

Blackrod Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105191
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	377195
Inspection dates	15–16 December 2011
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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	208
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Strapps
Headteacher	Ian Dryburgh
Date of previous school inspection	14 June 2007
School address	Manchester Road Blackrod Bolton BL6 5SY
Telephone number	01204 333488
Fax number	01204 333490
Email address	office@blackrod.bolton.sch.uk

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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors, who observed teaching and learning in 14 lessons or part lessons, taught by seven different teachers. The inspection team examined the school's policies, assessment information, pupils' work, teachers' plans and school-improvement planning. They held discussions with staff, members of the governing body, parents and carers and pupils. The inspectors analysed 105 questionnaires completed by parents and carers, 101 from Key Stage 2 pupils and 31 from staff.

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

- How well are the most-able pupils challenged and extended in Key Stage 1?
- To what extent are pupils acquiring and applying the more advanced skills of thinking, problem solving and independent study?
- How well are pupils applying and developing literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills across the curriculum?

Information about the school

Blackrod is a smaller-than-the-average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of a White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception.

The headteacher is currently serving as an executive headteacher of another primary school in the authority. As executive headteacher, he spends three days a week in the other school. During this time, Blackrod is being led by the deputy headteacher. The onsite before- and after-school provision is not managed by the school and governing body and is inspected separately.

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?

1

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

Blackrod Primary is an outstanding school. Highly effective leadership and strong team work among a dedicated staff means that the school has maintained and built upon the strengths identified in the previous inspection. Parents and carers are delighted with the care and education provided for their children and their comments included, 'Excellent school with an outstanding and committed staff.', 'Very well managed school with excellent teachers and a great atmosphere.', 'Excellent opportunities for first hand learning.' and 'Amazing school.'

All groups of pupils achieve exceptionally well because of high quality teaching and an exciting curriculum. There have been considerable improvements to the Early Years Foundation Stage provision recently and children make exceptional progress in most areas of learning. Outstanding progress continues through Key Stages 1 and 2 and, by the end of Year 6, attainment is consistently high in English and mathematics. Pupils acquire and apply literacy, numeracy and ICT skills extremely well. They learn independently and take great care and pride in their work.

Inspirational teaching successfully promotes enjoyment and high quality learning for pupils. Teachers convey high expectations and their enthusiasm and strong subject knowledge motivates the learners. Skilful explanations, demonstrations and questioning further enhance pupils' learning. Assessment information is used extremely well to plan teaching and to provide challenging and exciting tasks which are well matched to pupils' abilities. The curriculum is imaginative with meaningful links between subjects. It is enriched with a wide range of additional activities and visits. There are well-thought-out plans to further extend the learning facilities in the school grounds for creative and scientific study for all ages.

An extremely positive school ethos and outstanding care, guidance and support contribute to pupils' excellent personal outcomes. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well and pupils make exceptional progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils feel extremely safe because of the strong attention given to safeguarding. They show an excellent understanding of how to lead a healthy lifestyle. Throughout the school, pupils relate very well with others and their behaviour is exemplary. Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities and make invaluable contributions to the school and to the wider community. Attendance levels are consistently high. Pupils are exceedingly well prepared for the next stage of their education.

An experienced and established headteacher provides outstanding leadership and direction. He is very well supported by other senior leaders. All staff share a vision of promoting high quality provision and high attainment for pupils. There are outstanding partnerships with other agencies to promote pupils' learning and development. Through accurate and rigorous self-evaluation, the school knows its strengths and takes positive action to bring about improvements where needed. Governance has improved considerably since the previous inspection and makes a valuable contribution to the school's success. Since the previous inspection aspects such as pupils' progress and teaching have improved from good to outstanding. The school demonstrates an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Extend the outdoor learning facilities in the school's spacious grounds to further enhance opportunities for creative and scientific study for all pupils.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with knowledge and understanding which is broadly in line with those expected for their age. Across the school, pupils thoroughly enjoy the exciting activities provided. They told the inspectors, 'Every day we learn something new.' and 'Activities are fun.' Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, including the most-able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make outstanding progress. Outstanding teaching and challenging tasks ensure that the most-able are extended. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, it is evident from assessments, the lessons seen and pupils' work that attainment is high in reading, writing and mathematics.

By Year 6, pupils are articulate and confident speakers. Pupils apply their speaking and listening skills extremely well in a range of activities. For example, Year 3 pupils prepared weather reports for different parts of the world. Using auto cues and a backdrop, they presented their reports clearly and filmed the presentation. Pupils are very keen readers and enjoy a wide range of books. They write for a range of purposes. For example, in Year 2, pupils made exceptional progress in instructional writing. After seeing a Punch and Judy show, they designed and made attractive hand puppets. They wrote clear instructions on how to make a hand puppet. Also, after high quality instruction and demonstration by the teacher, pupils produced instructions on how to make a star decoration. Their writing was clear with accurate punctuation and spelling. Virtually all pupils in Year 2 write with a fluent, neat and joined hand.

Pupils make outstanding progress in mathematics because of the exciting practical problem-solving approaches provided. In Year 6, pupils made rapid progress in planning and carrying out a survey to find pupils' favourite sweets in a well known brand of chocolates and toffees.

Pupils acquire and apply a range of skills, including independent study skills, very well. For example, in Year 5, pupils thoroughly enjoyed studying 'Liverpool and the

Beatles'. The topic was enriched by a visit to the city. Pupils used the internet and a range of texts to gather useful information. Using a publishing programme, they created their own newspaper articles of the death of John Lennon from their research. With high-quality tuition from a visiting artist, pupils used perspective well in producing striking sketches of Liverpool's 'Water Front'.

Pupils make exceptional progress in their personal development and demonstrate very positive qualities such as cooperation, kindness, respect for others and responsibility. In assembly, they appreciate and celebrate the achievement of fellow pupils. Pupils work extremely well together in sharing their learning and solving problems. Through the curriculum and international links with Zambia and Italy, pupils gain a good understanding of different cultures and faiths. They feel exceptionally well cared for at school and know that there are always adults they can turn to for help if needed. Pupils willingly take on additional responsibilities. They raise funds for a wide range of appeals and charities. During the inspection, pupils from Key Stage 1 performed their Nativity Production in four different care homes. Pupils are extremely well prepared for their next school because, by the time they leave, they possess highly developed skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT. Their personal and social skills are particularly good.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	1
Taking into account:	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	1
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:	1
Pupils' attendance ¹	
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is a real strength at Blackrod and a key factor contributing to the school's success. Parents and carers wrote, 'Teachers are exceptionally good.' and pupils told inspectors, 'Teaching is brilliant.' Strong subject knowledge, high expectations and challenging activities lead to powerful learning for pupils. Teachers create attractive classrooms and a very positive climate for learning. Lessons have a clear purpose and so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Specific success criteria are provided to guide pupils' learning and help them to assess their own progress. Skilful questioning challenges pupils' thinking and checks their understanding. Lessons maintain a brisk pace and pupils are actively involved in their learning. Teaching

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

assistants are very effectively deployed and make valuable contributions to pupils' learning. The marking of pupils' work is thorough, positive and helpful.

The curriculum successfully promotes outstanding progress and high attainment for pupils. It also contributes exceptionally well to their personal development. Exciting and imaginative learning experiences are provided for all pupils. Very good opportunities are provided for pupils to apply literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in a range of areas. Health education and the wide range of physical activities provided contribute extremely well to pupils' excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the wide range of clubs, including, chess, French, gymnastics, football, netball, ICT, karate, gardening and Spanish. Visitors and visits further enrich the curriculum and pupils' learning.

Pupils, parents and carers fully appreciate the well-organised, safe and secure environment provided. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. A parent/carer commented, 'Staff are fantastic and care is outstanding.' Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are provided with first-rate support. In partnership with other agencies, the school is successful in supporting pupils and their families who require additional help. The effective monitoring and promotion of attendance contributes to high attendance.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	1
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	1
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?

Outstanding leadership and management are at the heart of the school's effectiveness and improvements. There is an extremely positive professional culture among the staff who all strive to provide high-quality provision so that all pupils can achieve and develop as well as they can. The outstanding outcomes for pupils demonstrate their considerable success.

Leadership responsibilities are effectively distributed and shared. Senior leaders have good opportunities to lead and manage areas of the school while the headteacher supports others schools in the local authority. The leadership of English, mathematics, Early Years Foundation Stage, special educational needs and the curriculum are all very effective. Teaching is successfully monitored and developed and this contributes to the high-quality practice across the school.

Under the dynamic leadership of the Chair of the Governing Body, governance has improved from satisfactory to outstanding since the previous inspection. Members of the governing body show a very clear understanding of the school's strengths and improvement priorities. They are supportive and provide constructive challenge to hold the school to account. Safeguarding is given considerable emphasis and there are highly effective policies and procedures to protect and safeguard pupils. The

monitoring and evaluation of these procedures are thorough. Staff are well trained in safeguarding. Safe practices for pupils are very effectively promoted through the school’s teaching and curriculum.

Equality of opportunity is promoted exceptionally well and discrimination is very effectively tackled. All pupils have full access to the high-quality provision and this enables all groups to make outstanding progress. Community cohesion is promoted extremely well. Very positive partnerships are developing with Bolton schools that have a different intake of pupils to that of Blackrod. Pupils are gaining a very clear understanding of the diversity within the United Kingdom. Partnerships with schools abroad successfully promote pupils’ understanding of the global community.

These are the grades for the 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	1
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	1
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

Very effective leadership and planning contributes to outstanding provision. Children settle quickly because of very effective induction arrangements. They make extremely good progress in their personal, social and emotional development because of the strong relationships between adults and children and the outstanding attention to care, guidance and welfare. Parents and carers make very positive contributions to children’s learning at home.

Children thoroughly enjoy the wide range of interesting activities provided. They are extremely well taught and make outstanding gains in their learning. Assessment information is used accurately to plan teaching and learning. There is a successful balance of adult-led activities and those chosen by the children. Children have considerable opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently. Each child has a ‘learning journey’ which is a detailed, annotated and photographic record of their progress and learning experiences. These are regularly shared with parents and carers.

Children make rapid progress in communication and language because these skills are very well promoted through most activities. They enjoy books and stories such as, *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The school’s success in writing begins in Reception. Children make outstanding progress in this area because of high-quality teaching and

the very well-organised opportunities for them to practise early writing skills. Children made progress in solving numeracy problems as they shared artefacts fairly between two teddies. The more-able children understood the idea of remainders. The outdoor areas successfully encourage children to be active and purposeful learners. The leader has clear plans to further extend outdoor learning facilities and resources.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

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

Views of parents and carers

A higher-than-usual response to the questionnaire was received by the inspection team. Almost all parents and carers who returned the questionnaire are happy with their children’s experience at the school. They are particularly pleased with safety in the school, teaching, the sense of enjoyment, leadership and management and how well the school meets their child’s needs. The inspection findings support these very positive views. The results of this survey indicate that parents’ and carers’ concerns about the school are very few. A very small minority do not feel that the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns. However, the school is not complacent and the headteacher and staff continually strive to meet and exceed the needs of parents and carers.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackrod 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 105 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	71	68	33	31	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	77	73	27	26	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	53	50	50	48	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	63	60	38	36	1	1	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	76	72	27	26	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	58	55	41	39	6	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	60	57	45	43	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)	53	50	43	41	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	64	61	38	36	1	1	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	46	44	51	49	3	3	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	37	35	53	50	8	8	1	1
The school is led and managed effectively	72	69	31	30	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	77	73	26	25	2	2	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 is 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.



19 December 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackrod Primary School, Bolton, BL6 5SY

Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school, giving us your views and showing us your work. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. Blackrod Primary is an outstanding primary school. These are the main strengths.

- You thoroughly enjoy school and your attendance is high.
- Children in Reception make outstanding progress.
- You make outstanding progress in Key Stages 1 and 2 because of the high quality teaching you receive.
- By the end of Year 6, standards are consistently high in English and mathematics.
- An exciting and wide range of learning activities is provided including clubs, visits and visitors.
- You get on extremely well with each other and your behaviour is outstanding.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- You feel extremely safe at school because teachers and other adults take excellent care of you and provide outstanding guidance and support.
- You make very valuable contributions to school life and to the wider community.
- The headteacher provides extremely good leadership. He receives very good support from other senior leaders.

We have given your school just one point for improvement. It is to extend the outside learning opportunities in your school grounds and there are clear plans to make this happen.

All of you can help by continuing to work hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Watts
Lead inspector

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