

Blenheim Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107884
Local authority	Leeds
Inspection number	395595
Inspection dates	20–21 June 2012
Lead inspector	Susan Walsh

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	258
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Humphries
Headteacher	Mo Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	10 June 2009
School address	Lofthouse Place Leeds LS2 9EX
Telephone number	0113 293 0808
Fax number	0113 293 7666
Email address	sangram02@leedslearning.net



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Introduction

Inspection team

Susan Walsh
Freda Jackson
Mary Lanovy-Taylor

Additional inspector
Additional inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors visited 20 lessons. Eight teachers were observed and the work of teaching assistants was also examined. Meetings were held with staff, as well as with members of the governing body and pupils. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documents, including development plans, records of pupils' progress, and arrangements for safeguarding. Most of the Year 6 pupils were on a residential visit during the inspection. Inspectors spoke to Year 6 pupils and their teacher prior to them setting off on their visit and looked at in detail at their work. They scrutinised 41 questionnaires returned by parents and carers and examined questionnaires returned by pupils.

Information about the school

The school is similar in size to most other primary schools. It is rapidly expanding and has far more pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 than in Key Stage 2. An above-average proportion of pupils is known to be eligible for free school meals. Pupils often join the school at different points in their primary education and then leave, sometimes without completing a full school year. There are relatively small numbers of pupils who complete the whole of their education in Blenheim Primary School. Pupils come from a very wide range of ethnic heritages and an increasing proportion of pupils comes from the Far and Middle East. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average. Over 38 languages are spoken and well over half of the pupils speak little or no English when they join the school. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average. The school meets the current government floor standard, which sets the minimum expectations for attainment and progress.

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, where pupils from a very wide range of ethnic heritages get on extremely well together. This is not yet an outstanding school because the quality of teaching is good and is currently promoting good achievement, rather than outstanding.
- Pupils make good progress from their individual starting points and their attainment is usually average by the time they leave Year 6. This corresponds to good achievement. A strong emphasis on language development means that pupils, quickly, develop their ability to speak English. The pupils' progress in mathematics is particularly rapid because they are taught mathematical language effectively and this promotes their good understanding.
- Teaching is usually good and sometimes outstanding. Lessons are frequently exciting and often relate to real-life situations. Although teaching in the Reception class is never less than satisfactory, there are some minor variations in staff's skills when teaching phonics (letters and sounds) and in the amount of challenge they provide for more-able pupils. In addition, activities that children choose for themselves are not always planned with a sharp-enough focus on their learning.
- The school is calm and orderly and behaviour is good. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and this is reflected in their neat and well-presented work. They feel very safe and the school ensures that pupils understand fully how to manage risk.
- The very ambitious head teacher is supported well by capable key managers, who make sure that assessment data are used astutely and that the quality of teaching is managed robustly. The rigorous management of performance has led to significant improvements in the quality of teaching and better outcomes for pupils. The school has correctly identified that there is the potential for parents and carers to be involved more closely in their children's learning. There is a good curriculum that supports pupils' personal development well.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by:
 - improving the quality of teaching in phonics
 - ensuring that staff are very clear about what children are expected to learn from activities that they choose for themselves, particularly when they are working outside
 - making sure that activities and teachers' questioning always provide sufficient challenge for more-able pupils
 - enhancing the quality of provision in the Reception classes.
 - enabling parents and carers to be more active in supporting their children's learning and progress by communicating with them more effectively, taking into account the very wide range of languages that they speak.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children join the Nursery with skills levels that are generally well below age-related expectations. A high proportion of pupils speaks little or no English and their social skills are often limited. They make rapid progress while they are in the Nursery because the curriculum is matched very carefully to their needs and teaching is always good. For example, in one session children were encouraged to look at pictures that recorded the emotions that children were expressing. Consequently, children learned the words quickly that were associated with that emotion and teachers helped them to learn how to move their mouths in a way that helped them to articulate letter sounds accurately. Progress in the Reception class is not quite as rapid as in the Nursery because the quality of teaching is sometimes satisfactory, rather than good. Nevertheless, outcomes at the end of the Reception Year are improving securely.

By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment is usually average, including in reading. Parents and carers are correct when they say that progress is good. All groups of pupils make good progress in both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, whatever their individual starting points. The school has a very good process for supporting pupils who join the school times at other than normal, so that they settle in quickly and make rapid progress. That includes teaching key vocabulary before each lesson. The teaching of phonics has a good impact on pupils' reading skills in Key Stage 1. Pupils of all abilities are able to recognise the sounds that groups of letters make and blend these together when they are reading words that are new to them. Progress in Key Stage 2 has accelerated this year, after it slowed last year due to staffing disruption, and the gap between attainment in English and mathematics is closing swiftly and securely. School data and inspection evidence show that pupils are now making good progress in both reading and writing and outstanding progress in mathematics. Pupils' work in mathematics is exceptionally neat and is almost always accurate. The excellent progress is because mathematical language is explained well and there is a high level of challenge for more-able pupils. By the end of Key Stage 2, attainment varies considerably because there are often small cohorts of pupils remaining in the school. Currently, attainment is average, including attainment in reading.

Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress also. That is because the school has a very good understanding of the difference between problems that occur because of language barriers and those that arise through learning difficulties. Not only does the school ensure that the work set is carefully matched to the needs of individual pupils, but it makes certain also that disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have equal access to the teachers' time.

Quality of teaching

Parents and carers say, quite accurately, that teaching is good. Teaching is consistently good in the Nursery, Key Stage 1, and Key Stage 2. It is slightly more variable in the Reception classes, although it is never less than satisfactory. In most classes, work is matched very well to pupils' needs and provides a good level of challenge. That is particularly true in mathematics lessons, where teachers' expectations are especially high. Although assessment information is used to inform planning in the Reception class, the activities that are actually delivered are, occasionally, not challenging enough for more-able children. Throughout the school, there is a strong emphasis on language development and abstract concepts are explained well. The close attention that is paid to the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural understanding is evident in many lessons. For example, Year 6 pupils have been writing sensitively about Stephen Lawrence and this has helped them to understand that racism is wrong.

Reading skills, including the links between letters and sounds, are, usually, taught effectively. However, in the Reception class, the articulation of letter sounds by staff is not always precise enough. In Key Stage 2, staff are good at teaching more complex reading skills, such as making inference from text. For instance, in a Year 3 lesson, good teaching helped pupils to realise quickly that authors convey lots of important information by cleverly using characters' conversations. Lessons are usually exciting and engaging and often relate to real-life situations that both aid understanding and encourage language development. Most teachers are very skilled at using questioning to check learning and to develop pupils' understanding. However, teaching in the Reception class does not always use questioning that is matched closely to children's needs and abilities. Additionally, staff in the Reception class are not always absolutely clear about what children are expected to learn from the activities that they choose for themselves, particularly those that take place outdoors. Teachers' marking often provides pupils with very clear guidance about how to improve their work. Teaching assistants play an important part in securing pupils' good progress, especially for disabled pupils or those with special educational needs. They deliver extra sessions effectively for pupils who are finding learning difficult and their positive attitudes give pupils great confidence.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

Although some parents and carers expressed concerns about behaviour, they provided little detail about the exact nature of their concerns. Inspectors looked closely at behaviour, as a consequence. In the past, there has been a high number of exclusions because of the school's zero tolerance to incidents of poor behaviour. That firm stance, combined with extensive staff training in behaviour management strategies, has brought about rapid and sustained improvement in pupils' attitudes and behaviour. During the inspection, pupils' behaviour was consistently good, both in classrooms and around school. Throughout the school, there is a calm and consistent approach to behaviour management, which is very effective. Incidents of disruptive behaviour have reduced significantly in number and are

now rare. Pupils with particularly challenging behaviour are managed well and there are striking examples of their behaviour improving over time. Pupils are polite to each other and the adults working with them. There is a very high level of respect for and interest in each other's culture, traditions, and languages. Pupils value the rich cultural diversity within school very much because it is celebrated by staff. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe. For example, they told inspectors that it was dangerous to cross the road with earphones on because you would not be able to hear the traffic. Pupils report that bullying is unusual. They know about different types of bullying and how to keep themselves safe when using the internet. The school tackles isolated instances of bullying effectively. However, occasionally, record-keeping lacks consistency and this sometimes hampers communication between staff. Attendance rates, although below average, are improving rapidly and securely because of the effective steps taken by the school to monitor and promote attendance.

Leadership and management

The high expectations of the headteacher, the governing body, and other key leaders have been communicated clearly to staff and have resulted in pupils making good and improving progress during their time in Blenheim Primary School. Information about pupils' progress is analysed carefully and the progress of all groups of pupils is checked rigorously. Leaders have combined the information with robust monitoring of teaching, in order to pinpoint exactly where further improvements can be made. Additionally, a watchful eye is kept on the progress of individual pupils, so that any who are in danger of falling behind are given timely and effective support. Carefully focused coaching has resulted in many teachers improving their practice and has resulted in much good teaching across the school. Although the school has been slower to secure consistently good teaching in the Reception classes, the quality of teaching there has clearly been enhanced. Achievement has improved because teaching is better and this illustrates the school's good capacity for improvement. The school is aware that there is the potential to involve parents and carers more in their children's learning. It has made a good start by providing parents and carers with opportunities to learn about helping their children with their writing. However, the school understands that there is more to do and is planning the introduction of an informative website that provides useful information for parents and carers in a wide range of languages.

The promotion of equal opportunities is central to the school's work and results in good progress for all groups of pupils in an atmosphere where all pupils are nurtured and valued, irrespective of their background or culture. There is an interesting curriculum that fully takes into account pupils' wide range of ethnic backgrounds. It provides pupils with exciting first-hand experiences that promote good learning, as well as encouraging pupils' good spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The school's arrangements for safeguarding meet statutory requirements.

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 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.



22 June 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blenheim Primary School, Leeds, LS2 9EX

It was a pleasure to visit your school. Thank you for talking to us, we listened very carefully to what you had to say. We were impressed by the way you all get on so well together, even though you come from such varied backgrounds. It was good to know that you are made very welcome when you join the school and you told us that you find the extra support from teachers and teaching assistants very helpful indeed. It is clear that those of you who do not speak English when you join the school become fluent in the language quickly. You are making good progress in English and excellent progress in mathematics. Your mathematics work is extremely neat and accurate. By the time you leave the school, your levels of attainment are usually similar to those reached by children in other primary schools.

You make good progress because there is a lot of good teaching in your school. The quality of teaching in the Reception class is, occasionally, satisfactory rather than good, because there is not always enough challenge for those of you who are quick learners. Also, staff are not always absolutely clear about what children are expected to learn from the activities that they choose for themselves. Additionally, the teaching of the links between letters and sounds varies in quality because staff are not always absolutely precise when they pronounce letter sounds. Consequently, inspectors are asking the school to make sure that all children in Reception Year achieve as well as in other key stages.

The leaders and managers at your school are successful in bringing about rapid improvement. Some of your parents and carers would like to do more to help you learn at home and so inspectors are asking your school to supply your parents and carers with more information about how they can help to support your learning. You can help your school to improve further by continuing to try hard in lessons and making sure you come to school every day. We wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely
Susan Walsh
Lead inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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