in the foundation subjects. Teachers, therefore, do not routinely check what pupils know and remember from previous years. Leaders should ensure that the assessment of subjects other than English and mathematics becomes embedded. This will help pupils to build even more effectively on what they already know in these subjects.
- Pupils are encouraged to pick their own reading books from Year 3 onwards. Most pupils pick books that are from modern authors. Few choose works that exemplify our rich literary heritage as expected by the national curriculum at key stage 2. Leaders should encourage pupils to read more widely so that the curriculum for reading matches the depth and breadth of the national curriculum at key stage 2.

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 Boltons CofE School to be good on 22–23 March 2011.

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 the school and 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	112245
Local authority	Cumbria
Inspection number	10111072
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	80
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mr Mark Dawson
Headteacher	Mrs Amanda Pitcher
Website	www.boltons.cumbria.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	1 March 2016

Information about this school

- The school had a section 48 inspection in June 2016.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, we spoke with pupils about their work and school life. We spoke with the chair of governors, the vice-chair of governors and two other members of the governing body, the headteacher, subject leaders and members of staff. We also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- We considered the nine responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the six responses from the online staff survey. We also considered the 24 responses to the pupil survey.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. We met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and spoke to pupils about their learning. We also looked at pupils' work and listened to pupils read.
- During the inspection, we reviewed a range of documentation, including curriculum plans. A range of documentation relating to safeguarding, including risk assessments, was also reviewed.

Inspection team

Erica Sharman, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ian Hardman

Her Majesty's Inspector

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