



Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 120117
LEA Leicestershire
Inspection number 280737
Inspection dates 12 June 2006 to 12 June 2006
Reporting inspector John Eadie AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	off Main Street
School category	Voluntary aided		Blackfordby
Age range of pupils	4 to 8		Swadlincote, Derbyshire DE11 8AB
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01283 217702
Number on roll	62	Fax number	01283 217702
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Roger Page
Date of previous inspection	15 November 1999	Headteacher	Miss Susan Vernon

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by a team of two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This small primary school is unusual in that pupils leave to go to their next school at the end of Year 3. The school is set in a small village close to the Derbyshire border and serves an area with some deprivation, although pupils come from a range of social backgrounds. All pupils are White British. There is an average proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Children have a range of levels of skills and knowledge when they join the school but, overall, these are below expected levels.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

It is easy to see why this good school is so popular with parents. The school makes strenuous, and very successful, efforts to treat all, whether they be child or adult, as individuals to be valued. As one parent said, 'This is the most supportive school I could wish for my children'. This emphasis on caring and treating pupils as individuals is resulting in the school creating responsible, happy pupils who are well prepared for the next stage of their education. The school's self-evaluation is carefully based on a good range of evidence and agrees in all respects with the judgements made by inspectors. The school provides good value for money.

Teaching is good and so pupils are learning well and making good progress. They start at school with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected and make good progress to reach above average levels by the time they leave at the end of Year 3. Provision for children of Nursery and Reception age is good and these children make good progress to reach the expected standards by the time they start in Year 1. There are very clear tracking systems which identify areas where pupils might be finding work difficult. In the top class, this has been extended and is used well to spell out clearly to pupils what they need to do next to raise standards further but in other classes this is not yet happening in all subjects.

The headteacher is passionate about providing the best for every child and adult connected with the school. This vision has been shared very well with all staff and there is a strong atmosphere of teamwork among all who have anything to do with the school. Within this positive picture, there is an area for development. At present, neither managers nor governors are monitoring the effectiveness of classroom practice sufficiently. The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and, with the evident desire to continue to raise standards, it is well placed to continue to improve.

What the school should do to improve further

- Continue to develop systems of target setting so that they are used throughout the school to help pupils and their parents know what pupils need to learn next.
- Improve the monitoring of classroom practice by managers and governors so that good practice can be celebrated and shared.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils make good progress through the school and are reaching above average standards by the time they leave. Children start school with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected. They make good progress to reach expected standards by the time they start in Year 1. They make particularly good progress in their literacy skills, although their standards in their social and communication skills are a little lower than expected. By the time they take the national tests at the end of

Year 2, pupils have reached above average standards. Almost all pupils reached the challenging targets that were set for them in these tests. The school has developed a good system for measuring pupils' progress across the range of subjects and this is used well to identify pupils who are experiencing difficulties. Good plans are then put in place to ensure that pupils with learning difficulties make good progress. Good progress continues in Year 3 and pupils go on to their next school confident in their above average standards. Progress is particularly good across the school in reading, showing the success of work done to raise standards in this area recently.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupil's personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are good. Children settle very quickly into school life because the staff make home visits prior to them starting, and personal development has a high priority. However, standards in this area are still a little lower than expected by the end of Year 1 owing to their low starting points. They are becoming confident, developing strong friendships and beginning to work well together. The strong focus on personal and social development, which is continued throughout the school, is as a result of this being a school in which all pupils are valued and well supported.

Around the school and in lessons, pupils behave very well and are polite to visitors. Older pupils play with younger pupils in the playground and the family feeling allows pupils of all ages to enjoy school. Pupils work hard and enjoy their lessons, and rates of attendance are above average. They make good progress in developing basic skills to help prepare them for their next stages of education and future careers. Pupils' well-being is promoted very effectively. As a result, pupils have a very good understanding of the benefits of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. This is shown by the fruit eaten at break and in most packed lunches. Pupils are contributing satisfactorily to the school and wider community but pupils have limited opportunities to take initiatives on their own. Older pupils have a developing awareness of education in another country as they have established a link with a school in Africa.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is good and pupils are learning well through the school. A particular strength of teaching through the school is the way that all adults know the individual needs of the pupils and work successfully to meet these needs. This is helped by the good tracking systems that have been developed. In the top class, this system has been extended to give children clear targets for what they need to learn next. It is planned to extend this throughout the school and this should help pupils and their parents see the next steps in learning.

A further strength in teaching is the way that teachers plan for the different age groups in their class. However, this planning is sufficiently flexible to allow pupils to work with older ones if they need more challenging work. Teaching assistants and other adults make a very valuable contribution to learning. For example, on the morning of the inspection, the teacher for the youngest children was making some home visits. Her class was left in very capable hands and the children made good progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It ensures that pupils build on what they have previously learnt and make good progress. The provision for children of Nursery and Reception age is good and contributes very well to the progress that the children make. The curriculum places good emphasis on working together, underlined in a class assembly where teamwork was the theme, using the World Cup as a good example. Pupils' enjoyment of learning is enhanced by this teamwork. Provision for physical education has been increased and pupils understand that healthy minds go alongside a healthy body. There is a good range of extra-curricular provision, with popular visits and visitors. The school also organises a residential trip for the oldest children, which is a very valuable experience and unusual for children of this age.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care is good. The school's strong promotion of guidance and support contributes very effectively to pupils' learning. There is a very good commitment to health and safety. Procedures for child protection are thorough and well understood by all staff. Pupils are confident that if they have any problems, the strong relationships they enjoy with all adults will allow matters to be very well dealt with. The school works well with outside agencies to support pupils in time of need. Older pupils are aware of targets to improve their work, though these systems have not yet been provided for other classes. The provision of an after-school club in ICT to support older pupils who do not have computing facilities at home is good practice.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management of the school are good. The headteacher has shared her passion to do the best for every member of the school community and there is a very clear sense of teamwork in the school. They have ensured that the very restricted space available is not hindering the pupils' learning.

Governance has improved significantly since the previous inspection and is now good. Governors have been very proactive, particularly in gaining Aided status for the school and have plans well under way to try to return the school to take pupils right through to Year 6. Although a good range of monitoring activities is carried out, neither governors nor managers in the school are yet carrying out sufficient monitoring of the

effectiveness of classroom practice. This is resulting in some good practice not being shared effectively.

Self evaluation is good. For example, careful analysis is carried out of national test results to establish areas for development. Parents and pupils are regularly consulted about their views, and several improvements have been made as a result. For example, as a result of parental requests, materials were produced so that parents better understand how their children are learning mathematics. With the input of parents, pupils and governors, the school is good at evaluating its success. There is a constant desire to raise standards and the school is well placed to continue improving.

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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	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	2	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	3	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

Dear Children

Thank you so much for welcoming us to your school. We really enjoyed talking to you and looking at your work. We were very impressed with how polite and well-behaved you are.

We think the following are the best things about your school:

the school regards each of you as individuals with your own needs and works very hard to make sure that you are doing as well as you can

all grown-ups look after you very well and you are developing into responsible and happy people

the headteacher and all other grown-ups know how to make the school better and are working hard to do that

teachers make their lessons interesting and are very good at giving you work that is just right for you

you make good progress in all subjects.

These are the things that we have told your school it needs to improve:

use the systems of target setting being used in Years 2 and 3 in all classes, so that you all know how to make your work better

at present governors, the headteacher and other teachers do not watch your lessons often enough to see how well you are doing.

Yours faithfully

John D Eadie (Lead inspector)