



Blenheim Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number 134008
LEA Bromley

Inspection number 274876
Inspection dates 17 - 18 May 2005
Reporting inspector Kath Beck

Inspection deemed to have been carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996 according to section 12(3) of the same act.

Type of School	Primary	School address	Blenheim Road
School category	Community		Orpington
Age range of pupils	3 - 11		Kent BR6 9BH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01689 819955
Number on roll	194	Fax number	01689 600830
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Gillian Harding
Date of previous inspection	Not applicable, newly amalgamated school	Headteacher	Mrs Alison Whiting

Age group	Published	Reference no.
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Introduction

The inspection was a pilot of the new arrangements for inspection announced by Ofsted in its consultation paper of February 2004. It was carried out with the support and co-operation of Blenheim Primary and Nursery and of the local education authority.

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

Blenheim Primary and Nursery is an average size primary school in Orpington, Kent. It was established in September 2003 following the amalgamation of Blenheim infant and junior schools. The nursery opened in April 2004. Most of the children are White British, but almost 20% come from ethnic minority backgrounds. A few are from traveller or asylum seeking families and there are three looked after children. The number of children who speak English as an additional language is a bit higher than usually found; but few are at the very early stages of learning English. One quarter of the children is eligible for free meals, which is about the same as in most schools. The number of children with learning difficulties is above average for a school of this size. It is difficult to recruit teachers and many, especially in the juniors, are new to teaching and to the country. In 2003 to 2004, some classes included children of different ages. All classes now comprise children from the same age group. This is the school's first inspection report.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

The school's view that its effectiveness is satisfactory with some strengths is confirmed by inspectors. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and Foundation Stage leader have faced the challenging circumstances of the amalgamation with determination. Teamwork among the staff, a positive climate in which children can learn, outstanding practice in the reception class and a good partnership with others outside the school have all been established. Children's personal development and well-being, especially the contribution they make to daily life, are at the heart of the school's work. This is enabling children to overcome the disruption and difficulties caused by the amalgamation.

Standards are low because the significant disruption to children's learning due to frequent changes in teachers, particularly in the junior classes, has left them with a lot of ground to make up. There are pockets of very good teaching that engage and challenge the children enabling them to learn quickly. However, too much of the teaching is only satisfactory and this not sufficient to improve children's learning at a fast enough rate. When work fails to capture their interest, children's concentration and behaviour deteriorate. Children of all abilities and from different backgrounds are welcome at the school and take part fully in lessons. While nearly all children make steady progress, some could achieve more than this if their particular learning needs were catered for better in lessons. Standards in the Foundation Stage are also very low but some very good teaching and exciting activities are helping children to make good progress.

The leadership team has an accurate view of the strengths of the school and the most important things that it must do to raise standards. They have the skills to bring about improvements, but need to implement changes with greater urgency. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Most parents and children like the school and appreciate its pleasant and welcoming atmosphere. They rightly think that more needs to be done to improve some children's behaviour and restrict the changes of teachers in some classes. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

Grade: 3

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards across the curriculum.
- Ensure all lessons are sufficiently challenging and engaging to secure better attitudes and good behaviour from the children.

Achievement and standards

Standards in English, mathematics and science are well below the national average. The school is setting realistic targets for children to achieve by the time they leave. Following the amalgamation, the school lacked the necessary information to pitch the work at a suitably challenging level. Consequently, standards have not improved quickly enough. The school is now checking the progress of the children more effectively and this is leading to some children making better headway. Targets for the next two years are low, but this is appropriate because children have not learned enough in the past. The school is on course to meet these targets.

Children who learn English as an additional language and children with learning difficulties do not progress as quickly as they could. This is because some class teachers are not planning effectively enough to meet their needs.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Children's personal development and well-being are satisfactory. The school has been energetic in helping them to understand how to stay healthy. An area of particular strength has been action to encourage healthy eating, and drinking water during the school day. There is also a good emphasis on physical activity. Children know that at times of difficulty or unhappiness there are adults ready to help. Everyone in the school is on their guard to prevent incidents of bullying and take speedy action to deal with those that occur.

Through the school council, children have an active voice in shaping the direction of the school and in the process learn important skills for living in a democratic society. For example, the school council has urged the re-establishment of the 'Listening Ear' initiative that provides private counselling for any child who asks for it. In good lessons, children are encouraged to take responsibility and show initiative in their work. This was not seen in all lessons. Children also take on responsible roles such as running the school shop. These activities lay secure foundations for children's economic well-being, but skills in literacy and numeracy are not yet high enough.

The school is successful in promoting children's social development. Children work collaboratively and support team activities well. They have drawn up school rules and generally apply them properly. A number of good, successful initiatives to improve children's behaviour are in place. There is still more to do to reach a consistently good standard. Children understand notions of honesty

and fairness. They have learned the importance of caring for each other. Children's cultural experience has been enriched by programmes in art, music and visits to places of interest.

Most children enjoy coming to school and contributing to its daily life. However, they do not always take pride in presenting their work neatly. In mathematics, this makes it hard for them to work accurately and slows their progress. The school is making determined efforts to increase the level of attendance of a small group of children, but some parents do not ensure their children attend often enough. This holds back their progress as they miss important areas of learning.

Grade: 3

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

The school recognises the variability in the quality of teaching across the school and agrees that overall it is satisfactory. The leadership team has worked hard to develop good practice in all classes, but this has been impeded by difficulties in staff recruitment. Outstanding practice in the reception class is enabling children with limited knowledge and skills to make the best possible progress. Generally children make steady progress, but those with learning difficulties or with English as an additional language could make headway faster if teachers took more account of their particular needs. However, children who have received additional support in literacy have accelerated their learning this year. Suitable new assessment procedures have been implemented to keep a check on how well children are learning. This provides the leadership team with useful information, but teachers do not use this sufficiently to match work to children's needs when planning their lessons.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

The school provides a broad and balanced range of work that meets statutory requirements. Following the reduction in the number of children on roll, the school has re-assessed its curriculum plans and amended them appropriately to meet the needs of single age groups, rather than mixed age groups. Programmes of work include activities that help children to avoid risks and stay healthy and safe. A good range of additional activities contribute well to learners' enjoyment and achievement. The school has been particularly successful in providing a rich and engaging curriculum in the Foundation Stage.

Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Children receive a good level of care, advice, guidance and support in their personal development. Inspectors found the school to be a calm and orderly community where children were learning happily. There has been some success in helping children to develop their self control, but there are still those who present a considerable challenge to the school community. Children have been encouraged to take responsibility for improving their daily life through the school council and questionnaires about their views. These are listened to and acted upon. Such initiatives have given this relatively new school a sense of identity. There are sound procedures for child protection, although there is an urgent need for further staff training to make sure that everyone is up to date.

Grade: 3.

Leadership and management

The leadership team has shown great determination in difficult circumstances to establish the school and raise standards. It has not been afraid to take tough action to ensure that the school continues to improve. The governors give energetic and positive support. They are undertaking appropriate training to help them to challenge the school more effectively about the progress it makes. The school's self evaluation is thorough and takes into account the views of parents and children. This together with the analysis of test results means the leadership team has identified the most important things it needs to do to raise standards and bring about improvements.

An effective partnership with a range of outside support services, such as the behaviour support team has been established. In this way the school is making satisfactory provision for vulnerable children. All children can take full part in the entire range of lessons provided and to the extra activities on offer.

Financial resources are spent appropriately and used well to help the school meet its priorities for improvement. Following the amalgamation all the teachers in the junior school left. The school has subsequently found it hard to recruit suitably qualified and experienced teachers. This has made it hard to achieve consistency in the quality of learning.

The school meets its mission statement, "Challenging ourselves today to fulfil our promise tomorrow."

Grade: 3

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INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Key to judgements: Grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall	16-19
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OVERALL EFFECTIVENESS

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2	
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	Y/N
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Not applicable	Y/N

ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS

How well do learners achieve?	3	
The <i>standards</i> reached by learners	4	
How well learners' make <i>progress</i> , taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3	
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3	
The behaviour of learners	3	
How well learners enjoy their education	3	
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3	
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community.	3	
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	

THE QUALITY OF PROVISION

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3	
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3	
How well does the provision promote the well-being of learners?	3	

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	Y/N

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	Yes/No/NA
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are taught about sexual health risks	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe.	Yes/No/NA
Procedures for Child Protection meet the requirements of <i>Working Together to Safeguard Children</i>	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
How well learners enjoy and achieve	Yes/No/NA
Support is given to learners with poor behaviour and attendance	Yes
Learners' personal and academic development are monitored	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	Yes/No/NA
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, are consulted when key decisions affecting them have to be made and their views are listened to	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	Yes/No/NA
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop their enterprise and financial skills, and work in teams	Yes
Education and training for all learners in 14-19 is co-ordinated to give experience of work based learning	Not applicable

Alexandra House T 0207 421 6800
33 Kingsway F 0207 421 6707
London WC2B 6SE www.ofsted.gov.uk



Blenheim Primary and Nursery School
Blenheim Road
Orpington
Kent
BR6 9BH

19th May 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for being so helpful to us when we came to your school a little while ago. We enjoyed our time with you, and we're pleased to let you know what we decided as a result of the visit.

You were quite right when you told us it was a happy school, and we can see why most of you enjoy coming. Teachers take good care of you, and they notice when you're worried or falling behind in your work. We were impressed with the way the school council works, and how thoughtfully you filled in the school questionnaire. It was good to see your views being taken into account. Congratulations on helping to bring the "Listening Ear" scheme back to life.

The children in the reception class do especially well, and this gives them a good start to school life. Most of you told us you felt you worked hard. That's what we found too, although occasionally a few of you let yourselves down by misbehaviour.

We saw some very good lessons, which you obviously enjoyed. But teachers do not always ask enough of you, or provide sufficiently interesting things to do. When this happens you don't learn as much as you could.

Overall the school runs smoothly. Most of you learn steadily year by year. More could be done though to help those of you who find learning difficult, and those whose home language is not English. The headteacher knows what works well in the school, and what still needs to be done to make it better.

You need to achieve more. This means all lessons becoming as good as the best ones are now, and all children working as hard as they can. You also need to take more care when you record your work in mathematics and English. This will help you to do better in the tests.

The school is still quite new, but it's already beginning to feel like a large family with everyone playing their part in making it successful.

Good wishes for the future,

Kath Beck and Martyn Richards
(The inspection team)