

# Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England (Aided) Primary School

## Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	120117
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379956
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 December 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	David Edwards

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	79
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robin Vryenhoef
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Vernon
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 June 2009
<b>School address</b>	Off Main Street Blackfordby Swadlincote DE11 8AB
<b>Telephone number</b>	01283 217702
<b>Fax number</b>	01283 217702
<b>Email address</b>	office@blackfordby.leics.sch.uk

---

<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	5–6 December 2011
<b>Inspection number</b>	379956

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2011



## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Seven lessons were observed and four teachers seen. Inspectors met with parents and carers, groups of pupils, members of the governing body and staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including teacher's planning; the school improvement plan; assessment, monitoring and evaluation records; records for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities; and safeguarding procedures. Questionnaire returns from 45 parents and carers were considered, along with the views of staff and pupils.

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

- Is leadership and management being effective enough in raising pupil achievement, particularly for the most able in mathematics?
- Does the curriculum meet the needs of all pupils and help them to establish links between subjects for pupils of all abilities?
- How effectively are teaching and learning in the mixed age classes accelerating pupil progress?
- Is the school doing enough to help pupils to have a good understanding about cultures other than their own?

## Information about the school

Blackfordby St Margaret's is a significantly smaller than average school, situated in a small village close to the Leicestershire/Derbyshire border. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average, as is the proportion of pupils who have a statement of educational need. The proportion eligible to free school meals is below the national average.

Early Years Foundation Stage provision is provided for children in the Reception class. Pupils are taught in mixed age classes in Years 1 and 2, and Years 4 and 5. Year 3 pupils are currently being taught as a single age class in the chapel school room until completion of the current alterations. Full primary status has recently been restored and the present cohort of Year 5 children will leave at the end of Year 6 in July 2013. The new building which will accommodate the increased age range will be completed shortly. The school has been awarded the Activemark.

**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

This is a good, inclusive and improving school. As one parent commented: 'My daughter is thriving at Blackfordby. It is a small school with so much to offer.' Parents and carers are very pleased with the quality of education that the school provides and the school vigorously pursues the exemplary links it has with them. It helps them to support their children in their learning, so that they feel confident to provide the help their children need.

Despite the fluctuations in attainment caused by the variation in the size of cohorts from year to year, the well-focused leadership and management of the school has ensured that attainment remains above average overall at the end of Key Stage 1. The achievement of all pupils is good, including that of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Children get off to a good start in the Reception class because good provision and good leadership and management ensure that they make good progress in all areas of learning. Good progress continues in Years 1 to 4. The attainment of the current Year 5 is above average overall and rising quickly. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully accelerated pupils' progress and significantly improved reading and writing at both key stages, so that it is above national expectations. The collection and use of a range of assessment data to evaluate the school's performance has proven to be a key driver in bringing about improvement. Attainment in mathematics dipped in 2011 to be in line with the national average by the end of Year 2. The school leaders quickly recognised what needed to be done to accelerate progress and pupils are now on track to meet their challenging targets in this subject and in English in Year 2 and Year 5. However, opportunities are missed in mathematics to raise standards further because not all teachers are replicating the good marking procedures that are in place for English across the school. In addition, pupils are not given enough opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills in mathematics.

The quality of teaching and learning is good and is much stronger than during the last inspection. Teachers have a range of questioning skills which they use to check and challenge pupils' thinking and to check on learning and progress in lessons. Tasks in lessons build carefully on prior attainment to ensure the correct level of challenge for most pupils, but in some classes there is insufficient challenge for the most-able pupils, particularly in mathematics. The good curriculum, which uses a whole-school thematic approach, is enhancing pupils' enjoyment of learning. This is achieved by establishing meaningful links between subjects and giving pupils the opportunity to use their skills in different situations.

**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

All pupils receive good quality care, guidance and support. Good links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are well met. The school also makes good use of local partnerships, such as those with neighbouring primary schools and the local education authority. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe in all aspects of their daily lives, and parents and carers views endorse the fact that their children are safe in school. Pupils' exemplary behaviour in and around school is making a strong contribution to their learning and progress. They also have a good understanding of what constitutes a healthy lifestyle.

The staff enthusiastically share the headteacher's clearly articulated drive to improve the school and this has created a secure capacity for sustained improvement. Subject leadership is good and they are now taking responsibility for standards in their areas. However, they do not have sufficient opportunities for gathering first-hand evidence about teaching and learning so that they can support staff in raising achievement further. Governors have a secure understanding of the strengths of the school and the effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. The school is a cohesive community and has good links with the local community. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural understanding is satisfactory overall; their knowledge of people's lives and cultures in the rest of the United Kingdom and the world is less well developed than other aspects of their personal development.

### **What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Raise achievement in mathematics, particularly for more-able pupils, by:
  - ensuring greater consistency in marking, so that it guides pupils more effectively to understand the next steps to improvement
  - empowering pupils to take greater control of their learning by more effectively evaluating the quality of their own work and that of others
  - achieving consistent challenge for the most-able pupils in lessons
  - giving pupils more opportunities to develop their problem-solving skills.
- Further develop the skills of subject leaders by giving them more opportunity for first-hand monitoring of the standards in their subject so that they can put effective plans into place to further accelerate pupils' progress.
- Enhance pupils' understanding of the lives and culture of people in the United Kingdom and the wider world by creating first-hand links with schools whose population is different from the school's predominantly White British heritage.

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

**2**

The quality of learning seen during the inspection was good across the school. For example, pupils in a Key Stage 2 mathematics lesson were making outstanding

**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

progress in their work on time. Pupils enjoyed the lesson because they found the work interesting and relevant. They worked hard because all were challenged well by their tasks. They were fascinated by the facts they discovered and used their targets and success criteria to check on the quality of their own learning. This practice is not replicated in all classes. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, enjoy learning and their achievement is good because of the skilled and relevant support they receive: their needs are quickly identified and timely intervention, often breaking learning down into small and manageable steps, enables them to make good progress in learning.

Inspectors observed no difference in attainment and progress between boys and girls in lessons. Bullying is almost unheard of and pupils confirm that the rare cases are quickly resolved. They take plenty of exercise and eat a healthy diet, which is confirmed by the school's Activemark award. They are keen to take responsibility, for example, as playground buddies, road safety officers, partners on the 'walking bus' or by contributing to the design of the new outdoor area for the Reception class in the new school building annex. Pupils' attendance is above average and this, allied to their good basic skills and developing information and communication technology skills and positive attitudes towards learning, mean that their preparation for their next phase of education is good.

Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep safe in all aspects of their daily life. They say they feel safe in school and confidently approach an adult with any worries, knowing their concerns will be quickly resolved. This is clearly evident in respect of any potentially vulnerable children and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are enabled to make the very best of what the school provides.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will</b>	<b>2</b>

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

**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

<b>contribute to their future economic well-being</b> Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	3

## How effective is the provision?

Pupils' good progress is in part the result of teachers and teaching assistants successfully meeting the wide range of needs in the mixed-year classes. It is also attributable to the careful tracking of their progress and the way teachers use that information to set up intervention strategies to ensure that any potential underachievement is eradicated. This means that in most lessons new learning is solidly based on prior knowledge and skills. Lessons begin with the presentation of clear learning objectives and the criteria against which pupils can judge whether they have achieved the objectives or not. Pupils like this because they know what they have to do in lessons. They also have their own personalised learning targets and these provide good guidance about what is required to get to the next level of learning. These factors were evident in a good writing session where pupils successfully produced newspaper reports. The good guided marking in English clearly sets the next steps to improvement for pupils. Opportunities to self-evaluate their work and that of others is empowering them to take control of their learning. Such practices are not consistently applied throughout the school in mathematics. In addition, pupils are not given regular problem-solving activities to raise their achievement further in the subject. This is particularly true for the most-able pupils. Throughout the school, the activities planned for the less-able pupils and those with special educational needs are consistently well-matched to their abilities.

The rich and creative curriculum is well adapted to most pupils' needs. A good range of additional out-of-school clubs, visits and visitors, opportunities to learn to play musical instruments, and themed events make a strong contribution to pupils' learning. Pupils say how much they enjoyed such activities. Pupils also say they feel safe in school and confidently approach an adult with any worries, knowing their concerns will be quickly resolved. This is clearly evident in respect of any potentially vulnerable children and for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, who are enabled to make the very best of what the school provides.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b> Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	2
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	2

**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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, ably supported by middle leaders and the governing body, has been extremely successful in building on the school's strengths and securing the support of all other staff in their drive for further improvement. School self-evaluation is rigorous and honest, and has identified the main priorities for action and improvement. As a result of effective monitoring of teaching and learning, the quality of this aspect of the school's work has improved greatly. This has contributed to the good progress of all groups of pupils. The robust collection and rigorous analysis of assessment data is used effectively in focusing resources for individual pupils, particularly those needing additional support. Setting of targets for individual pupils is assisting most to aim at and achieve higher standards. Subject leaders use assessment data and work samples to evaluate the effectiveness of their work but this is not supported by first-hand evidence of teaching and learning. The school's commitment to equal opportunities for all is strong. The development of excellent home-school links is a key partnership that has been used to provide good enhancement of the quality of pupils' learning and their well-being. The highly effective links with parents of pupils who face challenges in their life has a marked effect on their personal, social and academic development. The 'walking bus' is another example of the excellent partnership with parents, which is ensuring the safety of their children on the way to school. Partnerships with neighbouring schools are having a positive impact on the development of mathematics in the school.

The governing body knows the school well. They satisfactorily fulfil their statutory obligations and are supportive. Their ability to hold the school to account is developing. Governors' understanding of how to use data to challenge the school more effectively is at an early stage of development and there are plans for training in this area. The school places a high priority on safety and safeguarding. Child protection procedures are robust, regularly updated and fully meet current safeguarding requirements. The way the school assiduously pursues the interests of those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable is exemplary. The school is a warmly cohesive and inclusive community and is developing links with Kenya through missionary parents.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and</b>	<b>2</b>



**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

<b>tackles discrimination</b>	
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress from their varying starting points on entry as a result of effective teaching. Most of them enter Reception with skills that are broadly in line with those expected for their age. By the time they enter Year 1, children's attainment is above average in all areas of learning. Staff plan a good range of activities to develop children's language and communication skills as well as number and calculation skills across all areas of learning. Children's vocabulary is appropriately developed through adults' questions and comment. The close observation of children's development and the accuracy of assessment are real strengths. As a result, adults are able to provide timely intervention to support individual children who need it. The school has recognised the need to refine its planning so that all six areas of learning are always consistently covered. The current building work temporarily restricts children's opportunities for free flow, but this situation will be remedied when the new building annexe is opened in January 2012.

The children are offered a safe and welcoming environment for learning. Clear routines help them to settle quickly. They respond to adults' high expectations and behave well. They enjoy the opportunities given to them to make choices, both indoors and outdoors. Links with parents are highly valued and the home-school link books used well to exchange information and involve them very effectively in their children's learning. Leaders and managers foster effective team work and remain focused on raising children's attainment and ensuring their safety in all aspects of their school life.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

The number of responses from the parent and carer questionnaire was higher than normally found and those who responded showed a high degree of confidence in the school in almost every aspect of its work. They have a very high degree of

**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

confidence in the school's ability to help them in supporting their children's learning and to keep their children safe. They were unanimous about the effectiveness of leadership and management of the school. Inspection evidence supports parents' positive views of the school.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England (Aided) 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 completed 45 questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 79 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	37	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	82	7	16	1	2	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	60	16	36	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	71	13	29	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	37	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	31	69	14	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)	29	64	12	27	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	37	82	8	18	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	25	56	20	44	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	34	76	11	24	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	35	78	10	22	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	40	89	5	11	0	0	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](http://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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



7 December 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Swadlincote, DE11 8AB**

Thank you for your welcome and help when we came to inspect your school recently. We were impressed by your politeness and courtesy and delighted to see how much you enjoy all the activities arranged for you. You are exceptionally well behaved in lessons and around the school. We were pleased to see how much you contribute to helping others, to school life and community. Your involvement in the daily 'walking bus to school' helps to ensure the safety of all pupils who use this service. The staff are rightly very proud of you.

The school gives you a good education. All the adults in the school look after you really well and that is why you feel safe. Your knowledge of the things you need to do in your everyday life to stay safe impressed us, as did your understanding of what makes a healthy lifestyle. The good teaching you receive is helping you all to make good progress. The superb way you use your learning targets aids that process.

We have asked your teachers to continue to help you improve your problem-solving skills so that all of you, particularly those who can do more difficult work, achieve what you are capable of in mathematics. We want teachers to inform you how well you are doing through their marking of your work in mathematics and to set out your next steps in learning. We have also asked the school to make sure that you have a thorough knowledge of the life and culture of people from different backgrounds. Finally, we have recommended that teachers have more first-hand opportunities to check on how well you are getting on in different subjects in each class.

You can help with these improvements by continuing to work hard and doing your best at all times. The inspection team wish you all the very best for the future

Yours sincerely

David Edwards  
Lead inspector

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone **0300 123 4234**, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).**