

Boasley Cross Primary School

Bratton Clovelly, Okehampton, EX20 4JH

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2014

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Boasley Cross is a welcoming school where pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6 pupils attain above national averages. Pupils do well in developing their reading and writing skills.
- Provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is outstanding.
- Teachers have high expectations about what pupils can achieve.
- Staff provide good quality care and support, and have warm relationships with pupils. Pupils enjoy school and this is shown by their high rates of attendance.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils' behaviour is good.
- The executive headteacher provides good leadership and is well supported by a wealth of staff expertise across the partner schools and within the federation's governing body.
- By working cooperatively, senior staff and governors within the federation have improved teaching and learning since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to continue to improve even further.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to ensure that pupils' learning is outstanding, especially in mathematics.
- Occasionally, teachers do not act quickly enough to support pupils when they find learning difficult or to give them harder tasks when they begin to find work too easy.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector visited nine lessons and was accompanied by the executive headteacher during some of these observations.
- The inspector observed morning playtime and lunch breaks and also attended two assemblies.
- Meetings were held with members of the school council and many other pupils were spoken to during lessons and break times. The inspector also met with governors and held a separate telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector held meetings with school staff, including senior leaders. Seven staff questionnaires were also considered.
- Parents' and carers' views were sought as they brought their children to school, as well as through the 21 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector observed the school's work, and looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' progress, planning and leaders' checks on the quality of teaching, documents relating to safeguarding and records relating to behaviour and attendance.

Inspection team

Alex Baxter, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils attending the school are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils entering or leaving the school at other than the normal times is above average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs supported through school action is below the national average. The proportion supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average. These proportions vary significantly from year to year.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below that found nationally. Pupil premium provides additional funding for children in local authority care, children from service families and those known to be eligible for free school meals.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in a combined Reception and Year 1 class during each morning session and are joined by Year 2 pupils during afternoon sessions.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since September 2011, the school has been a member of the Dartmoor Federation, consisting of three other primary schools and the local community college. One governing body fulfils the governance of all the schools in the federation.
- This school is led by an executive headteacher who shares her duties equally with another school in the federation.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the amount of outstanding teaching and so raise pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics, by:
 - providing support for pupils when they find work too difficult
 - moving pupils swiftly onto to harder work when they find tasks too easy
 - ensuring that pupils' basic numeracy skills are developed in a more step-by-step way.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children's skills on entry to school vary significantly from year to year within the very small year groups. While their skills are mostly close to those levels normally expected for children of this age, communication and mathematical skills are often less well developed.
- National assessments at the end of Year 6 in 2013 indicated above average levels of attainment, especially in writing and reading. There is a positive trend of improving standards.
- Inspection observations of teaching and pupils' work match the school's own checks of pupils' developing skills. Pupils' make good and sometimes better progress from their often widely differing starting points in response to well-focused teaching.
- Strong links with parents and carers and exemplary teaching enable children to progress extremely well in their Reception Year. All children excel in making best use of the stimulating environment, for example, skills of coordination are improved when they pedal large wheeled toys in the outside area. Children collaborate well with each other when creating story maps and this helps them develop their communication skills successfully.
- As they move through the school, pupils continue to make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. Many do even better in developing their writing skills. Rates of progress and levels of attainment are more variable in mathematics.
- All pupils, including those who are disabled, those with special educational needs and other pupils who arrived from other schools later than the normal time of entry, make good progress. This is due to effective additional adult support, informed through regular checks of their needs and skills.
- The small number of pupils in receipt of pupil premium funding also benefit from additional support from adults who carefully check pupils' progress and provide further guidance in the particular skills that need to be improved to enable them to achieve as well as other pupils.
- In response to the exemplary teaching of phonics (letters and sounds) and reading, pupils make outstanding progress in learning to read. This is evident, for example, in the above average scores in the Year 1 phonics screening checks and in the end of Years 2 and 6 reading assessments. Regular parental support of reading at home and the very friendly sharing of books with their 'book buddies' during weekly 'book share' sessions further help to secure the pupils' love of books and enjoyment of reading.

The quality of teaching is good

- The inspector's observations of mostly good and some outstanding teaching matched the school's own checks of teaching over time. Typical strengths include the warm and encouraging relationships and high-quality care, especially for pupils with very complex needs.
- Exemplary teaching of phonics and reading in all classes successfully develops pupils' skills in a step-by-step way, building on previous learning as they move through the school.
- Teaching is outstanding for children in Reception, where staff work very closely as a team and make the very best use of much improved outdoor facilities and resources to enrich children's interest and engagement in learning.
- Teachers and their assistants show secure subject knowledge and manage behaviour very effectively. All adults promote pupils' positive attitudes to learning, for example, by praising their efforts and ensuring that all classrooms present a welcoming atmosphere enriched by attractive and informative displays of pupils' work.
- Literacy skills are taught very effectively and teachers set high expectations of what pupils can and should achieve at each stage as they move through the school. For example, during lessons and when marking pupils' writing, teachers comment as needed upon particular skills such as handwriting, spelling and punctuation. This helps to ensure that pupils develop the full range of

skills, knowledge and understanding needed to write meaningfully and expressively.

- Teachers and teaching assistants use questioning very carefully to probe and develop the level of pupils' understanding, as seen for example, in the Reception and Year 1 class where the teacher stimulated the pupils' interest by skilfully using a large computer screen to visually illustrate letter combinations. This successfully extended their ability to blend letter sounds to read new words.
- All pupils, including disabled pupils, those who have special educational needs and those for whom the pupil premium provides support, benefit from extra adult assistance. For example, adults help pupils learn how to check their own work and how to progress towards their personal targets and this is improving their rates of progress.
- Teachers listen carefully to pupils' views to plan what they need to teach next. For example, in a mathematics lesson in Years 2 and 3 the teacher questioned the pupils about work in the previous lesson and subsequently adapted the next lesson to reinforce pupils' understanding of subtraction and addition.
- On a few occasions during mathematics lessons, progress slowed when pupils tackled number problems, as the steps that they were expected to make in applying and extending their skills were either too big or too small and as a result a few pupils lost interest. At times when this happened, adults did not act swiftly enough to provide additional guidance or to move more-able pupils on to harder work and this constrained their progress.
- Teachers keep a close check on pupils' learning and aim to enthuse pupils. For example, pupils really enjoyed learning about fractions through grouping differently coloured chocolate sweets contained in a box. As the pupils say, 'Our teachers keep learning fun.'

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour is good. This is reflected in school records and is continued in lessons, break times and assemblies observed during the inspection.
- Parents and carers express their confidence in the way that staff care so well for their children while at school and appreciate the way pupils enjoy each other's company. When questioned pupils also consider behaviour to be good, although they say at times a few can be a bit silly and inconsiderate.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are also good. They are enthusiastic and show their confidence in the warm relationships promoted by adults by willingly offering and sharing their ideas. When this happens as for example, during 'book sharing' sessions, pupils' enjoyment and success in learning are significantly enriched.
- Most pupils sustain concentration well, but on occasion, especially when the work gets harder, a few 'lose heart' too quickly and need adult support to re-engage fully in their learning.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good and parents and carers agree.
- Pupils know about the different forms of bullying, for example, physical abuse. They confidently state that there is no bullying at the school. Pupils know that they need to take care when using computers.
- Attendance is consistently above the national average and reflects the school's careful checks and close links with parents and carers. Pupils arrive punctually for school and lessons start in good time.
- Pupils' enjoyment of school is clear when they say, 'Teachers encourage us to fit in, people are kind and learning is fun.'

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders and managers, especially the experienced and capable executive headteacher, promote good links with parents and carers and sustain consistently high expectations for pupils' progress and enjoyment of school.

- Careful and regular checks of the quality of teaching and pupils' progress involve supportive discussions with staff. There are close links between staff salary progression and training and school development needs.
- As a result the school has secured a clear track record of improvement since the previous inspection. This is evident in the extended outdoor facilities and strong practice in the Early Years Foundation Stage, as well as the improved teaching of reading and writing.
- Improved financial stability and more effective sharing of staff and governor expertise, as a result of federated leadership, further confirm that the school has a secure capacity to improve.
- Expertise across the federation helps to secure equal opportunity by ensuring that provision for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and for those in receipt of pupil premium support is planned and used effectively to enable them to achieve as well as others.
- Good use of the additional funding for sport and physical education is made by sharing of staff skills, the facilities across the federation and local authority guidance. These have resulted in lifting pupils' skills and enriching their health and welfare. Although improving, leaders have not yet fully planned for the consistent development of pupils' mathematical skills as they move through the school.
- Learning opportunities at the school are enriched by an extensive range of outdoor learning facilities including a swimming pool, adventure play equipment and garden and wildlife areas. Close links with partner schools and the community also bring a real-life dimension to pupils' learning and enhance pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Given the expertise in the school and across the federation, the local authority provides 'light touch' support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The federation governing body has a good understanding of the school; it supports and challenges school leaders well. Governors regularly undertake checks of their own effectiveness to ensure that they maximise their impact on improving pupils' outcomes, both within the school and across the federation. Governors understand how well pupils achieve when compared with other schools nationally. They challenge school leaders to expect high-quality teaching from all teachers. Appropriate checks are in place to ensure that governors have a clear understanding of how teachers' performance and experience are linked to pay progression. Governors understand the areas for development and work with the school to see the improvement plans through to enhance pupils' learning. Governors understand how the pupil premium is allocated and its impact on improving levels of pupils' attainment. The governing body ensures the school meets its statutory safeguarding requirements. Governors have undertaken sufficient training since becoming a federation to ensure that they have a full understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	113247
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	432435

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Foundation
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	56
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ian Courtney
Headteacher	Linda Wells
Date of previous school inspection	16–17 February 2011
Telephone number	01837 871362
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