

Blisworth Community Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	121794
Local Authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	380322
Inspection dates	26–27 September 2011
Reporting inspector	Keith Sadler

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	211
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Carter
Headteacher	Celia Irwin
Date of previous school inspection	14 January 2009
School address	Courteenhall Road Blisworth Northampton NN7 3DD
Telephone number	01604 858414
Fax number	01604 858532
Email address	bursar@blisworth.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed 14 lessons led by eight different teachers and practitioners. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. They observed the school’s work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school’s analysis of pupils’ progress, teachers’ lesson plans, the school’s improvement plan, leaders’ monitoring records and pupils’ work. Questionnaires from staff, pupils in Key Stage 2 and from 95 parents and carers were analysed and their responses taken into account.

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

- Pupils’ progress in Years 3 to 6 and whether current Year 6 pupils are on track to attain their targets.
- Strengths in teaching and any differences in quality between Key Stages 1 and 2.
- The impact of curricular revisions on the overall quality of the curriculum.
- The role that teachers with responsibilities play in the school’s monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Information about the school

Blisworth is an oversubscribed average-sized primary school. It serves the village and surrounding area though many pupils live outside this area and travel from the outskirts of Northampton. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils have learning difficulties.

The school provides a breakfast club, managed by the governing body, which was included in this inspection. In addition, there is an after-school and holiday club that is not managed by the governing body and which are subject to separate inspection.

The school has gained a number of awards including national Healthy School status and the Basic Skills Quality Mark.

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

1

The school’s capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

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

This outstanding school meets the needs of its pupils exceptionally well. The strengths identified in the previous inspection have been sustained and other aspects, particularly leadership and management, have been successfully developed. The school is a vibrant community with a welcoming and positive ethos where all pupils are fully included. This is because there are highly effective arrangements for the pupils' care, guidance and support which successfully underpin pupils' personal development and well-being. In consequence, pupils' behaviour is outstanding, their attitudes to school and learning are highly positive and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Pupils' enjoyment of school is reflected well in their high levels of attendance. By the time that they reach Year 6, pupils develop into thoughtful, confident young people who have high self-esteem and are prepared well for their move to secondary school and life beyond. Parents and carers expressed a high level of satisfaction with the school. They appreciate the exceptionally close and fruitful partnership that they enjoy with the school.

Pupils of all backgrounds and abilities make good progress and achieve well. By the end of Year 6, attainment is generally significantly above average in mathematics, science and information and communication technology. The school's assessment data and the inspectors' analysis of pupils' current work show that attainment is rising. Above-average attainment in English masks the fact that, while attainment is high in reading, it is a little lower in writing. Staff recognise that development of the sentence structure in pupils' writing is not supported by the systematic development of more complex grammar.

One of the reasons for pupils' good achievement is the way the curriculum has been matched exceptionally well to their needs and to the school's context. Effective provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities plays a key part in this. Provision for these pupils is aided by the excellent partnership that the school enjoys with other schools and support agencies. Teaching is consistently good and teachers ensure that pupils enjoy their work by making creative and coherent links between subjects. Staff manage the pupils exceptionally well and this ensures that classrooms have a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Even so, not enough teaching is outstanding to accelerate progress still further. Teachers are generally adept at ensuring that there is a brisk pace to lessons but this is not always the case. Even in some good lessons, teachers spend too long introducing topics and this slows the pace of learning.

The main reason why the school's overall effectiveness has lifted is that the headteacher and other senior leaders provide an outstanding drive for improvement. They combine clarity of vision with precise and carefully considered actions. Self-evaluation strategies are thorough and built into the school's routines. All the teaching staff gather a wide range of monitoring evidence about pupils' progress and check how well the school is meeting pupils' needs. Senior leaders are clear about the need to lift the overall quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding and the excellent improvement plan is a good tool to secure this. Improved provision and the strengthening of overall effectiveness are compelling examples of the

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school's thorough response to the findings of the previous inspection report and its outstanding capacity to improve further.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the overall quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - systematically developing the use of more complex grammar to improve pupils' sentence structure and close the gap between attainment in reading and writing.
 - ensuring that teachers do not slow the pace of learning by spending too long introducing lessons.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

'Our teachers make our learning fun and they make us laugh,' was one of the many enthusiastic comments from pupils about their learning. Positive attitudes are evident throughout the school as pupils apply themselves well to the work set for them. Because teachers are adept at providing activities that require pupils to work in pairs and small groups, pupils' interpersonal skills and their speaking and listening skills are developed particularly well in all classes. This was evident in a good quality Year 6 mathematics lesson when pupils supported and helped each other well in an activity to solve some two and three-step mathematical problems. While overall progress is good, for some pupils it is outstanding in all the Key Stage 2 classes in reading, mathematics and science. In writing, although progress is good, it is not as strong as in reading. Currently about a third of the Year 6 pupils are already reaching the higher level of attainment expected for pupils at the end of Year 6 in both English and mathematics. Similarly, Year 5 pupils have made excellent progress in Key Stage 2. A majority of these pupils have already attained the expected level for pupils at the end of Year 6 in reading, science and mathematics and a minority have attained that standard in writing.

Pupils say that they feel safe secure and valued. They speak intelligently about how to ensure the safety of themselves and others. Observations of pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable and those with learning difficulties, show pupils are cared for well and helped to develop independence and to play a full part in the life of the school. Pupils have a full appreciation of what it means to live a healthy life. They talk knowledgeably about the importance of diet and exercise and enjoy physical education lessons. Pupils know that their views are always taken seriously and that the staff will act quickly to resolve any concern they might have. Their excellent tolerance of, and support for, one another is central to the harmonious relationships within the school. Pupils delight in taking responsibility and they make an excellent contribution to the school and wider community. All pupils in Year 6 have a job description for their individual responsibilities, which are regularly checked by staff and each other. These procedures ensure that they appreciate the

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importance of their roles. Pupils show sensitivity in reflecting on their own and others’ experiences, and have a very good insight into their similarities and differences.

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	2
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	1
Pupils’ behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	1
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1
Taking into account:	
Pupils’ attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teachers plan lessons well. Their planning is detailed and incisive, catering thoughtfully for the wide range of abilities in each class. This was evident in a well-planned Year 2 religious education lesson which contributed well to the topic on ‘Me!’ The class teacher introduced an activity in which the pupils had to think and write about three of the things that make them unique and wonderful. Pupils helped and supported each other well in identifying their individual talents. Teaching assistants play an important role and are effectively deployed to support individuals and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The curriculum for literacy has been developed and a new approach, based on strengthening pupils’ skills in linking letters and sounds (phonics), is paying dividends in the lower part of the school. In Key Stage 2, a more systematic approach to the teaching of grammar and comprehension is also having a positive impact. Inspectors saw examples of effective questioning that challenged pupils’ thinking and helped them to evaluate their work. Teachers’ thorough approaches to assessment ensure that pupils benefit from good quality feedback. There is no difference in the quality of teaching in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. However, teaching is not as effective as it could be when teachers spend too long introducing lessons. This was particularly the case for the few

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

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satisfactory lessons during the inspection.

The school’s creative and exceptionally well-planned curriculum has a considerable and positive impact on learning. Thorough planning clearly identifies the necessary progression of knowledge and skills that are to be taught in each theme, topic and subject. As a result, cross-curricular provision is outstanding and allows pupils to choose and reflect on questions within the topics that they wish to pursue. Additional activities are excellent and a wide range of clubs and opportunities, both before and after school, support learning well. In addition, pupils say that they thoroughly enjoy the well-chosen trips and visits that help to enliven their learning.

Excellent attention continues to be given to all aspects of care, guidance and support. Staff pay close attention to identifying the needs of vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Extremely strong partnerships and links with a range of agencies, such as health and educational welfare, ensure prompt support for pupils. The school’s high quality procedures in linking with parents and carers and its good support for literacy and numeracy are recognised in it gaining the Basic Skills Quality Mark. Parents and carers were particularly fulsome in their comments regarding the very popular and exceptionally well-run breakfast club. Pupils thoroughly enjoy this provision and many pupils said that they persuade their parents to allow them to attend even on days when their parents or carers do not need to make use of this facility.

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	1
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is passionate about making the school as good as possible for the pupils. She is supported in her vision by the staff and the governing body. Teachers who have leadership responsibilities have a detailed knowledge of the school’s strengths and areas for development. The staff work closely together as a team and morale is high. The governing body is effective and ensures that all statutory requirements are met in full. Close and careful attention is paid to all aspects of risk assessment and the safeguarding of pupils. The school demonstrates highly effective child-protection and staff-vetting procedures. At present, however, the governing body is over-reliant on the headteacher for information about the school’s provision. Although some members of the governing body make visits to the school to gain a first-hand view, this approach is not shared across the whole governing body.

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The school provides a highly cohesive community and has excellent and close links with the local community, including local senior citizens who visit the school every week for lunch followed by a class assembly/presentation by the pupils. The school is committed to promoting equal opportunities for all its pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and the school works in very close partnership with parents, carers and outside agencies to remove any barriers to learning. The school actively seeks to extend pupils’ experiences about life within this country and also globally by the study of specific countries and different faiths. In addition, all pupils visit the Hindu Mandir, a local synagogue and also a Sikh Gudwara and this broadens their horizons well. A long-established link with a residential orphanage school in Kodai Kanal in India has included many visits by staff and an exchange of work by pupils.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	1
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	1
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	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	1
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage class love going to school. Even though they had only been in school for a week at the time of the inspection, they had settled quickly and already had a good understanding of the class routines. They had the confidence and self-esteem necessary to talk with others, whether adult or child. This is because there are excellent and thorough induction procedures. This included many parents and carers attending a high-quality session during the inspection that focused on how parents can support their children’s learning of reading. Most children enter with well-developed personal and social skills and their speaking and listening skills are also higher than expected levels. School data show that progress is good and by the time they leave the Reception class, almost all children reach the expected goals and many exceed them.

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Children talk expressively in lessons about their work and play. For example, when making sandwiches for Hansel and Gretel, children chatted happily together and talked excitedly about how they were selecting their fillings. The teacher helped the children to understand the importance of personal hygiene by ensuring that all washed their hands carefully before making their sandwiches. Children particularly enjoy the good balance between activities that are directed by the staff and those that they choose for themselves. Children make good use of the generous and well-resourced outdoor space. Even though the Reception teacher has only been in the class for three weeks, she has already ensured that there is very detailed planning which effectively covers all the required areas.

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 usual proportion of parents and carers completed the questionnaire. They were highly positive in their support of the school, with many saying how pleased they are to have chosen the school for their children. Many of their views are exemplified by the parent who wrote, 'My children, my husband and I are very happy with both the teaching staff and management of this school. They strive to provide our children with a varied and exciting programme. This helps to stimulate their minds and they balance this with wonderful supportive, caring natures throughout.' Some parents and carers also expressed their satisfaction about the close partnership that they enjoy with the school. As one commented to an inspector, 'We are helped to feel that we are important partners in our children's education.' Almost all said that their children enjoy school and that overall they are satisfied with their children's experiences at the school.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blisworth Community 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 211 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	58	61	34	36	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	71	75	24	25	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child’s progress	50	53	39	41	5	5	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	40	42	46	48	6	6	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	59	62	35	37	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	61	64	27	28	5	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	66	69	29	31	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)	54	57	32	34	4	4	0	0
The school meets my child’s particular needs	50	53	39	41	6	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	52	55	37	39	3	3	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	50	53	41	43	3	3	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	72	26	27	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	63	66	31	33	1	1	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	43	47	10	0
Primary schools	6	46	42	6
Secondary schools	14	36	41	9
Sixth forms	15	42	41	3
Special schools	30	48	19	3
Pupil referral units	14	50	31	5
All schools	10	44	39	6

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 2010 to 08 April 2011 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 2010/11 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.



28 September 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blisworth Community Primary School, Northampton, NN7 3DD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. It is an outstanding school. You told us that you really enjoy lessons and learning and we can see why! Your teachers make lessons interesting and they plan lots of interesting activities for you to do. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. We particularly enjoyed listening to your accounts of the topics and themes that you are enjoying.

You told us that your school is a very happy place and that the adults look after you well. We agree with you, and so do your parents and carers. We were impressed by how well you all get on together. Your behaviour is excellent, you have an excellent understanding about being healthy and also you feel very safe in school. We think that your headteacher is doing an excellent job and she is helped by all the staff. They are always checking on how well you are doing because they want all of you always to do as well as you can.

Even in an outstanding school like yours there are things to improve. We have asked your headteacher to make sure that your teachers make sure that your learning gets even better by improving your writing skills by using more complex sentence structures. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that they do not spend too long introducing your lessons.

We really enjoyed our time in your school. Thank you for taking time to talk to us and watch your lessons. We hope that you all continue to find your time in school enjoyable.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler
Lead inspector

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