

Blackhall Colliery Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114201
Local Authority	Durham
Inspection number	357496
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	John Paddick

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	268
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr B Greenwell
Headteacher	Mrs J Clark
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2008
School address	Middle Street Blackhall Colliery, Hartlepool County Durham TS27 4NA
Telephone number	0191 5864049
Fax number	0191 5864049
Email address	blackhallcolliery@durhamlearning.net

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Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester
M2 7LA

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They visited 13 lessons taught by 11 teachers. Inspectors scrutinised a wide variety of pupils' work, especially in English, mathematics and science. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the School Improvement Partner, the coordinator for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the Early Years Foundation Stage leader, governors and groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at governors' minutes, the school development plan, records of pupils' progress and safeguarding documentation. They analysed 102 questionnaires from parents and carers, 24 from staff and 125 from pupils.

The inspection reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- Current standards being reached by all groups of pupils, particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The extent to which the school is challenging its more-able pupils.
- Procedures for identifying and supporting pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Whether there are now more opportunities for developing writing.

Information about the school

Blackhall Colliery Primary School is larger than most schools of similar type. The vast majority of its pupils are from White British backgrounds. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups or speak English as an additional language. A well above average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Around a third of the school's pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities, which is well above average. Pupils with statements of special educational needs make up just over 1% of the school's roll, which is average. Since the previous inspection, there have been many staffing changes and the current headteacher has been in post just over a year. There is a breakfast club for pupils from nursery age to Year 6.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

Blackhall Colliery Primary School provides its pupils with a satisfactory and rapidly improving quality of education. There are many good features. An example is the good quality of care, guidance and support for pupils, which is fully recognised by parents and carers. Another is the pupils' good behaviour and the polite and confident way that they conduct themselves. Capacity for further improvement is good because there is a very strong shared commitment from all staff to move the school on to the next level. Self-evaluation is accurate and plans to improve teaching and raise attainment have a very high profile. There is clear evidence to show that lessons are improving quickly and pupils are making accelerated progress. The gap between where pupils are and where the school wants them to be is narrowing fast.

The relatively recently appointed headteacher and deputy headteacher have introduced an effective tracking system that accurately identifies pupils' levels of attainment and the progress they are making. They have tackled the areas for improvement from the previous inspection well so that pupils now have regular lessons in phonics and benefit from a wider range of opportunity for extending their writing. This is all helping to raise attainment. Although teaching is satisfactory overall, it is improving quickly because teachers and their assistants are now much clearer about how to accelerate pupils' learning. However, there are still lessons where teachers talk to the class for too long. This means the time available for active learning is restricted. Occasionally, teaching is outstanding and promotes really rapid progress.

Attainment by the time pupils leave Year 6, however, remains below average in English and mathematics because some of the older pupils are still making up for ground lost in previous years. However, tracking data show improving progress for most pupils and inspection evidence supports this. Many pupils' attainment especially that of the younger ones, is now average and some are doing better than that. Pupils who are making less than good progress are clearly identified and provided with effective extra support.

Pupils display very positive attitudes and almost always behave well. They are confident and keen to discuss their work and their school. They say that they really enjoy their education because the teachers make learning fun and provide them with a very comprehensive range of extra activities and visits. These enable them to develop social skills well and improve their knowledge and experience of the world outside Blackhall Colliery. The school runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis and provides a very welcoming atmosphere for pupils, parents and carers.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment to at least average throughout the school and ensure that all pupils make good progress by:
 - further increasing the proportion of good challenging teaching
 - raising the profile of pupils' targets in lessons.
- Improve the quality of the satisfactory teaching to good by:
 - planning for a better balance between teacher talk and pupil activity
 - providing more challenging work for the most-able pupils.
- About 40% of schools whose effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enjoy their education and are keen to do well. Their good attitudes and behaviour in lessons help to support the universally good learning atmosphere that pervades the school. Good social skills mean that pupils enjoy productive relationships with the adults who work with them. Pupils relate well to each other and work effectively in pairs and groups in class. They have a strong grasp of what constitutes healthy living. Their attendance has improved considerably and is now above average. Pupils benefit from the good range of opportunities to take responsibility within school and to experience the joy of giving through their shoebox appeal. Taking leading roles in extremely well-presented assemblies often gives pupils' confidence a spectacular boost. Through the work of the school council, pupils have a strong voice. There are several recent examples of improvements to outside facilities which have been informed by their views.

Attainment is below average overall but achievement is satisfactory because pupils' learning and progress are improving securely and quickly. Children join the Nursery and Reception with well-below average skills and personal development. Inspection evidence shows that many of the younger pupils are reaching broadly average standards but some of the older ones are making up ground for some previous underachievement. This applies equally to all groups of pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. Work in Years 5 and 6 shows that pupils' speaking and listening skills are average but their performance in mathematics and English is below average. Pupils generally present their work well and take a pride in it. This is particularly evident in science where pupils reach average attainment. Here, they illustrate their studies and experiments well and know how to apply their understanding of tables of results and number to produce accurate graphs to record physical changes.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
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	3
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?

Teaching is improving rapidly. It is always at least satisfactory, frequently good and occasionally outstanding. Teachers manage their classes well and provide their pupils with a good range of interesting activities. They utilise the skills of their teaching assistants well so that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to others in the same class. In the most effective lessons, good planning underpins a strong pace in the classroom, matches work well to the needs of all pupils, and ensures that learning is rapid. Teachers know exactly where pupils are in terms of attainment and build securely upon the progress that they make. However, they do not always show them clearly enough how to improve the quality of their work to the next level. In a minority of lessons there is still room to provide the school's most-able pupils with more challenging work.

The curriculum is providing pupils with a secure and strengthening route towards making satisfactory and increasingly good progress in the development of their basic skills. The good combination of visits and extra-curricular activities helps to underpin the good progress that pupils make with their personal development. The good care, guidance and support that the pupils receive make a strong contribution to the quality of their education. This feature of the school's work is fully recognised by the pupils themselves and their parents and carers. Good links with outside agencies are effective in providing specialised help for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Good

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procedures for identifying special needs mean that pupils quickly get the help that they need. Good transition arrangements to the next stage in pupils' education mean that they are confident about moving to secondary school.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides the school with strong and effective leadership. She is ably assisted by other managers at all levels and has the full confidence of staff, parents and carers. Since her relatively recent appointment, she has produced a clear agenda to focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising attainment. The rigorous monitoring of lessons is improving their quality and raising expectations of teachers, their assistants and the pupils. There has not been enough time for attainment by Year 6 to reach a higher level as for some pupils there is still a legacy of previous underachievement. Inspectors, however, found that pupils' progress is accelerating and attainment across the school is rising quickly. Staffing is now stable and morale is excellent.

The governing body has been instrumental in setting more challenging targets for staff and pupils. It recognises the school's strong features but it is not content with pupils making satisfactory rather than good progress. It challenges and probes appropriately and takes a very active and keen interest in what is actually going on in classrooms and outside areas. Governors know that their policies are being implemented because they have so much first-hand knowledge of the school's work.

Good safeguarding procedures are firmly in place and have a high profile in the daily life of the school. The promotion of equal opportunities is satisfactory rather than good because some pupils are still making up ground lost due to the many staffing changes that followed the previous inspection and some more-able pupils are not being fully challenged in a minority of lessons. Apart from that, the school promotes equal opportunities well and there is no evidence of discrimination. Promotion of community cohesion is a developing area with some strong features related to visits out of the immediate locality so that pupils can gain first-hand experience of people from the range of cultures that make up the population of Britain. The well-organised breakfast club provides a valuable service for parents, carers and pupils. It enables pupils to socialise, enjoy a variety of activities and prepare for the school day.

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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	3
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	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage benefit from an outstanding and fascinating educational environment and good teaching. They enter the Nursery with very variable skills and abilities and many have stages of development that are exceptionally low. Currently, children are making good progress. Based on robust assessment procedures, teachers and their assistants expect them to reach overall broadly average standards by the time they enter Year 1. This is realistic given the good progress and wide range of activities observed during the inspection. Teaching varies from satisfactory to outstanding. Lessons are always well organised but there are occasions when some members of staff could involve children more in conversation and discussion to develop speaking skills and vocabulary.

Good leadership and management mean that the programme has rich variety and, as with Years 1 to 6, outcomes are improving fast. Teachers and their assistants work well as a team and they provide quite exceptional levels of care and attention for the children. Resources are excellent and teachers use them well to provide children with interesting lessons. Children are eager to come to school and learn because they enjoy the lessons that the staff prepare for them. They particularly like the area where they have the opportunity to spend time with a very interesting range of live animals.

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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

Parents and carers have an extremely positive view of the school. They say that it really is welcoming and has improved substantially under the leadership of the current headteacher. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views but also identifies key improvements that still need to be made, particularly in terms of the standards being reached by pupils.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackhall Colliery 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 102 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 268 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	73	72	29	28	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	75	74	27	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	66	65	35	34	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	60	59	39	38	1	1	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	74	73	28	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	57	56	44	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	59	40	39	0	0	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)	53	52	43	42	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	62	61	38	37	1	1	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	51	42	41	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	47	46	45	44	2	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	63	62	39	38	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	74	73	28	27	0	0	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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackhall Colliery Primary School, Hartlepool, TS27 4NA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school recently. A particular thank you goes to those of you who filled in the questionnaires or met with us to talk about your school. We would also like to thank those of you who were so keen to explain what you were doing when you were in class. We were impressed by your behaviour and courtesy and we are pleased to know that you really enjoy coming to school.

We found that Blackhall Colliery Primary School provides you with a satisfactory and rapidly improving quality of education. Your headteacher has done a good job since she arrived. You now have much higher targets than previously and teachers are checking up on your progress very carefully to make sure that you reach them. We are pleased to note that many of you are now making much better progress than you were a year or two ago. However, some of you in Years 5 and 6 are still behind where you should be in English and mathematics.

Your school can still improve further and we have asked the governors, headteacher and staff to make some changes to enable you to learn more quickly. These are to:

- ensure that even more of you make good progress so that the standards you reach are higher
- improve some lessons so that you all get good teaching all of the time.

You can help by continuing to behave well and work hard.

Yours sincerely

Mr John Paddick
Lead inspector

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