

# Lord Blyton Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	108700
<b>Local authority</b>	South Tyneside
<b>Inspection number</b>	377803
<b>Inspection dates</b>	23–24 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Clive Petts

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	111
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Alice Malcolm
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanne Atherton
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 October 2008
<b>School address</b>	Blyton Avenue South Shields NE34 9BN
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Clive Petts

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice by one additional inspector. The inspector observed eight lessons taught by five class teachers. He also observed a range of intervention activities for small groups of pupils, talked to different groups of pupils about their learning and scrutinised in detail the work in pupils' books. In addition, the inspector held discussions with pupils, members of the governing body, staff and the designated school improvement adviser. The inspector observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's information records relating to pupils' progress and achievement, evidence relating to leadership and management, monitoring and evaluation, behavioural records and safeguarding. He also took into account the questionnaires, returned by 60 parents and carers, 84 pupils and 11 staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection.

### Information about the school

Lord Blyton is a smaller than average primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a very few at the early stage of learning to speak English. Double the average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is twice the national average, with none with a statement of special educational needs. There is a higher than usual proportion of pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. A small minority of reception-aged children arrive with limited or no pre-school experience. In 2011, the school met the current government floor standard. The school has achieved the Numbers Count award, part of the Every Child Counts initiative.

**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

<b>Overall Effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key Findings

- Lord Blyton is a good school which has improved continuously since the previous inspection, as a consequence of the headteacher’s clear vision and determination to keep improving. The excellent quality of care and high expectations of what pupils can achieve promote good and sometimes exemplary behaviour.
- Pupils’ progress is good and by the end of Year 6 their achievement is good overall and high in English. Swift progress is made in Years 5 and 6, because teaching is inspiring and constantly challenging pupils to sharpen up their thinking. Despite this, the pattern of progress through the school is uneven. The pupils’ enjoyment of reading and writing is promoted well, although their early reading development lags behind that of writing and mathematics.
- Pupils are keen to learn from an early age and thoroughly enjoy school. This is evident in their above-average attendance. The good curriculum provides a developing range of interesting learning experiences and provides well for pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, their self-confidence as learners grows significantly over time.
- The majority of teaching is good, with much that is thought-provoking and engaging. Strengths are in the high quality of relationships in the classroom and in the use of probing questions to promote talk and tease out what pupils know and understand.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, those potentially vulnerable and the very few at the early stages of learning English also make good progress because of the effective support that they are given. Pupils are safety conscious and report that staff are always on hand to listen to a worry or concern. All parents and carers appreciate that their children are kept safe.
- Leadership and management are good. The staff share the vision, ambition and high aspirations of the headteacher and as a result the quality and richness of learning are continually improving.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Quicken the pursuit of a consistent pattern of good progress and achievement in Key Stage 1, especially in pupils' reading, by:
  - using and building upon existing inventive and inspiring practice in school to ensure a high level of challenge, interest and pace in lessons
  - ensuring that pupils' understanding of letters and sounds and the making sense of new words are practised constantly to improve early reading
  - making certain that probing questioning is continually used by staff.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Over the past three years, the school has systematically improved the quality of learning to ensure that pupils' achievement is at least good. Rigorous checking of pupils' development has correctly identified areas of learning which require further development, for instance, the quality of outdoor learning for younger children. This has resulted in a pattern of improving teaching, as activities are ever more effectively shaped to the ages, abilities and interests of pupils. Consequently, pupils learn well and the pattern of their progress is increasingly more consistent. Attainment gaps are being decisively tackled because lessons are well-planned, such as in the improvement in mathematics.

Typically in lessons pupils are self-confident, sharing their ideas or exchanging their views with a partner or with the whole class willingly. Even the youngest children happily enter into conversation with each other, listen well and take turns to speak. Positive action to make the curriculum more interesting, adding to the richness of experiences, is more effectively 'hooking' the curiosity of pupils, increasing their enjoyment and raising achievement. For example, a group of older pupils was observed totally engrossed discussing different types of horse after reading extracts from the novel, 'War Horse'. However, the development of early reading can sometimes lack pace and progression.

Children settle happily in the friendly atmosphere of the Reception class and their keenness to learn is fostered well. From starting points below that typical for their age, often with underdeveloped communication skills and limited self-control to cope with the rigour of classroom routines, children make good progress. Ongoing development of opportunities to explore and investigate the world around them when outdoors is adding to the richness of children's learning. Children's early listening, speech and language are promoted well. Interesting activities are provided for children to read and write, but are sometimes too drawn out and opportunities to practise their skills are occasionally missed. Effective support is provided for pupils as they move to Year 1.

By the end of Year 6 pupils reach average attainment in English and mathematics. Taken as a whole, this represents good progress from pupils' starting points. Although year groups do vary, there are occasions when progress in English is outstanding. Rapid progress is a common feature in Years 5 and 6, because approaches are made fun and activities stimulate ideas and hold pupils' interest, such as in their persuasive writing. Nevertheless, the pattern

of progress as pupils move through the school is a little uneven. Although quickening as a result of the positive action taken, progress in Years 1 and 2 remains satisfactory overall, though it is faster in writing and mathematics than in reading. Attainment in reading by the age of six and at the end of Year 2 is below average. Despite concerted efforts to promote early reading, the teaching of sound and letter relationships lacks essential challenge. Pace and opportunities are sometimes missed to practise skills in all subjects. By the end of Year 6, significant progress has been made nurturing an appetite for and a love of reading. For example, pupils of all abilities are able to discuss confidently an author's style or the genre adopted, such as in the books written by Michael Morpurgo.

The school's information on pupil progress and inspection evidence confirm that any attainment gaps are closing quickly by the end of Year 6 and that attainment is rising at the end of Year 2. The school acknowledges that early reading is not always taught at an appropriate pace to ensure pupils' speedy improvement. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also make good progress, because their needs are accurately identified and programmes carefully tailored to meet their individual needs. Excellent care is provided for potentially vulnerable pupils to ensure barriers to their progress are removed. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are making good progress and the school meets their children's particular needs.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is good overall and improving with some outstanding teaching observed. Teachers set high expectations and promote very positive relationships with pupils. All parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire feel that their children are well-taught. Lesson planning is clear and securely based on an accurate grasp of each pupil's current progress. When progress slips, including that for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, specific, well-planned support from teachers and their assistants is provided. In the best lessons, the pace is brisk and questioning relentlessly probes pupils' thinking and understanding. Frequent opportunities are provided to extend learning through independent working or talking with a partner. This promotes higher levels of language, subtly prompted by the teacher increasing the pace of learning. For example, pupils in Years 4 and 5 were totally absorbed discussing the different ways in which temperature can be measured. Increasingly, the good curriculum is having a positive impact and provides more challenging and enjoyable activities, including in Years 1 and 2. Pupils demonstrate growing confidence considering alternatives before applying their skills to solve problems. Despite this, in some lessons, activities can be too drawn out and questioning does not challenge pupils' thinking enough to build effectively on their learning. This is particularly the case during pupils' early practising of reading skills to promote fluency.

Pupils' enthusiasm and determination to solve problems themselves is an emerging strength in the teaching of older pupils. The willingness of older pupils to listen, speculate and consider the options independently or with a friend is a strong feature of their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers' marking, including feedback, is completed frequently. Nearly all is of a good quality, helpfully and constructively identifying strengths in a piece of work and providing good guidance for improvement. Pupils have measurable and challenging targets. The few starting to fall behind and those with a disability or special educational needs receive specific, well-planned support from teachers and their assistants, mostly during lessons.

## **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Pupils' keenness, considerate attitudes and their enthusiastic response to the expectations set for them are a key element in the positive climate for learning. Their behaviour in classrooms and corridors is calm and orderly. Pupils are clear about the boundaries that are set for them and the consequences of any inappropriate actions. Pupils report that the school behaviour initiative, 'It is good to be green' works well. They report that bullying is rare. One pupil's remark that, 'not many pupils are that bad!' summed up the views of almost all. Most parents and carers responding to the questionnaire agree that behaviour is good and this is endorsed by past records. Pupils state that they feel completely safe and secure in school. From an early age, they develop an awareness of risk and learn how to minimise any potential dangers or harm. The rare challenging behaviour of the very few is managed highly effectively and sensitively and ensures that their behaviour improves appreciably over time. Consequently, all pupils are provided with an equal and fair chance to thrive and learn. Pupils' willingness to learn is demonstrated in their keenness to participate in a broad range of sporting, artistic and cultural activities.

The school's tireless promotion of the value of regular attendance results in good punctuality and a pattern of above-average attendance. The positive engagement of parents and carers, including those sometimes hard to reach, contributes strongly to their children's development. Pupils demonstrate a strong sense of responsibility with members of the school council making thoughtful suggestions and decisions to enable the whole school to benefit.

## **Leadership and management**

Central to the school's good leadership are the purpose and resolve of the headteacher in continually striving for excellence. She is ably supported by an effective assistant headteacher and their reflective and self-critical approaches are constantly refining many aspects of the school's work. This has established a culture of continuous improvement which is having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Staff teamwork is a strength, providing positive leadership in their areas of responsibility. Thoughtfully-targeted professional development and specialist support by the local authority is successfully enhancing improvements. The governing body provides good support through its close involvement with the school. Its expertise is increasingly used to hold the school to account in positive ways and help shape its strategic direction. Safeguarding procedures meet the current government requirements with recommended good practice adopted. The school promotes equal opportunities well and is quick to address any discrimination. High-quality support for families enables staff to pinpoint pupils' needs promptly. Great care is taken to ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to achieve success. The improvements made since the previous inspection to improving planning, accelerating progress in mathematics and improving writing skills show that the school has a good capacity to continue to improve and achieve its ambitions.

The good curriculum has been systematically enriched over time. It is broad and balanced and promotes a successful progression to secondary education. Themes are successfully used to link subjects together in interesting ways, enhance the quality of first-hand experience and increase the focus on basic skills. The successful use of partnerships adds to the quality of pupils' learning. These increase the opportunities for pupils to develop independence, initiative, imagination and creativity, such as during their residential outdoor experience and visits to performing arts events in the community. The school produces

regular newsletters and makes effective use of the texting service to keep parents and carers informed. Despite this, a very few parents and carers wrote to express frustration that some information arrives at short notice which sometimes creates difficulties for them. The evidence gathered during the inspection indicated that the school works conscientiously to keep parents and carers well-informed. The texting service has been received well with positive written comments made by parents and carers on the returned questionnaires. However, there have been isolated occasions when notice of events, proposed or cancelled, has been relatively short and sometimes outside of the school's control.



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk))

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and 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 governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



25 January 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Lord Blyton Primary School, South Shields NE34 9BN**

I want to thank you all for the very friendly welcome that you gave me when I visited your school to see how well you were learning. I really enjoyed my time listening and talking to you.

Lord Blyton is a good school. I was really impressed with the very positive relationships your school has with your parents and carers and the way your staff constantly encourage and help you to do as well as you can. I was pleased by your good behaviour and the high-quality staff support that you receive. You told me that you feel safe, secure and happy as a result. You take pride in helping your school to improve and this was impressive.

The headteacher and the governing body are keen to ensure that the school continues to improve and this can be seen in your often excellent progress in English and better use of your skills in mathematics. I have asked the school to eliminate the differences in the rate of some of your progress in Years 1 and 2. I have asked your teachers to provide more activities which test your thinking and understanding and to share their best practice to make certain all of your activities are interesting and challenging. This will help you learn at a faster rate. I would also like staff to make certain that younger pupils are more consistently challenged to practise combining sounds and letters to form words and to make sense of new words when they are reading.

You can all play your part by continuing to work as hard as you can.

All the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Clive Petts  
Lead inspector

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