



# Blacklow Brow Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 104445  
**LEA** Knowsley  
**Inspection number** 277159  
**Inspection dates** 21 November 2005 to 22 November 2005  
**Reporting inspector** Mrs Lesley Traves CfBT Lead Inspector

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Tarbock Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Huyton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11		Liverpool, Merseyside L36 5XW
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 477 8010
<b>Number on roll</b>	251	<b>Fax number</b>	0151 477 8012
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mr G Powell
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	27 March 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs S Walmsley

Age group	Inspection dates	Inspection number
3 to 11	21 November 2005 - 22 November 2005	277159

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

## Description of the school

Blacklow Brow is a popular primary school, situated in a socially advantaged part of Huyton. A small, but significant proportion of pupils come from less affluent circumstances. The majority of pupils are of white, British heritage and all are English speaking. On entering nursery, pupils have broadly average skills. Fewer pupils than average are entitled to free school meals and an average proportion has learning difficulties and/or disabilities; the number with statements is low.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

This is a good school, with some outstanding features. This matches the school's own assessment of its work. Pupils achieve well and reach above average standards in most areas as a result of good teaching. However, standards in writing could be higher, particularly at Key Stage 2. Learning experiences are stimulating and exciting. As a result, pupils enjoy school greatly, their behaviour is outstanding and they work really hard. This has a strong impact on their learning. Children get off to a good start in the nursery and Reception classes (Foundation Stage) because a high emphasis is placed on ensuring that they feel happy and secure. The outstanding care and support all pupils receive from staff enables them to flourish and develop as confident, mature individuals who respect others. Parents greatly value the school and are very supportive of its work.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher and deputy head provide outstanding leadership, working with energy and commitment to move the school forward. Governance is good, with governors using their individual expertise well in fulfilling their responsibilities. There are thorough and rigorous procedures for checking on the school's work. However, subject leaders could take a stronger role in checking on teaching and learning. Issues identified at the last inspection have been fully addressed and the school has moved rapidly forward in other areas, such as developing the curriculum. There is excellent teamwork in evidence and very good capacity for further improvement. The school provides good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

The school has identified and inspection findings confirm the following priorities for improvement:

- raise standards in writing at Key Stage 2 by ensuring that teachers make better use of their assessments of pupils' progress to identify more closely the next learning steps
- develop the skills of subject leaders in checking on teaching and learning to iron out inconsistencies and bring about improvement.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' achieve well and generally meet the challenging targets set for them. On entry to nursery, their skills are broadly as expected for their age. By the end of Reception, most have met and a number have exceeded the goals set for this age group. They do particularly well in their personal and social development. Pupils build effectively on this good start because of good teaching. By the age of 11 the standards they reach are, generally, significantly above average, particularly in mathematics and science. In English, standards are more variable from year to year because although the majority of pupils do well in reading, writing is a weaker area. The school has identified this as

a priority for improvement. Those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve well and sometimes very well as a result of the high quality support provided for them.

In the 2005 national tests for 11 year olds, results dipped. This was largely because a quarter of the class had learning difficulties and although they were supported well, they did not reach average levels; however, in science and mathematics, over half the pupils reached the higher level (Level 5). In English, pupils missed the targets set for them by some margin. Fewer pupils achieved both the average and the higher levels in writing than in reading, pulling overall English results down. The school has started to address this and the current Year 6 pupils are on course to do better. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. In the tests taken by Year 2 pupils in 2005, standards were above average in reading, writing and mathematics. They rose from average in all three areas in 2004 as a direct result of strategies put into place to accelerate progress. Almost all pupils reached the average level in reading and mathematics and an above average proportion reached the higher level (Level 3) in reading and writing. Indications are that these results are likely to be sustained and further improved in 2006.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school, work extremely hard and are very enthusiastic about their learning. They report that they feel very happy, confident and safe in school. Pupils have excellent relationships with the staff and each other. They behave exceptionally well at all times and are friendly, polite and caring. Their manners are exceptionally good and they show great care and consideration for others. As a result, the school has a particularly warm, relaxed atmosphere in which all flourish and feel included.

The school council is extremely effective in enabling pupils to contribute to decision making. They were fully involved, for example, in planning a safe route to school as part of the school travel plan. This work has had a significant impact on all pupils' awareness of how to stay safe. Pupils demonstrate a particularly good understanding of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle through the work undertaken towards achieving the 'Healthy Schools Award' and through the high emphasis the school places on physical development. Pupils have many exciting opportunities to learn about their own and other cultures. For example, an innovative project with a twin school in India has included the exchange of photographs and video material and has led to a very meaningful consideration of the contrasts between the two schools. Pupils also take a regular part in a wealth of cultural and multi-cultural events in their local area. Pupils work together extremely well, attend regularly and are punctual; they know that working hard is both enjoyable and beneficial. These skills equip them well for future life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. Staff work hard to capture pupils' interests and engage them in learning. They have high expectations of their behaviour and work rate; very good relationships prevail. As a result, pupils work very hard and are enthusiastic about their learning. There are many opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and share ideas. They are strongly encouraged to value all contributions, following the excellent examples set by staff. This ensures they become confident learners and active listeners. In the best lessons, where teaching is outstanding, teachers are very knowledgeable, pupils are clear about what they are expected to learn and tasks are highly interesting and challenge them to the limit. Where teaching is occasionally satisfactory rather than good, it is because lessons are over directed by staff and pupils are less involved independently in their learning. This results in a lack of challenge for some pupils. Teaching assistants are very skilled in supporting pupils with learning difficulties and this has a significant impact on their learning.

At Key Stage 2, pupils would benefit from further support and guidance in their writing tasks. Teachers could make better use of information about pupils' progress to set more specific targets for them in order to push them on faster. Marking could also be more evaluative in writing and point the way forward more effectively so that pupils understand clearly how they can improve.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

The curriculum is outstanding. It meets the needs of all pupils very well, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those in the Foundation Stage. It is thoroughly planned to enrich pupils' experiences in all subjects. The headteacher and deputy have taken a very strong and innovative lead, together with other local schools, in designing and implementing a curriculum which is rich, stimulating and exciting for pupils. It places a high emphasis on the creative arts and on links between subjects. This project has had a significant impact on pupils' enjoyment of learning and on their personal development. The work is currently being shared as a model of outstanding practice, both locally and further afield.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils to work with artists and poets, to learn an instrument, visit places of interest and to take part in sporting events and residential trips. Learning is also greatly enriched through pupils taking part in cultural and community events. The wide range of out-of-school activities, which includes sports, the arts and a choir, is very popular with the children.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school provides an outstanding level care for its pupils. This is firmly reflected in its positive ethos and the excellent attitudes and behaviour in evidence. Arrangements for child protection are very robust and there are high levels of trust in staff, expressed by both parents and pupils. Health and safety procedures are very effective and much thought has been given to ensuring pupils are safe at all times. Arrangements for settling new children into school are excellent and result in happy and confident learners from the outset. There are many opportunities for children to succeed and have their achievements recognised, which builds their confidence and self-esteem. One parent stated, 'My children are of average ability but do not feel average...their particular talents and hard work are consistently and openly celebrated'. Partnerships with parents and other agencies are particularly strong and impact very positively on pupils' progress, particularly for those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The procedures for tracking pupils' progress are very thorough and are the product of much hard work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. The leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher is outstanding; together, they form a highly effective team, committed to moving the school forward and ensuring it provides the best possible education for the pupils. A key strength of the management team is its commitment to innovation and development through working with others. For example, it takes a leading role in the local cluster of schools curriculum design project. Staff, pupils, parents and governors share the vision for the school. There is no complacency. As a result, there is very good capacity for further development.

There are thorough and rigorous procedures in place for school self evaluation. Consequently, the school has a sharp view of what it does well and what needs to be improved based on good quality evidence. The inspection largely confirmed the school's views of its own performance. Subject leaders are doing a good job of developing their areas and providing good guidance for colleagues. However, they are not yet fully involved in checking on teaching and learning. As a result, inconsistencies arise, such as in the quality of marking, and are not always dealt with as swiftly as they could be. Governors are supportive and knowledgeable. They use their individual expertise to best effect and fulfil their responsibilities well. They have identified as a priority the need to be more closely involved in school self evaluation.

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## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2	NA

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	1	NA

<sup>1</sup> Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	2	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

### **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

As you know, three inspectors visited your school recently to find out how well your teachers are helping you to learn. Thank you for being so polite and friendly. We really enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say about your school and what you like best about it.

The things we think are really good about your school are:

- the way in which teachers help you to do well in your lessons
- your outstanding behaviour and the kind and helpful way you treat others
- your attitudes to lessons and the way you really enjoy them and the many other exciting activities the school offers
- the way in which all the people in school care for you and support you in all you do.

We have asked your teachers to improve some things to make the school even better. They are:

- we would like them to help you improve your writing, particularly in Key Stage 2
- we would like more teachers to be involved in checking on how well you are doing in lessons to make them even better.

Thank you very much for helping us with the inspection. We hope that you will carry on enjoying school and doing so well. Most of all, we hope that you will continue helping the staff to make your school even better.