

Blackburn Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	106834
Local Authority	Rotherham
Inspection number	356033
Inspection dates	11–12 October 2010
Reporting inspector	David Matthews

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr John Gilling
Headteacher	Brian Walker
Date of previous school inspection	8 January 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 19 lessons, observed 14 teachers and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They spoke informally to parents and carers around the school. They observed the school's work, and looked at documents relating to safeguarding, the tracking of pupils' progress and the monitoring of teaching and learning. They scrutinised samples of pupils' writing and their mathematics. Questionnaires received from 89 parents and carers were analysed.

- Whether progress is good enough for Key Stage 2 pupils.
- How effective the quality of teaching is in securing good progress.
- Whether boys' attainment in writing, in Key Stage 2, is high enough.
- The effectiveness of the school in promoting positive attitudes among pupils.

Information about the school

Almost all of the pupils attending this larger than average-size primary school are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. An above average proportion of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school has achieved a wide range of recent awards, including those relating to financial management.

The privately managed childcare arrangements at the school are subject to separate inspection arrangements. There have been significant staff changes since the last inspection, particularly within senior leadership and middle management.

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

Blackburn Primary is a good school. There is a caring ethos and a strong, effective focus on promoting pupils' personal development and well-being. The dedicated headteacher galvanises staff so that morale is high and there is a shared determination among all staff to improve the school's performance and provision. Pupils behave well and get on harmoniously together. This is especially noticeable when teachers give them the opportunity to work cooperatively in groups, for example, when solving mathematical problems.

When children join the Early Years Foundation Stage, most have skills that are below those typical for their age. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 6, their attainment is broadly average. Pupils make good progress and achieve well, as a result of the overall good teaching and learning throughout the school. Teachers and teaching assistants work energetically to make lessons engaging. Relationships are positive, so that most pupils respect their teachers and want to please them by trying hard. Many pupils have a very clear understanding of their targets and what to do to improve their work. However, a small minority of pupils are unsure of their targets for improvement and are not sufficiently clear on how to improve their work.

There are rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress and for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning. The systematic use of data and of lesson observations inform the school well about where its strengths and relative weaknesses lie. Most teaching is effective in meeting the needs of pupils of differing abilities. The school knows that teaching is good overall, but there remain occasional relative weaknesses, particularly in ensuring that work set always takes rigorous account of pupils' various abilities. Pupils are sometimes set tasks that are too easy or too hard. Where this occurs it impacts most in limiting Key Stage 2 pupils' attainment in writing and mathematics.

The school's curriculum is good, promoting pupils' personal development well. Staff are innovative, bringing learning to life by, for example, setting up exciting 'Rowdy Robot' days when pupils work with fathers and grandfathers to make working robots. The headteacher and senior leaders have an extremely accurate picture of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses. The headteacher's and senior leaders' ambition, the effective teamwork generated and the successful whole-school drive for improvement, give the school a good capacity to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics and writing by the end of Key Stage 2 by:
- - making sure that pupils of differing ability are always set work that fully matches their ability

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- - making sure that all pupils have a clear understanding of their learning targets.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' learning in lessons and their overall achievement are good. Learning is particularly strong in lessons where teachers skilfully challenge pupils of differing ability with well-matched tasks, and in the many lessons where practical activities capture pupils' imagination. In such lessons, pupils show much enthusiasm and enjoy their learning. Most pupils respect their teachers and want to please them. On the rare occasion that teaching is less engaging, pupils are less enthusiastic. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress, including in Key Stage 2, where until recently progress has been inconsistent.

From their overall below expected starting points when they join the Nursery, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. They continue to make good progress in Key Stage 1. Historically pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 has varied due to inconsistencies in teaching. Because of improved teaching, progress in Key Stage 2 is now consistently good and attainment is rising.

The overwhelming majority of pupils report that they feel safe at school. They have a good awareness of the dangers that they may face in everyday life. Pupils' mostly good behaviour makes a strong contribution to their good learning in lessons. They know about the factors that affect their health and most want to take account of these in their daily lives. Some are involved in running health-related activities, including the school's 'healthy' tuck shop. The pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. Their active participation in the eco club exemplifies their care for and understanding of issues facing the local community. Pupils make good progress in developing the skills needed for their future economic well-being. They are developing their basic skills increasingly well, their attendance is above average and they work particularly well in a team. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because they have ample opportunities to reflect in lessons and to empathise with others in difficult situations. Pupils' engagement with a range of groups from different ethnic, religious and socio-economic backgrounds is not as strong as other elements of their personal development.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
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	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

The great majority of teaching is ensuring pupils' good progress. Teaching is mostly imaginative in motivating and engaging pupils. One pupil commented, 'This is cool!' sitting in an 'air-raid shelter' on the school stage, the sounds of the Second World War blitz all around. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use resources well. The most modern technology, such as 'visualisers' enables pupils to see examples of each others' work on a screen. High quality relationships and skilled management of pupils' behaviour are features of almost all lessons. As a result of good assessment procedures, teachers generally plan well to meet the needs of all pupils. In one class, all pupils wrote about the fictitious 'Mr Reynolds', with the teacher very adeptly placing different demands on individual pupils so that those of varying abilities all made consistently good progress. Just occasionally, teachers set tasks that are not so accurately matched to pupils' needs. In such cases, pupils make slower progress. Pupils are provided with detailed feedback, giving most a clear view of how to improve. However, a small minority are unsure of their learning targets and so they do not have a clear focus on how to improve.

The curriculum takes good account of pupils' learning styles and effectively captures their interest. It is particularly successful in promoting their good personal development, including instilling positive attitudes and values. The curriculum is constantly being modified in light of performance data. For example, effective strategies have been introduced to engage boys more fully in writing. The imaginative curriculum incorporates

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effective links between subjects that make learning increasingly engaging and meaningful. Pupils enjoy the varied enrichment opportunities.

Staff know the pupils well and provide good quality care, guidance and support. There are well-targeted interventions, not only for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, but also for pupils identified as underachieving. These include highly effective intensive one-to-one support in the 'Numbers Count' room, where individuals make outstanding progress in mathematics. Many staff, not least the learning mentor, play an effective role in the school's strong support of pupils' care and well-being. Resources, including the Dolphin Room, are used well to build pupils' self-esteem, particularly the more vulnerable. Most pupils report that they know how well they are doing at school.

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?

Leaders and managers at all levels communicate ambition and drive improvement well. The headteacher is highly effective in encouraging staff to introduce initiatives that improve provision. The school makes good use of a range of monitoring activities. Copious data are used to track pupils' progress and to inform effective intervention strategies. The information gained from the rigorous checks on the quality of teaching and learning results in challenging targets being set for individual teachers and informs changes in whole-school teaching approaches. As a result, the quality and consistency of teaching has improved.

The governing body is rigorous in its efforts to ensure that pupils and staff are safe and it discharges its duties effectively. The school adopts recommended good practice across all aspects of its safeguarding arrangements. Meticulously maintained records are kept of the vetting procedures carried out on all adults working with pupils. Staff training on safeguarding issues is fully up to date. All staff are trained to carry out 'emergency first aid'. The governing body is very supportive of the school and relationships with the staff are constructive. Members of the governing body question and challenge the school and are increasingly involved in evaluating its effectiveness. The school satisfactorily promotes community cohesion. It actively and effectively promotes community cohesion within the school community and, as a result, all groups of pupils work and play in harmony. The school is reaching out to other communities to strengthen its engagement with a range of community groups beyond the school and local community. The school promotes equality of opportunity well. There is a clear view of the performance of different groups and the school knows that there are no overall discrepancies between them. Data are now used

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effectively to compare the performance of groups, including gender groups, to ensure that pupils progress at similar rates.

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	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The quality of provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. As a result, after a sensitively applied induction programme, they settle quickly and make good progress. Teaching is good because adults understand how young children learn. Activities are often based on the children's own interests, such as the current 'pirate' theme. This contributes to children's enjoyment by making learning fun. When a worm was discovered in the 'treasure pit' the children's great excitement was harnessed to promote their knowledge and to instil a sense of care for other creatures. There is a good balance between adult-led activities and those opportunities for children to choose for themselves, including outdoor activities. This choice effectively contributes to the children's growing independence. They stay committed to their chosen task for a considerable time and work and play happily and sensibly together. Adults engage with children regularly and positively, sharing what they are discovering, drawing them into conversation and asking well-focused questions that promote their good learning. Close attention is paid to children's welfare. Assessment is thorough and regular, with a good range of strategies used to build a comprehensive picture of children's progress. The information gained is used well to plan future learning. The setting is well led and managed. The new Early Years Foundation Stage leader has quickly gained a secure picture of the strengths and relative weaknesses of the provision and has made well-considered changes.

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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

A relatively small proportion of parents and carers returned the questionnaires.

The overwhelming majority of whom expressed happiness with their child's experience at Blackburn Primary. One parent expressed concern regarding pupils' safety. Looking at security arrangements, inspectors found that the school is vigilant in its efforts to safeguard its pupils, and takes its responsibilities in this area very seriously. Numerous parents and carers commented that their child is well cared for and that children new to the school are warmly welcomed. Inspectors endorse the parents' and carers' positive views.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackburn 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 89 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 325 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	67	27	30	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	67	28	31	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	41	46	46	52	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	42	47	40	45	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	52	58	33	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	55	39	44	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	43	47	53	3	3	0	0
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)	41	46	38	43	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	39	44	46	52	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	47	53	38	43	0	0	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	36	40	46	52	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	56	63	27	30	2	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	58	65	27	30	4	4	0	0

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 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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 pupils' 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.



13 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackburn Primary School, Rotherham S61 2BU

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school. We enjoyed meeting you and talking with you. We found that Blackburn Primary is a good school. Your headteacher and all the staff take good care of you and they are keen to help you to do your best, which matches your motto of, 'Only our best is good enough.'

The inspectors found that most of you make good progress in your work and that you behave well and you get on well together. Teachers try to make lessons as lively and interesting as they can and the school keeps a close eye on how well you are getting on with your learning. Your teachers mostly give you work that is not too easy or too hard but just right. As this is not always the case, we have asked that the work you are given is always just right for you. We have also asked your headteacher if he, and the teachers, will check very carefully in your books to see that this is happening right through the school. Most of you said in your questionnaires that you learn a lot in lessons and that the adults explain how to improve your work. Because most of you know your writing and mathematics targets you have a really clear idea of what to do to improve your work. Inspectors have asked your teachers to make sure you all know your targets very well so that you all can improve even more quickly in these subjects.

You can help your headteacher and the staff to make this good school even better by continuing to behave well and trying as hard as you can.

I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

D Matthews

Lead inspector

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