

Blackhorse Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109121
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	356476
Inspection dates	23–24 March 2011
Reporting inspector	Richard Light

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	350
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sarah Hudson
Headteacher	Philip Winterburn
Date of previous school inspection	3 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twenty-five lessons or part lessons were observed, and 15 teachers were visited. Meetings were held with senior leaders, other staff with positions of responsibility, members of the governing body, parents and carers, local authority officers and two groups of pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at pupils' progress data provided by the school, pupils' books, records of monitoring carried out by the school, action plans and case studies for a small number of pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Questionnaires from 164 parents and carers, 159 older pupils and 40 members of teaching and support staff were analysed.

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

- Whether teaching is sufficiently challenging to secure and maintain good progress and raise attainment, especially in mathematics.
- The impact of current strategies for assessing and monitoring pupils' learning on increasing their rates of progress.
- How the curriculum enables pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.
- The use of systems for self-evaluation to bring about improvements.

Information about the school

The school serves a new housing estate in the north of Bristol. It is larger than the average-sized primary school and most pupils live close by. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are provided for in two Reception classes. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national figure and most pupils come from White British heritage. The school has a specially resourced provision for special educational needs (the resource base) for 20 pupils with social and communication needs, and, as a result, the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above the national average. The governing body manages a breakfast club on site. An above average proportion of pupils leave or enter the school other than at the normal times. The governing body has made a considerable number of significant appointments following the departure of the previous headteacher, including many staff for positions of responsibility and a new headteacher to start in April 2011. There is currently an acting headteacher. The school has achieved an Activemark and has National 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

Blackhorse Primary School has improved significantly and is now a good school. Key to this success are the effective partnership arrangements between the school, community and the local authority, combined with strong actions taken by leaders and managers at all levels to bring about improved outcomes for all pupils. Positive relationships between staff, parents and carers, and pupils contribute to the good and sometimes outstanding behaviour seen in lessons, around the school and during breakfast club.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage settle quickly, making a good start to their education. Pupils go on to make good progress in their learning in lessons and relative to their starting points, as a result of good and occasionally outstanding teaching combined with sharply focused support. In a very small minority of lessons, teaching lacks pace, and assessment information is not always used effectively to ensure faster rates of progress. By the time they leave, pupils' attainment is average and rising. Attainment in writing, while still broadly average, is lower than that of reading and mathematics. Spelling and handwriting are weaker areas and opportunities for pupils to develop their cross-curricular writing skills are sometimes missed.

Pupils in the resource base reach broadly average standards and make good progress in their learning as a result of carefully planned and personalised teaching. Their levels of self-confidence and self-esteem are raised through opportunities to celebrate their achievements and through peer and self-assessment. The resource base is well managed.

The satisfactory curriculum provides a range of activities to meet the needs and interests of pupils, and makes good provision for some aspects of personal development such as social skills and moral understanding. Pupils develop a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. However, there are limited opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of the national and international community so they can make a better contribution towards it. Pupils apply their reading, mathematics and ICT skills in lessons, but less frequently in real-life contexts.

The acting headteacher provides clear, open and honest leadership for the school. He leads a new staff team that shares the school's aims and vision. Good self-evaluation ensures that the school has an accurate understanding of its strengths and areas for further development. The arrangements for monitoring teaching and learning, and school improvement plans, are well constructed and identify specific areas for development. Robust follow-up action by leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, ensures rapid progress is maintained. However, there are few formal opportunities for teachers to learn from each other's good practice.

Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in the school's work which include new systems for recording pupils' progress, improved attainment for all pupils and

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quicker rates of progress. The rapid pace of improvement, combined with the school's effective self-evaluation and development planning, demonstrates that the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in writing by:
 - developing plans and increasing opportunities for cross-curricular writing
 - improving the quality of spelling and handwriting
 - using ICT and displays of writing more effectively as a stimulus to aid development.
- Match the quality of teaching to the best in the school by:
 - ensuring all lessons are accurately pitched to pupils' different levels of ability
 - keeping pace high
 - sharing and modelling good practice between staff.
- Improve the quality of the curriculum by:
 - developing greater opportunities for pupils to apply their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a range of real-life contexts
 - enabling pupils to raise their understanding and make a greater contribution to the national and international community.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start at the school with levels of skill lower than those expected. Throughout the school, they make good progress with their learning in the classroom and achieve well in some aspects of their personal development. Their good understanding of how to lead healthy lives is reflected in the national awards gained by the school and the high uptake of healthy school meals. They enjoy lessons and collaborate well to complete group tasks and evaluate their work. They usually work at a good pace, though occasionally this drops. Their interest in learning is heightened when they have the opportunity to apply their skills in practical situations, such as using puppets to retell a story of Romeo and Juliet.

Pupils in the resource base recall multiplication facts to 10 quickly when playing hopscotch that simultaneously develops precision and control when throwing bean bags. In Years 4 and 5, pupils expand the use of general vocabulary in writing to use interesting time connectives to start sentences. Previous variations in the performance of different groups of pupils have now been levelled; all groups progress well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, both in the main school and in the resource base.

Pupils enjoy coming to school because they feel valued and safe. They conscientiously take on extra responsibilities around the school, for example by participating in the school council, eco-warriors group or organising the annual 'leavers event'. Pupils' communication, teamwork and personal qualities are enhanced well through the Year 6 residential programme and pyramid club for pupils in Key Stage 2.

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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	3
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

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?

Teachers and other adults understand the pastoral and academic needs of pupils well. They have good relationships with pupils and encourage them to participate widely in the life of the school. Staff deploy their good subject knowledge well to provide good support and challenge for all groups of pupils. Most lessons are well paced and maintain pupils' interest. In some classrooms, displays of writing or ICT are used well as starting points for further work, but this is not consistent. A purposeful atmosphere exists in nearly all classes. Teaching assistants contribute well to pupils' learning because they encourage pupils to do as much as possible for themselves. Teachers have conducted lesson study activities to tackle the underperformance in some boys' writing. This has had a positive impact and has accelerated these pupils' progress.

Teachers have good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and recording their progress. However, there is variation in how well this information is used to ensure pupils are given work of the right challenging level. For example, it was less effective in one ICT lesson during the inspection. Examples of excellent challenge exist, including in mathematics. In an outstanding Year 6 lesson, pupils applied their mathematical calculation skills extremely well using calculators to solve well-chosen multiple step problems.

The school has taken some steps to widen its curriculum. Resource base work on the Chinese New Year makes a contribution to pupils' understanding of other cultures. It uses the local environment to provide some historical experiences for learning such as visits to

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Brunel's ship, the SS Great Britain, or Cardiff Castle, though activities to maximise pupils' progress in writing following these events are not always grasped. Crime Scene Investigation theme days develop pupils' contribution to their local community adequately and foster positive partnerships, but these links do not permeate to the national or international level. Some opportunities for pupils to reflect and make connections between different aspects of their learning in assembly are missed. However, a range of well-attended extra-curricular clubs, including the breakfast club, enhance the curriculum effectively.

The strong staff teamwork and close partnership with parents, carers and other professionals underpin the school's caring and supportive environment. The individual education plans and detailed support, including good partnership arrangements with a range of external agencies, and the breakfast club, ensure that the needs of all pupils, including those whose circumstances make them vulnerable, are met well.

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	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The school has a caring yet purposeful ethos based on clarity and honesty. The acting headteacher's open style of leadership is welcomed by all members of the school community. Ambitious targets have resulted in an environment where pupils' progress has rapidly increased. Their successes are shared collectively and cherished through reward certificates they receive in assemblies and in newsletters. Similarly, staff strengths and skills are recognised and valued. Their good analytical skills and subject knowledge are used well to accelerate pupils' academic progress. The commitment to professional and personal development of leaders and managers at all levels plays a significant role in embedding and driving improvement across the school. Identified actions by leaders to improve the quality of teaching are shared with governors and acted upon robustly.

Parents and carers receive high-quality information about the personal care and academic progress of their children, and the vast majority are very supportive of the school, sharing in the rapid progress and developments that are continuing. One parent commented, 'Blackhorse school has recently offered very useful parent workshops in supporting our children's literary and numeracy development. The school has responded quickly and effectively to any issues that I have raised.' This view summarises the feelings of most parents and carers. Positive relationships extend to good partnership arrangements with a wide range of external agencies: these ensure individual needs can be met. Links to the local secondary school enhance learning well, for example in dance, for older pupils.

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The governing body challenges and supports the school well. Governors care deeply about the quality of education pupils receive and are involved in monitoring the school's work through visits to lessons and presentations from staff. They receive high quality information regarding the performance of the school and act quickly to address concerns. Systems are in place to ensure statutory requirements are met and finances managed prudently. All staff and governors are well trained in child protection procedures, and adults are fully vetted and checked before they are employed by the school. Staff, pupils, parents and carers say that they feel safe and secure with the school.

Through the inclusive ethos, the school successfully promotes equal opportunities and does not discriminate. School values are well modelled and taught by staff, and have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes and personal development. Participation in activities such as fund-raising and big-clean litter days adequately promote community cohesion locally, but its promotion in a national and international context is more limited.

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 Early Year Foundation Stage staff form positive links with families through the well-planned programme of induction. Good transition arrangements for children moving into Year 1 ensure a smooth passage to the next stage of their education. Parents and carers are provided with detailed information early, helping to ensure that children quickly develop a positive attitude to learning. Good and detailed observations that build on previous experiences are used well to provide individual daily lessons in phonics (the sounds that letters make) and mathematical work. Creative development is nurtured well when children have time to explore and investigate at length ideas that interest them such as 'Space'. Activities such as making space rockets from fruit and vegetables foster a strong collective community with children working well together and cooperating well with

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adults. The indoor and outdoor areas are well resourced and adapted to children's responses meaning that they are interested in and enjoy their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader has good subject knowledge and clear ideas on how to improve provision further, including targeted action to address weaknesses in writing. As a result of the effective teamwork, good leadership and well-organised, imaginative teaching, children become happy and confident, making good progress in lessons.

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 higher than average proportion of questionnaires was returned. One comment stated: 'There have been very positive changes since the acting headteacher took over. Staff morale seems to have improved; parent/school liaison is vastly better. As a parent, I feel much more included and welcome.' Parents and carers hold positive views of most aspects of the school's work and recognise the safe and caring environment the school has created. A few parents and carers felt that their children were not making enough progress. During this inspection, inspectors judged progress to be good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackhorse 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 164 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 350 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	88	54	70	43	4	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	100	61	61	37	2	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	67	41	87	53	4	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	58	35	80	49	20	12	2	1
The teaching is good at this school	62	38	85	52	10	6	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	63	38	86	52	9	5	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	53	32	95	58	11	7	1	1
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)	37	23	99	60	11	7	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	56	34	93	57	9	5	2	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	48	29	91	55	6	4	3	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	32	92	56	7	4	3	2
The school is led and managed effectively	68	41	83	51	6	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	47	76	46	2	1	3	2

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.



25 March 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackhorse Primary School, Bristol BS16 6TR

Thank you for the warm welcome when we visited your school recently. We were impressed by your good behaviour in lessons and around the school. We enjoyed seeing you in lessons, talking to you about your school and looking at your work.

Yours is a good school. All the adults in the school take good care of you and make sure you are all safe. You say you enjoy being part of the school and the activities and visits teachers plan for you. You behave well, look after each other thoughtfully and gain some good personal skills to help you grow up. You know the importance of eating healthily and taking regular exercise.

Your teachers work hard to make sure you are making good progress. The good teaching you receive is helping you develop most of the skills you need in English and mathematics. We have asked teachers to improve your writing further by planning opportunities to write in different subjects and working on your spelling and handwriting.

We have also asked the acting headteacher and his team to:

- make more teaching as good as the best in the school by ensuring your work is hard enough and you work quickly
- enable you to apply your literacy, numeracy and ICT skills to things to do with the world outside school
- provide ways for you to learn more about, and contribute more to, the wider community ♦ worldwide and in this country.

In this way, they can all help to make your school an even better place in which to learn. I am sure that the school, with all your help, will continue to improve.

It was a pleasure to meet you all. Best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Richard Light

Lead inspector

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