

Blackshaw Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105175
Local Authority	Bolton
Inspection number	355720
Inspection dates	2–3 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Pat Kime HMI

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	228
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Dr Pippa Barrington
Headteacher	Ms Catherine Watkin
Date of previous school inspection	5 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors saw 10 lessons and made brief visits to a further seven lessons. They observed all the teachers. They held meetings with staff, pupils and a representative of the governing body and they spoke, informally, to many parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation provided by the school, including the plans for improvement, curricular planning and records of pupils' progress. They also considered responses to the inspection questionnaires from pupils, staff and 95 parents and carers.

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

- Why has attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 fallen while the school judges that the quality of teaching has improved?
- How well do pupils make progress in writing, which was an area for improvement in the previous inspection report and continues to be a focus for school development?
- How well are boys doing, in view of the underachievement of boys, especially those born in the summer months, at the end of Key Stage 1 in 2010?

Information about the school

Blackshaw is of average size for a primary school. It has an average proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Few pupils are from minority ethnic groups and almost all speak English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is lower than average but many of these pupils have significant or complex learning difficulties. The school is designated by the local authority as inclusive provision for pupils with severe or multiple and profound learning difficulties but has had very few such pupils in recent years. A number of staff, including the deputy headteacher, have been promoted or joined the school since the previous inspection.

Childcare is provided before-and after-school and in school holidays by a private provider on the school premises. This provision was inspected separately by Ofsted. Its inspection reports can be found on the Ofsted website www.Ofsted.gov.uk.

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

The school provides pupils with a good quality of education and an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception). The school has improved in the last three years. It has maintained good standards in pupils' personal development, their behaviour and their attendance. The quality of teaching and the use of assessment to support learning have improved and are now good. The curriculum has also improved and is good with an outstanding range of opportunities in music. The good work of the senior leadership team is now bearing fruit in pupils' better progress in learning.

Pupils' attainment in the end of Key Stage 2 tests in 2010 was broadly average, though better in mathematics than English. The proportion of pupils reaching an above-average standard for their age lagged behind the national figure in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly in writing, and the boys' attainment was weaker than that of the girls. Pupils coming through the school now are benefiting from better teaching. Consequently, they are making good progress in both key stages and standards are rising. Attainment in writing, however, is behind reading and spelling and handwriting lets many pupils down.

The senior staff have a clear and accurate picture of the school's effectiveness and are determined to continue improving its provision and pupils' achievement. Their good plans for this, the extent of improvement, and the recent strengthening of the senior team show there is good capacity to sustain improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Sustain and build on the recent improvement in pupils' progress in order to:
- – raise attainment in writing, especially for boys, with particular attention to standards of spelling and handwriting
- – increase the proportion of pupils who reach an above-average level of attainment for their age by the end of each key stage.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils make good progress academically and in their personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Last year attainment was broadly average overall, with mathematics stronger than English and writing the weakest area. These standards represented satisfactory progress for last year's leavers. However, pupils are now making good progress as a result of improved teaching. The last two years saw a downward trend in attainment at the end of Key Stage 2, as a result of unsettled teaching which has now stabilised. Three features stand out in the academic outcomes in 2010.

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First, boys did less well than girls in both key stages. Second, in Key Stage 1, boys and pupils born in the summer months – sometimes the same pupils – did less well than similar children across the country. The school has recognised this and taken appropriate steps to help them catch up and to ensure that, in future, pupils do not fall behind. Third, relatively few pupils reached an above-average standard for their age, particularly in writing. Weaknesses in spelling and handwriting undermine the quality of many pupils' writing.

Pupils are now making at least good progress throughout the school. When children start in nursery, many of them can do less than is typical for children their age. As a result of improvements in provision, children now make outstandingly good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the end of reception, their attainment is securely above the national average in all areas of learning. Boys do particularly well at this stage. Good foundations have been laid for raising their attainment in Key Stages 1 and 2 to match that of the girls. The school's records and pupils' work show that pupils across the school have made good progress this school year in English and mathematics. There are pockets of outstanding progress, for instance, in English in Year 6 and mathematics in Year 5. In the lessons seen, pupils worked well, often with great enthusiasm and a determination to achieve, especially when solving problems. As a result, they made good gains in learning in most lessons. Expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are high and these pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

Pupils feel very safe at school. They know the adults care about them and they are confident to turn to staff with any problems or worries. Pupils put their good understanding of how to keep healthy into practice well. They contribute well to the life of the school as a community and are involved wider community activities. A range of opportunities help pupils to develop spiritually, and to appreciate diversity in Britain and the wider world.

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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?

Good pastoral care has been maintained since the previous inspection and all other aspects of the school's provision have improved.

The school has a very caring atmosphere, with positive and encouraging relations between staff and pupils. The school provides good support for pupils who may be vulnerable and mobilises additional support to meet their needs. There is a good range of extra help for pupils at risk of underachievement, whatever their ability.

The school provides a good curriculum which ensures progression in all subjects as pupils move up the school. The curriculum is enhanced with a range of special events, such as themed weeks, often including first-hand activities, and educational visits and visitors. Pupils have an exceptionally good range of opportunities to learn and perform music within and beyond school. For example, they learn to play stringed, woodwind and percussion instruments and there is a boys' vocal band.

Teaching is largely good. Teachers implement the recently revised behaviour policy effectively and maintain good order and a purposeful working atmosphere in lessons. They have secure knowledge of their subject matter and use resources judiciously to add interest to lessons and to keep all pupils actively involved in learning. For instance, mathematics lessons often include solving problems, presented as games or challenges, and in English pupils are asked to write their ideas on individual white boards at various points during a lesson, rather than put their hands up. Teachers brief support staff well,

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so they make a good contribution to pupils' learning. Lessons are planned carefully but, at times, they are less effective than they might be because work is not closely tailored to the range of pupils' attainment or teachers do not check on the progress of all pupils' work frequently enough during a lesson.

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 senior leadership team has been strengthened by a recent restructure. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work together very effectively. They share an ambitious vision for the school and they are supported well by other senior staff who are fully aware of the school's priorities and who contribute well to meeting the plans to fulfil them. The robust action taken to improve teaching reveals the effectiveness of the school's leaders and managers. Management systems are strong. The school has introduced rigorous tracking of pupils' progress and teachers are held responsible for how well the pupils do. The governing body meets its responsibilities well. Governors are well-informed about the school's performance and they bring a good level of relevant expertise to their work.

The school works closely with external agencies to ensure that pupils' needs are met. For example, it enlists support from the local authority's specialist staff for any pupils who have behavioural difficulties. As a result, these pupils gain in self-control and their behaviour does not hinder learning for others. The strong partnership between the school and the out-of-school provision supports good communication with parents and cares and the good quality of care and support for pupils.

The school has good arrangements for safeguarding pupils, including those for child protection, and staff are appropriately trained in these matters. This is an inclusive school where equality of opportunity is promoted, for instance, by targeting some music provision for boys. Staff check the personal and academic success of different groups of pupils. They are aware of where improvement is needed, for example, to resolve the discrepancy in achievement between boys and girls. The school promotes community cohesion and harmonious relationships well, in school and through its links with other schools in Britain and abroad.

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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	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of the nursery and the Reception class who are taught in a single Early Years Foundation Stage unit. When they join nursery, children's attainment, taken overall, is lower than is usually seen in children of their age. Standards have risen over the last three years and children now make outstanding progress in all areas of their learning. By the end of the Reception Year, attainment is above average. Boys' progress is particularly good.

Children benefit from a very rich range of learning activities indoors and out. The staff are knowledgeable and team work is strong. Staff keep a very close eye on how well the children are doing and they plan taught activities and play opportunities very carefully in order to meet each individual's particular needs. Outstanding leadership and management, rooted in a clear vision for the unit, underpin children's success in learning and the high quality of the provision.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

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Views of parents and carers

As the chart below shows, parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about their children's experience at Blackshaw. Few express any dissatisfaction. The inspectors' judgements are equally positive. A very small number of parents or carers expressed concern that some pupils' behaviour hindered their children's learning. The inspectors saw no evidence of this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackshaw 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 95 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 228 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	59	62	35	37	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	56	59	36	38	3	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	55	58	37	39	3	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	59	62	33	35	3	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	55	58	39	41	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	51	54	42	44	1	1	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	43	45	50	53	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)	36	38	53	56	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	48	44	46	4	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	41	43	45	47	6	6	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	39	50	53	7	7	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	43	45	48	51	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	57	60	36	38	1	1	1	1

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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

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.



4 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackshaw Primary School, Bolton, BL2 6TE

I am writing on behalf of the team of inspectors who came to your school recently. Thank you for welcoming us. We learned a lot about the school from seeing your lessons and talking to you. This letter is to report our findings to you.

I am so pleased to be able to tell you that your school has improved a great deal since it was last inspected three years ago. It is now a good school. Children now get an outstanding start in the Early Years Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and you are making good progress in the Year 1 to Year 6 classes. Attainment, by the end of Key Stage 2, is improving after a dip over the last two years.

This improvement is the result of the staff's determined hard work and ambition for you to do well; an example for you. You are now taught well, and you have good opportunities to learn in all subjects, especially in music. We were pleased to see so many pupils learning to play musical instruments. The staff take good care of you and go the extra mile for pupils who have any problems.

We agreed with Ms Watkin about how to make your school even better. The most important thing is to raise attainment by the end of Year 6. The priorities in order to do this are:

- to maintain your current good rate of progress in learning
- to improve standards in writing, especially for the boys, and including in spelling and handwriting
- to help more of you to reach a high standard for your age
- to set targets for your progress each year that would mean you learned faster than most pupils in schools in England.

I wish every one of you well for the future. I am sure you will have good ideas about how the school could improve and you will be able to propose them through the school council.

Yours sincerely

Pat Kime

Her Majesty's Inspector

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