

Blackwell Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	125963
Local Authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	381159
Inspection dates	16–17 November 2011
Reporting inspector	Chris Grove

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	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Cocks
Headteacher	Alison O'Neill
Date of previous school inspection	25 March 2009
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 14 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, with staff and members of the governing body. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at analyses of pupils' attainment and progress, the school's development planning and documents relating to monitoring, safeguarding and the curriculum. Inspectors analysed inspection questionnaires returned by 121 parents and carers, as well as those completed by 14 members of staff and 116 pupils.

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

- The extent to which more-able pupils progress as well as they should.
- The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The extent to which teachers provide challenge for pupils, and the extent to which they use information about pupils' progress to inform their planning.
- The effectiveness of the school in evaluating its own performance.

Information about the school

Blackwell Primary is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most pupils are White British, and others come from a range of other ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The school is accredited with the Healthy Schools, the Sportsmark (Gold) and the Eco Schools (Silver) awards. The school offers a breakfast club facility for pupils. On the school site there is a children's centre and a pre-school which are not managed by the governing body, and which are the subject of a separate inspection.

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

Blackwell Primary is a good school. The headteacher is well supported by the senior leadership team and has created an atmosphere in which staff feel valued, work well together and are proud of their school. Parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school and feel that their children enjoy their experiences. One such parent commented warmly that her son had 'always enjoyed school, and progressed well over the years. It will be a sad day when he leaves the school'. Another noted with good insight that her child 'is doing so well because of the way the school tries to make learning exciting and challenging for all the children'.

The headteacher's inclusive vision is shared by the teaching and support staff. As a result, staff work well to help pupils to develop very positive attitudes. The focus on pastoral care is strong, and consequently pupils' welfare needs are met well. For these reasons, pupils' behaviour is good. They are attentive in lessons, polite to others, and friendly and confident with visitors. They feel safe and make positive contributions in the school. Pupils gain an excellent understanding about how to keep themselves fit and healthy. This is reflected in their very full participation in the broad range of physical activities within the outstanding extra-curricular programme.

As a result of good teaching, children make good progress and achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. This good teaching and progress is sustained across the school so that, by the end of Year 6, attainment is broadly average. However, pupils do not perform quite as well in mathematics as they do in English because not so many reach the higher Level 5 standard. Generally, teachers mark pupils' work well but occasionally in mathematics the marking does not give sufficient guidance on how to improve. Although there are arrangements to set pupils targets in mathematics, their impact is limited because targets do not indicate sufficiently what pupils need to do to reach higher levels of attainment.

The headteacher, with good support from the members of the senior leadership team and the governing body, offers the school strong ambition and drive through their clear direction and rigorous progress tracking arrangements. In view of the effective range of links with the neighbourhood, the school does a satisfactory job of promoting community cohesion locally. However, pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their awareness and understanding of communities elsewhere in the United Kingdom or in different societies in the world.

The school has established robust systems to monitor and evaluate teachers'

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planning, the quality of lessons and pupils' progress in their work. The information gained is used well to help teachers improve. Staff collaborate well to reach the accurate evaluation of the school's performance. The information gained is used well to inform future improvements. Challenging targets have been broadly met. Given these factors, and also the overall rise in pupils' attainment, and higher attendance, the school has a good capacity to sustain further improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise attainment in mathematics to match attainment in English, through:
 - ensuring that tasks more consistently match the needs of different groups of pupils, especially the more able
 - improving the impact of target setting by indicating more precisely how to reach higher levels of attainment, and the impact of marking by providing better feedback about the next steps in learning.
- Promote pupils' awareness and understanding of the diversity of other communities, both nationally and internationally, by establishing a wider range of contacts.

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

Pupils achieve well and the great majority agree that they enjoy their time in school. Children's knowledge and skills on entry are generally below typical expectations, especially in writing, but also to some degree in other aspects of literacy, and in their calculation skills. Children progress well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. By the time they enter Year 1, their knowledge and skills are closer to average, though scores in writing are lower than in other areas. Pupils continue to make good progress, especially in reading and writing across the rest of the school. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities also progress well, because teaching is mostly well tailored to their needs and adults give them good support in their learning. The good progress that pupils make was exemplified in a successful Year 6 mathematics lesson about solving problems involving fractions. The teacher had carefully planned the match of tasks to groups of different prior attainment, and discussed key words, such as numerator and denominator. Appropriate support and encouragement by the inclusion manager and the teaching assistant enabled the two lower-attaining groups to progress well, using practical equipment. Pupils of average attainment were effectively challenged, for example when they had to explain the strategy that they had adopted to solve the problems. The challenge for the most-able pupils was a more demanding task which required them first to reduce several fractions to a common denominator. However, some of these pupils could have been extended even further, as could more-able pupils elsewhere in the school.

Pupils behave well around the school, and in assemblies. In lessons, they cooperate maturely and are attentive to their teachers, although concentration can lapse on the

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few occasions when the pace of learning slows. Pupils feel safe in school and are confident to talk to adults if minor difficulties occur. The good relationships that they have with staff and with each other mean that pupils learn to behave well and show good levels of moral and social awareness. Their spiritual awareness is well developed through opportunities to reflect in assemblies. However, their understanding about how people from other cultural backgrounds live their lives is more limited. Pupils' outstanding understanding about how to maintain a healthy lifestyle is demonstrated by their excellent participation in the wide range of extra-curricular clubs involving sports and other physical activities. Almost all pupils say that the school helps them to practise healthy lifestyles. Those pupils who attend the breakfast club benefit from the healthy options, as well as from the very good emotional support offered by the adults, notably the learning mentor. The Healthy Schools and Sportsmark (Gold) awards are testimony to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy living.

Pupils make good contributions to the school and beyond, for example through the school council, through raising funds for charities, and through opportunities to take on roles of responsibility, such as the Play Pals Scheme. The Eco Schools (Silver) award recognises the good impact of groups such as the Gardening Club. Pupils demonstrate good listening, speaking and social skills at school, and develop good skills in information and communication technology (ICT). However, in view of their broadly average overall attainment in literacy and numeracy, this indicates that they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils' attendance is above average.

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	1
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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

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How effective is the provision?

The cordial relationships between teachers and pupils demonstrate the good climate for learning. Teaching is well planned, including clear objectives and criteria for successful learning, so that lessons are purposeful. Teachers set a good pace for learning, making good use of time. Where teachers ensure a good match of tasks to the different groups, all pupils are effectively challenged. However, in mathematics lessons, the challenge for pupils, particularly for the most able, is sometimes not sufficient to ensure their good progress. Teaching assistants do much to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Teachers regularly check progress in lessons, but do not make consistently good use of questioning to assess the extent of pupils' understanding, for example by ensuring that pupils who do not put up their hands are also invited to answer. Teachers regularly mark pupils' work conscientiously, and offer encouragement and points for improvement, especially in English. Occasionally, in mathematics, pupils are not given enough guidance about how to improve their work. Although teachers set individual targets for pupils, their impact is sometimes more limited in the case of mathematics because targets do not consistently direct them towards higher levels of attainment.

The curriculum is broad and balanced and has an appropriately strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Careful planning ensures that pupils progress well in their literacy skills, but relatively less so in mathematics. In part, this is because the school's policy to support the consistent teaching of calculation has not been recently reviewed or evaluated for its impact. Good cross-curricular connections between subjects make learning meaningful. For instance, the study of ancient Egypt in Year 5 included good links with aspects of art and mathematics, and opportunities for written work. Themed events, such as the Arts Exhibition and the European Day of Languages, and exciting visits, such as the Year 6 residential excursion to an outdoor pursuits centre, extend pupils' learning well and contribute effectively to their personal development. The school makes flexible arrangements according to pupils' particular needs, for example, additional provision if pupils are assessed as falling behind, and the engineering project whereby able pupils in Key Stage 2 build a kit car.

Staff are committed to the caring ethos and meet pupils' needs very well. The school environment is welcoming. The inclusion manager makes particularly good provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Other pupils who may be vulnerable are well supported, especially by the headteacher and the learning mentor. The school's actions have had a positive impact on improving attendance. Among other benefits, the breakfast club also serves to promote good attendance.

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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	3
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 headteacher and members of the governing body communicate high expectations to school staff and build well on the secure climate for learning. Governors have a good overview of the school's many strengths and the few weaknesses. They play the role of critical friends to good effect, and have offered challenge, for example about attainment in mathematics. Involvement with the local sports partnership complements the school's provision well, and links with a secondary school provide good support for the teaching of French. A local charity has worked closely with the cookery and gardening clubs. The good engagement of parents and carers is evident in the very high proportion who feel well informed about their children's progress. Leaders make good use of data to track the attainment and progress of individuals and groups, including those who may be vulnerable. In this way they ensure that all groups of pupils have an equal opportunity to be successful and that no discrimination occurs. A broad range of partnerships, including with external agencies, provides good support for pupils' learning and well-being.

The inclusive ethos and good links with the neighbourhood ensure effective contributions to promoting community cohesion in the school and in the local community. Pupils from different backgrounds get on very well with one another. However, the school acknowledges that there is more to be done to foster pupils' understanding of cultural diversity at the national and international levels. The school's systems meet all the requirements for safeguarding. Arrangements and procedures are thorough and are rigorously undertaken. Policies for child protection, race equality and behaviour, up-to-date staff training in child protection, and detailed risk assessments for a range of purposes, ensure that pupils are effectively safeguarded.

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	2

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met	
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

Children rapidly adjust to school and develop good relationships with adults. One parent noted positively that, 'Blackwell is a small and friendly school where my child is happy after only two months.' Routines are soon established. For example, children self-register quickly at the beginning of school, and wash their hands before eating fruit at snack time. They show good attitudes and behaviour, develop the skills to relate well to others, and enjoy their experiences at school. As a result, they make good progress. In one lesson observed, for instance, children discussed enthusiastically what they would need to take on a trip to the moon, and with their teacher compiled a list of items. At other times, children develop the greater independence needed for effective learning, such as following up the theme of rockets by making models using cartons, accessing an art program on the computer for painting, or role-playing a visit to the moon.

Good planning ensures effective opportunities for activities led by adults and for children to learn independently. The teacher's engaging reading of stories stimulates children's imaginations well and leads to their enthusiastic participation in discussions. The teaching of letters and sounds, in particular, is of good quality. The positive impact of such work was underlined by the parent who wrote appreciatively that her daughter had a phonics book, and so she could see her progress each week, and practise with her at home. There is a good ratio of adults to children. The teaching assistants create good rapport with children, and support their learning well. The indoor area is well planned to ensure a balanced curriculum. School staff are still in the process of developing the outside space to promote children's learning. Children are frequently very well focused on their activities, for instance thinking independently or using equipment for themselves. On such occasions, however, adults sometimes miss opportunities to observe and record their learning. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed. There are good induction arrangements, including home visits, which ease the transition to school. Adults make careful assessments of children's progress in their learning journals. However, data on children's performance are not always sufficiently well analysed to inform future planning for improvement.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

There was a very high rate of return of completed questionnaires. Most parents and carers who responded hold positive views about the school. All feel that the school keeps their children safe, and almost all think that it helps them to adopt healthy lifestyles. Nearly all believe that their children's needs are met, and the great majority think their children are making enough progress. Inspectors endorse these judgements. Although most parents and carers believe that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour, a very small minority do not. Inspectors judge that pupils mostly behave well in school and did not note any unacceptable behaviour. A few parents and carers feel that the school is not well led and managed. Inspectors judge that leadership and management are good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackwell 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 195 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	68	56	50	41	2	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	64	44	36	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	57	47	61	50	3	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	56	46	61	50	3	2	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	57	47	61	50	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	49	40	66	55	4	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	54	52	43	2	2	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)	43	36	67	55	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	51	42	66	55	3	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	28	72	60	8	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	26	80	66	2	2	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	58	48	55	45	6	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	54	47	39	7	6	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.

18 November 2011

Dear Pupils



Inspection of Blackwell Primary School, East Grinstead, RH19 3JL

We would like to thank all of you for your help during the inspection. We enjoyed seeing you in your classrooms and talking to you at break times and lunchtimes. We especially thank those of you who filled in the pupils' questionnaire. Inspectors judge that you go to a good school.

These are the main things that we found out about your school.

- Your school is welcoming and helps you to learn well.
- You enjoy school, and your behaviour at school is good.
- You have very good relationships with the adults who take good care of you.
- You feel very safe in school and have an excellent understanding of how to keep yourselves fit and healthy.
- You make good contributions within your school and the wider community.
- The teaching and the curriculum in your school are good.
- Your attendance is above average.
- You participate very well in the wide range of excellent extra-curricular clubs.
- Your achievement is good. You make good progress, so that by the end of Year 6, your attainment is broadly average, though better in English than in mathematics.
- The headteacher and the other leaders know how to improve your school.
- Most of your parents and carers are happy with your experience at school.

We have also asked the headteacher and the governing body to help the school to become even better, by:

- improving your attainment in mathematics by making sure that tasks and questions are better matched to your different abilities, especially for the more-able pupils; by ensuring that marking tells you the next steps in your learning, and that target setting tells you how to reach higher levels.
- giving you more opportunities for contact with people from cultural backgrounds different to your own, not just in your local area but also elsewhere in this country and in different parts of the world.

You can help by continuing to work hard so that the school can improve even more. We wish you every success in the future.

Yours sincerely

Chris Grove
Lead inspector

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