



Blackboys Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 114547
LEA East Sussex
Inspection number 279409
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 30 November 2005
Reporting inspector Jacqueline Marshall RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackboys
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5LL
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01825 890423
Number on roll	116	Fax number	01825 891 247
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Jennifer Gill
Date of previous inspection	20 March 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Jill Webb

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 30 November 2005 - 30 November 2005	Inspection number 279409
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blackboys Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school serving a rural community in East Sussex. The mainly White European school population has a lower than average proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average though the percentage of pupils with statements is double the national figure. The school is currently undergoing substantial rebuilding and, as a result, teaching has been reorganised to use both the school and village halls as learning bases.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspection evidence supports the school's view that Blackboys is a good school with outstanding features. Pupils join the school with average ability and, by the time they leave at age 11, they reach exceptionally high standards, making outstanding progress from their test results at age seven. Strengths are in mathematics and science. The school is tackling relative weaknesses in writing, particularly for younger pupils. Children in Reception receive a good start because teaching is good. This ensures that they achieve well and reach standards above the level expected for their age. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities make outstanding progress because of the high quality support they receive.

The pupils' personal development and attitudes to learning are excellent and contribute significantly to their achievements. Behaviour, even when tested by the current building work, is exemplary, both in lessons and around the school. The range of curricular opportunities is good, as are the care, guidance and support the school gives to all its pupils. Teaching is good, with outstanding provision for the oldest pupils, and learning support assistants provide effective support.

The leadership team have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses through checking how well things are going. However these checks are not yet focused enough to ensure that practice is consistent throughout the school or to fully support the school's own self-evaluation process. The improvements made in the school since the last inspection demonstrate clearly that it has capacity to make further progress and this is driven by the strong sense of teamwork and desire to improve that already exists. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards even further in English, particularly in writing, to reach the same high levels achieved in mathematics and science
- improve the procedures for checking the school's progress towards its targets.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well at Blackboys. Children join the school in the Foundation Stage with standards that are average and go on to reach exceptionally high standards by the time they leave the school at age 11. Personal skills are developed exceptionally well throughout the school and all pupils make excellent progress in learning how to work and play alongside others.

Reception children make good progress because their different needs are recognised and well catered for. By the start of Year 1, standards are above average and children have acquired a good range of skills to set them up for the future. The oldest pupils achieve extremely well because of the high quality teaching they receive and standards are very high in Year 6. Pupils' achievement in the rest of the school is good. The

school is seeking to improve standards in Year 2 by increasingly targeting individuals and groups and providing them with additional support, particularly in writing and reading. Pupils already receiving such support - those with learning difficulties and disabilities for example - make outstanding progress.

Overall, achievement and standards in Key Stage 1 are satisfactory. Recent results of national tests show that pupils in last year's Year 2 made good progress in mathematics to reach above average standards. Standards in reading and writing were satisfactory. Results were exceptionally high in the most recent tests at the end of Year 6, with pupils exceeding the school's own challenging targets. All pupils did extremely well in mathematics and science, though some more able boys could have done even better in English. That said, the overall progress of all pupils was outstanding and pupils exceeded the school's own challenging targets in mathematics and English. Because of the relatively small numbers of pupils, the school has done well to maintain these high standards over recent years, even when there have been fluctuations in the numbers of pupils in different year groups and varying numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Inspectors agree with the school's judgement that pupils' personal development is outstanding. The school attaches a high priority to this. Consequently, pupils are extremely enthusiastic about learning, show considerable enjoyment of school and feel valued and secure. They get on well and help one another, as demonstrated by their readiness to become 'learning buddies'. Around the school and in lessons, their behaviour and attitude to work are exemplary, especially for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Attendance has improved and is above the national average. Pupils greatly appreciate the range of high quality activities offered. One example is the 'Marvellous Magical Me' topic, where pupils are able to take responsibilities, develop and grow through completing team challenges. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good and helps pupils develop a greater awareness of the world around them. All pupils know how to stay safe and the school is using the current building works to help pupils learn these skills. Pupils have a highly developed understanding of how to keep healthy and the school has gained the silver 'Healthy School Award' for its efforts.

As well as class responsibilities and many opportunities provided for the pupils to get involved in the local community, the school council offers opportunities for additional responsibility and pupils respond extremely well to this, preparing them well for their future life.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Where lessons are best, teachers set very challenging expectations for pupils' achievement and participation and, as a result, progress is outstanding. All teachers plan exciting and relevant activities for pupils' differing needs and encourage individual pupils to think about the different ways they learn so that they are able to decide which way suits them best. Teachers ask demanding questions, which encourage pupils to think about what they have learnt and to give reasons for their answers. Teachers allow pupils to work on their own or in groups where they can help each other through their learning buddies. Teachers show pupils how and what they need to do to improve through supportive marking and by setting them individual targets. However whilst examples of very high quality marking are evident this level is not yet consistent across the school.

The work of classroom assistants is a strength because they know the individual needs of pupils and adapt their approaches to them accordingly. All pupils enjoy lessons because they have very good relationships with adults and find the work interesting. As a result, behaviour is exemplary.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum develops pupils' basic skills well, particularly since the school has focused on developing reading and writing further. However some opportunities to reinforce their literacy skills are missed when writing in other subjects. Teachers' planning makes sure that pupils' learning is vibrant and exciting. The school plans many quality opportunities to enrich the curriculum. For example, it offers specialist music teaching to all age groups. This plays a significant part in the high standards reached by pupils in music and stimulates their participation and enjoyment of additional activities such as the school orchestra. The school has a wide and varied range of other extra-curricular activities that are well attended and greatly appreciated by pupils, including sports clubs and a residential visit for older pupils.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school welcomes all children, whatever their needs, and provides them all with good care, guidance and support. Pupils and parents recognise this and it is a key factor in pupils' positive attitudes to school. The school is aware of the potential hazards caused by the current building works and has taken every possible measure to ensure pupils' safety. Child protection and health and safety procedures are robust and any pupils who are at risk are identified and supported well.

Pupils' learning is also supported well. Teachers set them individual targets, which tell them what they need to do to improve. Whilst the quality of marking is generally good it is not yet consistent in showing pupils the next step in their learning. The level of support and guidance given to pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding. In particular, targeted support, tracking pupils' progress and liaison with other agencies help these pupils to do extremely well.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management at all levels are good. Leaders have successfully built a culture of teamwork within the school and led the drive for improvement, for example recently raising standards in reading, demonstrating their capacity to improve further. Through monitoring teaching and learning they have correctly identified the areas that need improvement. This contributes to the school's judgements of its own effectiveness. However, whilst checks by leaders are regular they do not always focus clearly enough on the school's own targets or how far it is achieving them. This weakens the school's capacity for self-evaluation.

Governors support the school and fulfil their statutory duties well. Currently involved in the school development process they are aware of the need to tighten their procedures further, to better support the school's self-evaluation process, recently undergoing training for this. The school seeks pupils' and parents' views and most parents feel it takes these into account. The school and governors are providing additional opportunities to listen to the very small minority of parents who have voiced concerns during the current building works. Links with external agencies support pupils' learning well, particularly those who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

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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>	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?	2	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	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

How well do learners achieve?	2	NA
The standards ¹ 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	1	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	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	1	NA

The quality of provision

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

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	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	2	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

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
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
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
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
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
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
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
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

Blackboys Church of England Primary School, School Lane, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex,
TN22 5LL

1 December 2005

Dear Pupils,

As you know, some inspectors visited your school recently to check on how well it was doing.

Thank you very much for saying hello to us. Special thanks go to all of you who told us about life at school. We think you are all very polite to grown-ups and extremely well behaved. We think you are doing well at school, and amazingly well by the time you leave in Year 6.

These are the things we particularly liked:

- you told us how much you liked being at school
- your teachers make sure you know how to stay fit and healthy and there are lots of activities, such as visits and clubs, that you can enjoy
- the adults and other grown ups are really good at helping you to get on well with other children and grown ups
- everyone at your school looks after you well and takes good care of you.

In order to make your writing even better, we have asked the adults at your school to make sure you always know what you need to do next to improve and give you lots of practice to use your writing skills in other subjects. We have also suggested that things like this need to be happening in the same way in every classroom.

Thank you again for helping us with our work.

Yours faithfully,

Mrs Marshall Lead inspector