



Blacko Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 119167
LEA Lancashire
Inspection number 280477
Inspection dates 14 November 2005 to 15 November 2005
Reporting inspector Eric Jackson

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Blacko Primary School
School category	Community		Gisburn Road
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Blacko, Nelson BB9 6LS
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01282 616669
Number on roll	86	Fax number	01282 616669
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mark Rollisson
Date of previous inspection	1 February 2000	Headteacher	Miss Rachel Ormond

Age group 4 to 11	Inspection dates 14 November 2005 - 15 November 2005	Inspection number 280477
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an additional inspector.

Description of the school

Blacko Primary is a small, oversubscribed village school for pupils aged 4–11, with slightly more boys than girls. All the children are from white British backgrounds. Socio-economic circumstances locally are well above average, and eligibility for free school meals is very low. Fewer children than average are identified with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the overall attainment of the annual intake of children is above average. The headteacher was absent on long-term sick leave during the inspection, and an associate headteacher from a local school supported the leading teacher in managing the school. Major building improvements caused significant disruption to normal procedures. The school is part of a Network Learning Community.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Blacko Primary is a good school. Although it has some outstanding features, it also has areas for further improvement. This matches the school's own judgement of its effectiveness. The parents and pupils have positive views of the school. The school is well-placed to continue to improve, as it has since its last inspection. It provides good value for money.

Leadership and management are good, as are teaching and learning. The staff have coped well with the disruption caused by the building works and the absence of the headteacher, minimising the impact on the quality of children's education.

Standards are high in Year 6 national tests in English, mathematics and science, and the school has been in the top 10% of similar schools over the past 3 years. This represents good achievement in these subjects, and good improvement since the last inspection. Children's achievement is satisfactory in other subjects because teachers' expectations are not high enough. The quality of provision in the Foundation Stage (Reception class) is satisfactory with some good features, but access to outdoor activities is not easy. Children's personal development is good, and their attendance is outstanding. The school's involvement in a Network Learning Community is beneficial, particularly for gifted and talented children and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise children's achievement in other subjects to those reached in English, mathematics and science by raising teachers' expectations of what pupils are to achieve.
- Further improve the accommodation and access to outdoor activity for children in Reception.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children's attainment at entry to Reception is above average, but covers a wide range. Children make satisfactory progress in the Reception class and generally exceed the goals expected for five-year-olds. The school has identified slower progress for some boys in reading and has an effective action plan to address this.

Children make good progress in Years 1 and 2 and their results in national tests in Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics are well above average, representing good progress in Years 1 and 2. Speaking and listening skills are often exceptional.

Standards are high in national tests in English, mathematics and science in Year 6, although lower in 2005 than in 2004. Progress in Years 3 to 6 is good. It is often very good in mathematics in Years 5 and 6 as a result of inspirational teaching. Progress in other subjects, such as information and communication technology (ICT), art and

design, design and technology and singing, is only satisfactory because teachers do not expect pupils to achieve high enough.

Children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because the support they receive meets their learning needs well. A recently adopted programme of support in reading and writing is proving effective in accelerating some of these children's progress. Gifted and talented children are identified and challenged effectively to reach high levels.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Children's personal development is good. Attendance is well above the national average. The children's moral, social and cultural development is good, and their spiritual development is satisfactory. Older children who have joined the school recently say that they were welcomed warmly by the staff and other children.

Children make a good contribution to what goes on in school. Those on the School Council have outstanding opportunities to develop their involvement, in and commitment to, the school's work.

Almost all children have good attitudes to their learning. They take part well in lessons, and say that they enjoy them most of the time. Behaviour is good, and older children help the younger ones when they have difficulties. Bullying is not tolerated. Children cope well during the building work. They learn to be safe in school. Occasionally, the staff do not insist enough on routines being followed, so that some children take longer than necessary to be ready for the next lesson.

The school is working towards Healthy School status, and the children learn effectively how to be fit and well. Through the development of high level basic skills and good opportunities to work in pairs and groups, the children are beginning to be well-equipped for the world of work.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good, based firmly on good learning relationships between staff and children. Many children start school with good social skills and are ready to learn. In Reception, they build on these skills satisfactorily. However, their learning is adversely affected currently by the cramped space in their classroom, and the lack of the usual access to the hall and the outdoors whilst building work proceeds.

The emphasis throughout the school on English, mathematics and science leads to good achievement in these subjects. The teachers are confident about teaching them and plan effectively to meet the full range of children's needs, including those of the high attainers and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Support staff make a good contribution here, particularly in Reception. However, teachers'

expectations of children's achievements in the wider curriculum are not as high as they are in English, mathematics and science.

Teachers are concentrating on the improvement of children's investigative skills in mathematics and science. This is generally having good impact, but is inconsistent. For example, Years 1 and 2 enjoyed developing their understanding of two and three-dimensional shapes in a very good practical investigation, which included interesting links with art when the children printed their mathematical shapes. In Years 3 and 4, the teacher had planned a science lesson for children to make switched electrical circuits. However, their opportunities to investigate were restricted by them all having to make exactly the same switch mechanism, and they were denied the chance to experiment for themselves.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good, meeting all statutory requirements. There are good enrichment opportunities through visits out, visitors to school, and extra-curricular activities. The curriculum is strong in English, mathematics and science, but satisfactory for other subjects. Despite the cramped accommodation, children in reception have satisfactory opportunities to experience all the areas of learning.

Children say that they enjoyed a week of learning based on China, organised across the local Network Learning Community. This covered aspects of geography, culture, history, art and other subjects well.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Children are well cared for, and report that they feel safe in and around the school. There are good arrangements to ensure safety whilst the building work proceeds.

Guidance and support are also good. Children are helped to improve their learning effectively, especially in English and mathematics. They also learn to assess their own progress by indicating with 'thumbs up' or 'thumbs down' whether they have achieved the learning objectives at the end of a lesson. Parents of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities wrote in high praise of the support and guidance for their children.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good, leading to high standards in English, mathematics and science. The school's development plan sets out a clear programme for further improvement, but the need to raise standards in other subjects is not being addressed with sufficient urgency. Governors are closely involved in setting the direction

of the school with the headteacher, and a knowledgeable governor monitors the on-going building improvements closely.

The school's performance is monitored well by key staff and governors, with good support from the local authority, and its self-evaluation of its effectiveness is accurate. The long-term absence of the headteacher has been effectively covered to minimise disruption for the children. The leading teacher is assuming responsibility, with the support of an experienced headteacher from another school. This arrangement is working well, and all staff are contributing to the continued successful management of the school.

The school ensures that all children benefit equally from what it provides and unfair discrimination is not tolerated. The staff provide a secure and protective environment in which children can learn effectively. The school's resources are deployed well to meet the children's needs.

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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	3	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	1	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

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

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16 November 2005

Dear Children

Thank you for welcoming myself and Lorraine, the childcare inspector, to your school. Some children said that when they joined your school from another one, you and the staff made them very welcome because the school is so friendly. We know how they felt. Our job, as you probably know, is to check how well your school provides for you, and how well the staff and governors understand how well you are doing.

We feel that Blacko Primary is a good, safe and happy school, with some very good features. By the end of Year 6, children usually do very well in the SATs. You help here by mostly behaving well and trying hard to do your best. This makes it easier for your teachers to teach you, and they do this well. Some older children feel that Mr Harrison really inspires them with exciting mathematics lessons! Those of you who go to the Tower Club also behave really well, and enjoy the good things that go on there.

Your head girl and boy do their job very well, and they certainly know how to run a meeting of the School Council. I enjoyed listening to your councillors plan the 'Children in Need' day. I hope it went well.

You have coped well with the way the building work affects your work and play, and I know that most of you are really looking forward to it being finished. It looks good so far, and I know your cook is looking forward to her new kitchen. I would like the Reception class to have a bigger classroom, and a door to the outside, if your school can afford it.

We have asked your teachers to let you do more work in areas such as art and design, design and technology and music, and to expect you to do as well in those as you do in English and mathematics.

With best wishes to all of you for your future,

Yours sincerely

Eric Jackson, Lead Inspector

Annex B