

Blackheath Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	103981
Local Authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	355499
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Helen Morrison

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	454
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jill Rushton
Headteacher	Lesley King
Date of previous school inspection	4 October 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. A total of 21 lessons taught by 16 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, school leaders and representatives of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at curriculum planning, data on pupils' achievement including their current progress, documents about safeguarding, plans for improvement, pupils' work and records of the school's own monitoring of its performance. They also analysed 116 questionnaires that were returned by parents and carers, together with 100 from pupils and 31 from staff.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

Current attainment and rates of progress for boys in English across the school.

- The impact of actions to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.
- The effectiveness of teaching in securing good progress for higher ability pupils across the school and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Information about the school

Blackheath is a larger than average sized primary school, where about a fifth of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average, and the majority of these have moderate learning difficulties or behavioural, emotional and social needs. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average.

The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises a nursery class, which provides part-time education, and two full-time reception classes.

The school has gained a number of awards including the Basic Skills Quality Mark, the Sports Mark, and the Thinking School Award, and it has Healthy Schools status.

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

Blackheath Primary is a good school. Among its strengths are the good start to children's education provided in the Early Years Foundation Stage and the exciting and engaging curriculum. Senior leaders and governors provide strong leadership of the school and have a good understanding of the needs of pupils and their families, which is shared by staff.

The curriculum is exciting and carefully planned so that pupils' progress across the school, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, is good. As a result pupils' attainment is broadly average. The school has worked hard to ensure that boys enjoy learning, for example in Year 6 where work based on an absorbing novel helped pupils to learn about Victorian workhouses. As a result the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is narrowing, particularly in English. However, the school recognises that more able pupils are not always given sufficiently challenging work and there are limited opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to pursue their strengths and extend their skills.

The school is caring and welcoming and pupils enjoy being there. Pupils know they will be listened to if they approach an adult with a concern and as a result they feel safe in school. They learn to be tolerant and care for one another and are eager to take on responsibilities, such as acting as playground buddies or membership of the school council. They say that any misbehaviour or bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively. Pupils consider the experiences of others, but the school recognises that it provides only limited opportunities for them to learn about the lives of other people in the United Kingdom.

The school has implemented a wide range of initiatives to promote good attendance, such as individual and class awards, and in consequence attendance shows a clear upward trend. However, some more recently introduced strategies have still to have an impact, and the school's average yearly attendance remains low.

The headteacher, senior leaders and governors have high expectations and a clear vision for the future improvement of the school. Their good leadership underpins the school's good capacity for sustained further improvement and has been effective in ensuring that challenging targets for pupils' attainment have been met. Accurate school self-evaluation and monitoring of teaching by senior leaders has led to well-targeted professional development for staff and as a result teaching has improved and is now good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment and improve progress by :

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- ensuring that more able pupils are fully challenged in every lesson so that they reach the high standards of which they are capable
- providing more opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to extend their skills.
- Increase attendance to at least 94% for the 2010/11 school year by working more closely with the local community and in particular parents and carers to reduce the number of pupils taking holidays in term time.
- Improve the effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion by extending pupils' understanding of the United Kingdom as a diverse community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Children enter the school with skills that are well below those expected for their age, and make good progress in the Early years Foundation Stage. In the past pupils have made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and started Year 3 with below average standards. Key Stage 1 pupils now make good progress as a result of good teaching and a lively curriculum - for example pupils much enjoyed using the 'magical maths microphone'. This, together with the introduction of a structured programme that links sounds and letters and the use of 'writing ladders' to support writing, has improved attainment so that it is now average. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress. Attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 has been broadly average for the last three years and current pupils' work confirms that this has been maintained. Inspectors' observations show that throughout the school some more able pupils do not always achieve as well as they could. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because the school is quick to identify their individual needs and provide personalised support in lessons. Pupils from different ethnic backgrounds achieve as well as their peers.

In the classroom, even the youngest children are learning to work independently and take opportunities to share their thinking with 'talk partners'. They grow in confidence as they move through the school. Pupils are clear about what they are learning in lessons and how well they have done. They enjoy their work and participate eagerly in practical activities such as using coins to check their addition of decimals. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good overall though in a small number of lessons where the pace was slower some pupils lost concentration and became restless.

Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They have a good understanding of the importance of being healthy, for example through drinking water and eating fruit. They enjoy a range of exercise and sporting activities, some of which are led by professional sports coaches. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community, for example through collections for local and national charities. Their interest in learning, promoted through group work and a focus on thinking skills, together with an increasing awareness of the world of work result in their being satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and later life.

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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	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	4
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 assistants and teachers work well together as a team. Tasks are usually well matched to pupils' previous understanding, particularly for middle ability pupils and the less able. Teachers have good subject knowledge and plan exciting lessons that are often tailored to pupils' interests and needs. They use a rich variety of resources to appeal to the wide range of pupils. Pupils' learning is enriched by good use of information and communication technology such as the use of video material to enhance writing. They benefit from specialist music teaching in Year 3 and from direct experiences such as those provided by visits and visitors. However there is little enhancement of the curriculum specifically aimed at gifted and talented pupils, in order that they can share and extend their skills.

The school works well with a range of agencies to support pupils, especially those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, so that they are helped to achieve well. Good induction procedures ensure that children settle in quickly though actions to improve attendance have yet to have a full impact.

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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?

The drive and ambition of senior leaders and governors has brought about good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in the quality of teaching which is now good. The school is committed to equality of opportunity and identifies quickly the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Termly pupil progress meetings are based on the school's extensive analysis of the progress of different groups of pupils so that any differences are addressed promptly. As a result, the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is narrowing.

The school uses its knowledge of the socio-economic, ethnic and religious make-up of the school and its local communities to promote mutual respect and understanding. As a result, pupils from different backgrounds get on well together. The school makes effective use of partnerships to ensure it meets community needs well. These links and those being developed with other countries are good examples of ways in which the school promotes community cohesion at both a local and international level. However, school leaders know that pupils' knowledge and understanding of the different cultures and beliefs elsewhere in the United Kingdom are less strong. Parents and carers are given satisfactory termly information about the school's activities and the work their children are doing.

The governing body provides the school with a good level of support and challenge and ensures that the school fulfils its statutory duties well. It is well informed about the life of the school its performance and governors work well with senior leaders in strategic planning. The governing body holds the school to account well, though monitoring of safeguarding policies is not as rigorous as other aspects of evaluation. Nevertheless, procedures meet current government requirements and ensure that pupils are safe in school.

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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	3
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	3
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

As a result of good teaching children make good progress in both Nursery and Reception years, although their attainment remains below average when they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage. Many children start in nursery and some in reception with particularly underdeveloped communication and language skills. Carefully structured activities, particularly to strengthen these skills, ensure children in the nursery and reception enjoy learning and achieve well. Speaking and listening are well promoted in group work and parents are encouraged to support their children's learning, for example through initiatives such as 'chattermums'.

The curriculum captures the children's interest and imagination and activities are well-chosen and engaging, for example when pupils dress as astronauts in the role play area. Indoors, children enjoy a good balance between adult led activities and those they choose for themselves. However the outdoor learning environment does not yet provide a similar level of opportunities for children to exercise choice and follow their own initiative.

Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good and children's progress is monitored very effectively. Induction procedures, including home visits, are good and as a result children settle quickly into life at school. Children are well cared for and procedures are in place to ensure that children are safeguarded well.

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Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

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 are supportive of the school, and the overwhelming majority that responded to the inspection questionnaire say their children enjoy school and are kept safe. Some individual comments indicated concerns over behaviour and bullying and a number of parents did not consider that behaviour is well managed. Inspectors saw behaviour that was generally good, though some pupils became restless in a very small number of lessons when the pace slowed. Pupils say that any bullying that does occur is quickly dealt with. A small minority of parents believe that their views are not sufficiently taken into account. Inspectors found that the school tries to tailor ways of consulting with parents and carers to meet their needs, though work to re-establish the parents' consultative group has only just begun.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackheath 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 116 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 454 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	50	56	48	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	57	49	57	49	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	37	32	67	58	10	9	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	34	64	55	9	8	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	39	34	71	61	4	3	1	1
The school helps me to support my child's learning	33	28	71	61	10	9	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	41	35	72	62	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)	29	25	69	59	9	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	33	28	72	62	6	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	23	71	61	15	13	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	23	20	72	62	14	12	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	25	69	59	14	12	2	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	44	38	64	55	5	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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackheath Primary School, Rowley Regis, B65 9NF

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and showing us what you are learning. We really enjoyed talking to you, sharing your lessons and reading your questionnaires and we agree with you that your school is good.

Your teachers care for you and look after you well so you feel safe.

In a lot of lessons you enjoy exciting activities and your teachers try to make learning fun for you, so you are actively involved.

The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get a good start to their school life.

You make good progress.

Those of you who find work difficult are given lots of support so you can keep up with your classmates.

In order that your school gets even better we have asked your headteacher, staff and governors to do the following:

Ensure that those of you who are capable of reaching high standards in English and mathematics always have challenging work to do and provide more opportunities for those of you who have special gifts and talents to learn new skills.

Make sure that more of you come to school regularly because some of you miss too many days.

Make sure that you learn more about the different cultures of people who live in the United Kingdom.

All the adults in your school want you to do well. You can help them by coming to school every day when you are well enough and always doing your best.

Yours sincerely

Helen Morrison

Lead inspector

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