

Blueberry Park

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133691
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	381533
Inspection dates	15–16 May 2012
Lead inspector	Angela Westington HMI

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	250
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Barbara Murray
Headteacher	Kathryn Honey
Date of previous school inspection	10 March 2010
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Introduction

Inspection team

Angela Westington
Lenford White

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional Inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons or part lessons and eight teachers were observed teaching. They heard a number of pupils in different year groups read and met with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, and looked at a range of school documentation including its self-evaluation, its development plans, the records detailing the progress made by pupils and documentation relating to the monitoring of the quality of teaching. Inspectors scrutinised the school's procedures for the recruitment and vetting of adults and for safeguarding pupils. They took account of the results from 86 completed parental questionnaires and those from staff and pupils.

Information about the school

Blueberry Park is an average-sized school. Three quarters of pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. This proportion is very high: nearly four times the national average figure. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language are much lower than average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is higher than the national average but a smaller than average number has a statement of special educational need. The Early Years Foundation Stage consists of two nursery classes: a morning and an afternoon session, and one reception class. The school has gained a number of awards including Healthy Schools status, the physical education Activemark, International School Award and Beacon Status for enterprise learning. The school provides a breakfast club before school for pupils.

When the school was inspected in March 2010, it was judged no longer to require special measures and its overall effectiveness was judged to be satisfactory. In July 2011, the headteacher who led the school through special measures moved to another school. During the autumn term 2011, the school was led by a seconded headteacher from elsewhere. The new, substantive headteacher took up her post in January 2012.

The school exceeds the current floor standards. This means that the school's results for 11-year-olds in English and mathematics are above the minimum standard set by government.

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	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key Findings

- This is a good school. Pupils achieve well over time because the quality of teaching is good overall. Leaders, managers and the governing body have succeeded in placing the school at the centre of the community. Pupils are well cared for. Aspects of safeguarding practice are exemplary. The school is not outstanding because there remains some satisfactory teaching that limits pupils' progress and independence; the teaching of writing is weaker than the teaching of mathematics and reading; the children in the reception class do not have sufficient early, decodable reading books to take home and, despite improvements, the attendance of pupils remains below the national figure.
- From low starting points, pupils make good, but variable, progress over time to attain broadly average standards by the end of Key Stage 2. They make good progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and enter Key Stage 1 with skill levels in line with expectations, except in writing. They make variable, but at least satisfactory, progress across the rest of the school and rapid progress towards the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils with special educational needs, some who attain less well at Key Stage 1 and pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement make good and, in individual cases, outstanding, progress.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, but variable. It is strongest in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in upper Key Stage 2. The teaching of writing is weak because, until very recently, there has been no agreed whole-school programme to teach handwriting, letter formation, presentation and spelling.
- Behaviour and safety are good. Parents and carers, pupils, staff and agencies who work with the school are unanimous in their views that the ethos and character of the school have changed beyond recognition. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is good. They are keen to learn.

- Leadership and management are good. Governance, especially, is strong; it ensured that the school's improvement drive was maintained in the period during which the school was led by a seconded headteacher. Staff performance is robustly managed and supported; professional development has been a key factor in improving the quality of teaching and outcomes for pupils.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve standards in writing across the school by:
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in writing
 - implementing the whole school programme to teach handwriting, spelling, presentation
 - ensuring that all books are marked regularly and errors corrected.
- Raise the satisfactory teaching to good by reducing the amount of over-direction in lessons and increasing pupils' independence in their learning.
- Ensure that the children in Early Years Foundation Stage have access to sufficient, early, decodable reading books to take home.
- Raise attendance to at least the national average figure as soon as possible.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Overwhelmingly, parents and carers feel that their children are achieving well. This view is accurate. Children enter the nursery with skill levels below those usual for this age group. As a result of good teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage they make good progress and increasing numbers are entering Key Stage 1 having attained a good level of development. In 2011, this figure was in line with the national figure for the first time. The recent changes to the way in which children are taught to read in the Early Years Foundation Stage is having a very positive impact; they are acquiring a good knowledge of letter-sound relationships and can read simple texts. However, there are insufficient early decodable reading books for children to take home and practise their new skills.

Pupils make variable but generally good progress across the rest of the school. The most rapid progress is seen towards the upper end of Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6 where consistently good teaching enthuses and motivates pupils to work well. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, pupils sustained concentration well and worked hard, finding the areas and perimeters of compound shapes, completing a good amount of work in the lesson.

Pupils make better progress in mathematics than in writing. There is a marked difference in the quality of work in pupils' writing and mathematics books. In addition, in some classes, pupils complete a large volume of work, covering a wide range of topics, with work presented to a high standard. There is no doubt that, in

these classes, pupils work very hard. However, in other classes, pupils' writing books present a different picture and not all the work is marked regularly or consistently and so pupils' errors persist.

Pupils' reading skills at the end of both Key Stage 1 and 2 are broadly average, the result of the detailed and structured programme for teaching reading in Key Stage 1 and the guided reading sessions which have been re-introduced across the school. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs and those whose circumstances make them vulnerable to underachievement make good and occasionally exceptional progress, the result of high quality care and attention as well as good teaching and well directed additional support.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers consider the quality of teaching to be good. In general it is, but it is also variable and this variability directly impacts upon the standards attained by pupils.

Improving teaching and provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage are resulting in the children entering Key Stage 1 better prepared than ever before. Across both Key Stages 1 and 2, the teaching of mathematics is strong. The teaching of writing is weaker because, until very recently, there has been no agreed whole-school programme to teach key aspects such as handwriting, letter formation, presentation and spelling.

Where teaching was satisfactory, inspectors observed several features coming together which limited the effectiveness of the lessons. These included:

- over-direction by adults in the lesson. In some lessons, every group of pupils had an adult seated at their table to support them. Too often, this resulted in the adult over-directing pupils in their work and inhibiting pupils from working independently
- over-rehearsing and over-teaching. In some lessons, where a supporting adult was sitting with a group of pupils, too often the adult would repeat or re-teach what the teacher had just taught before pupils could start to work independently.
- over-structured work materials. In some lessons, pupils were provided with beautifully-prepared materials which often either structured their responses so much that they inhibited independence or, because pupils' writing skills were weaker, required only short responses from pupils.

In contrast, where teaching was good, there were high expectations of what the pupils could achieve over time and within each lesson: pupils were challenged intellectually and required to work hard and sustain effort. They completed a lot of work in the lesson.

The well planned provision for disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs results in their good progress. The provision is mapped carefully and monitored. Additional support is time limited and its impact recorded. The school's records show the movement of pupils off the special needs register as a result of timely, well matched support. In 2011, every Year 6 pupil who took the

national tests, made expected or better than expected progress in mathematics, including those who had attained below average results in Key Stage 1. The school attributes this, in part, to the effectiveness of its additional one-to-one mathematics support programme.

The improvements to the curriculum have resulted in lessons that engage and enthuse pupils. Parents and carers too, commented upon the changes in how subjects are taught. Much work is undertaken to develop the whole child and introduce pupils to ideas that they may not normally come across, such as The Enterprise Challenge or Aspirations Week, which introduce pupils to a wide range of employment options. Pupils in Year 3 learn sign language and, in one lesson observed, thoroughly enjoyed learning a new song in sign language.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Parents and carers, agencies that work with the school, adults in the school and pupils all report that this aspect of the school's work has changed dramatically and is now good. Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. During this inspection, inspectors observed no poor behaviour and when they occasionally observed low-level 'off task' behaviour, it was usually when teaching was less than good. Pupils who spoke to inspectors had a very good understanding of various types of bullying. They reported that bullying is rare and when it does occur, is dealt with swiftly. They say that lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Racist incidents are rare. Pupils know how to stay safe when using the Internet; they know about stranger-danger. Pupils spoke to inspectors about the new post of 'school prefect' and those who had been given the role spoke proudly about what it meant to them and the responsibility that went with it.

The pupils are well cared for. Regular meetings are held to discuss the needs of specific pupils and to plan appropriate support. Systems for the safe recruitment and vetting of adults who work in the school are exemplary.

When the school was inspected in 2010, attendance was just below 90%. It has improved considerably since then and, at times, has been above the national figure. Much of this improvement is the result of targeted work led by the learning mentor and supported by the headteacher and educational welfare officer. However, during the learning mentor's absence some initiatives, such as the walking bus, have stopped. Attendance is again below the national figure.

Leadership and management

A particular strength of the leadership and management is the governing body. There is now in place a full governing body which includes governors who were on the interim executive board and the shadow governing body. The governing body provides robust direction for the school and makes clear its expectation about the future direction of the school. In the period during which the school was without a substantive headteacher, the governing body ensured that the cycle of lesson observations and monitoring of planning and pupils' books continued. In the search for a new headteacher, it went through two recruitment cycles in order to find the best candidate, mindful of the school's recent history and the need to keep the

school moving forward. During the same period, planned developments, such as the changes to the way in which early reading is taught, continued. Since her appointment, the new headteacher has maintained the strong focus on monitoring and professional development for staff and instigated initiatives of her own, including the new handwriting and presentation policy.

The deputy headteacher has led the development of the curriculum well, an area for improvement identified at the previous inspection, and is supporting middle leaders in the development of their role. The school's curriculum contributes strongly to pupils' achievement and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Extra-curricular activities are extensive; they add significant enrichment to the curriculum and to pupils' personal development.

Staff report that performance management and professional development are significant features of the school's work and that training and observations of good practice elsewhere are key to the school's continuing improvement and rising standards.

The school promotes equality well. Pupils from ethnic minority heritages and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs do well in school and are well looked after. The governing body fulfils all statutory requirements and ensures that the building is safe and well maintained. Accident books, racist incident logs, fire drills and other safety checks are carried out or maintained appropriately.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add up exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



17 May 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blueberry Park, Liverpool L14 2DY

As you know, I visited your school recently with Mr White. Thank you very much for being so friendly and for welcoming us to your school. Thank you especially to those of you who completed the questionnaires and who met us to talk about school. We could tell that you are very proud of your school and you are right to be! Blueberry Park is a good school. These are just a few of the things that we think are good about your school.

- You work hard and you do well; you behave well and your parents and carers are happy with the school.
- The teaching is good.
- The school helps you to grow into decent, kind and responsible young people.
- The headteacher, teachers and the governing body run the school well for you; they do their best to make sure that the school keeps getting better.

We have asked your headteacher and the governing body to look again at a few things.

- We think that all of you could do better in your writing.
- We think that the children in Reception need some different reading books to take home to practise their reading.
- We think that all of the teaching in your school could be good.
- We think that your attendance could be even better. We know that it has improved a lot already but with a bit of an extra push we think it could be even better; it is really important that you all attend school every day. If you don't attend how will you get better at reading, writing and maths? And think of all the fun things you miss if you don't come to school.

We are sure that you will all continue to work hard for the teachers and to help them to make your school even better. Thank you again for making us so welcome!

Yours sincerely

Angela Westington
Her Majesty's Inspector

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