



Blanche Nevile School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 102175
Local Authority Haringey
Inspection number 286298
Inspection dates 20–21 November 2006
Reporting inspector Mike Smith

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

Type of school	Special	School address	Admin and Secondary Department Burlington Road, Muswell Hill London N10 1NJ
School category	Community	Telephone number	02084422750
Age range of pupils	3–16	Fax number	02083522101
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Chair	Mrs Judy Downey
Number on roll (school)	60	Headteacher	Mr Keith Horrell
Appropriate authority	The governing body		
Date of previous school inspection	8 July 2002		

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Blanche Nevile is located in Muswell Hill and Highgate and takes deaf pupils from sixteen authorities in and around London in addition to those from Haringey. Pupils come from a wide range of social and cultural backgrounds and on entry all pupils are working well below the national expected levels. All pupils have statements of special educational needs or are waiting to be assessed for their deafness and associated delay in language and communication development. Just over 90% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and 28% of parents require interpreters or translated documentation. All pupils are at the early stages of learning English. The primary and secondary sections of the school work closely with their mainstream partner schools on their co-located sites, two miles apart. Pupils benefit from regular learning opportunities with their mainstream peers.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Blanche Nevile is a good school with some outstanding features. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are clearly focused and determined to improve the learning opportunities for all pupils and together with senior staff are putting policy into practice. Leadership and management ensure that the needs of the pupils are at the heart of all decisions. A parent, reflecting the views of many, wrote, 'I am very happy with the progress my children are making, both academically and emotionally. The school has greatly contributed in making my children happy and confident learners'. School self-evaluation strategies are effective; the school knows itself well and has a clear understanding of what needs to be improved and how to achieve it. Monitoring arrangements are good and the school has an accurate view of the quality of education provided. The best practice in teaching and learning is clearly identified. The school is aware of the need to share this more effectively and establish it consistently across all year groups.

The partnerships with mainstream schools are a strength of the provision, especially in the primary department where all pupils have an inclusion programme and the primary headteacher is very supportive of all partnership development. Staff from both schools share expertise, knowledge, practice and training, and work together to improve an already inclusive school community. Pupils have opportunities to learn alongside their hearing peers in mainstream lessons and develop their social skills, while building up their confidence and self-esteem. A number of mainstream pupils also benefit from attending small classes with deaf pupils. In these lessons with additional support for their literacy and language skills, they too increase their confidence and self-esteem, develop deaf awareness, communication and social skills.

Overall, pupils' standards are below the national average. However, given their low starting points, their achievement and progress are good, particularly in their personal development, language acquisition and communication skills, which are outstanding. Children in the Foundation Stage make outstanding progress overall and get the best possible start to their education. This is due to the excellent teaching and support from the nursery nurse. Overall, pupils make good progress because of good teaching, support by the communication support workers (CSWs), learning support assistants (LSAs), therapy support and the excellent care, support and guidance for their individual needs. Pupils are encouraged to become more independent and to improve and practise their social and academic skills. The monitoring and assessment of individual pupils' progress in lessons are helping to identify appropriately challenging targets, which most pupils achieve. The school is aware of the need to improve the consistency of assessment and recording practices, to enable more accurate tracking and analysis of progress as pupils move through the school. In addition, the school recognises the need to further develop teacher assessment in order to ensure the accuracy and reliability of their judgements when considering the levels at which pupils are working. The curriculum offers a wide, interesting and relevant range of learning activities that meet the needs of all pupils. British Sign Language (BSL) and English are given equal status and are both taught as language to deliver the curriculum. There is a very good

emphasis on their personal, social, health and citizenship education. Pupils' attendance is excellent as is their contribution to the community. Planting trees during National Tree Week and work with the London Symphony Orchestra are just some of the variety of community projects. Pupils are extremely well prepared to take on the challenges of the future and they learn skills that will ensure their success.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Meal times in the mainstream schools provide a worthwhile experience where social and communication skills can be practised. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and form the basis of good behaviour. The care, guidance and support for pupils is outstanding and parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One wrote, 'This school has greatly contributed in making my children happy and confident children with positive deaf identities'. Pupils greatly enjoy coming to school and are really happy in their learning. There have been satisfactory improvements since the last inspection. Governors now take a more active part in school self-evaluation, although their contribution to the monitoring and strategic management of the school is not sufficiently comprehensive. Leadership and management are having a positive impact on the school's provision which is leading to improved chances for pupils to achieve and make continued good progress. The capacity to improve even further is good.

What the school should do to improve further

- * Ensure teachers achieve consistency in how they record pupil' attainments, in order to facilitate the tracking of their progress.
- * Improve the accuracy and reliability of teacher assessments when considering the levels at which pupils are working.
- * Ensure that governors take a more active part in the monitoring of provision and strategic management of the school.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Given their starting points and abilities, all pupils make good progress. Some, particularly those children in the Foundation Stage make outstanding progress in their communication, language acquisition and confidence in their learning. Although standards overall are below national expectations, some pupils will occasionally achieve in line with their mainstream peers. The partnership with the mainstream schools supports pupils' achievement and their shared learning helps improve their progress in acquiring and developing academic and social skills. Individual learning needs are clearly identified and challenging targets are proposed which most pupils achieve. Primary pupils make good progress in English, maths and science and older students do well in a range of accredited examinations, including GCSEs. Although the number of pupils in each year group is small when comparing nationally, the added value the school is making to pupils' progress is excellent, and places the school in the top five percent of schools nationally. There is no difference in the achievement or rates of progress of different ethnic groups. Parents are pleased with the progress their children

make. One parent wrote, 'I feel that the school meets my child's educational and social needs and is progressing well in the majority of subjects'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding as a result of the excellent support by all staff, who put the needs of the pupils first and take a genuine interest in their achievement. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and pupils are encouraged to become confident and as independent as possible. Pupils show enthusiasm for their learning and appreciate the opportunities they have to learn alongside pupils in mainstream schools. Attendance is excellent and behaviour is good. Pupils like coming to school, feel safe, understand healthy lifestyles and follow safe practices, as well as they can. They acquire the essential skills of communication, including BSL that supports their confidence and helps to prepare them for the next stage of their education or employment. Pupils are confident that their views are listened to and there are pupil representatives on the mainstream school councils. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and is firmly embedded in the formal curriculum and in the varied opportunities that are arranged outside school. Pupils' achievements and participation in school and community events are well displayed around the school, including, charity and sporting events, work experience and Enterprise projects.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their learning because teaching and individual support ensures they make at least good progress. Team work is a strength and teachers, nursery nurse, CSWs, therapists and LSAs ensure all learning opportunities are fully maximised. Pupil confidence is raised enabling them to take chances and learn by their mistakes in a supportive environment. Teaching is good overall, with examples of excellent practice across the school. Learning targets are generally well matched to individual needs and all staff help ensure that pupils' personal development, communication and care needs are fully met so they can get the best out of their learning opportunities. Pupils respond well to the high expectations made of them and make good progress when work is matched to their individual needs. There is good monitoring and recording of pupils' progress in lessons, and information is generally well used to inform planning. The accuracy and reliability of teacher assessment, when considering the levels at which pupils are working, is an area for development.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and offers a relevant and broad range of experiences that support excellent personal and good academic development. It is further strengthened by the inclusion opportunities that pupils have in mainstream classes. All pupils receive lessons in British Sign Language and deaf studies in order to meet their linguistic and cultural needs. Secondary pupils take BSL as a modern foreign language in line with the bilingual philosophy of the school. British Sign Language is used alongside spoken English to ensure that the curriculum is fully accessible to all pupils and training is given to all staff and also offered to parents. Personal, social and health education, and citizenship make a significant contribution to learners' growing self-confidence and maturity. A good range of additional 'real life' experiences are offered including work-related learning and enterprise projects. In such a project, pupils worked together to create a product while developing their financial and other skills necessary for their working life. An increasing range of accredited courses and work related opportunities are offered to older pupils which effectively meets their needs and prepares them well for when they leave school.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Pupils are kept safe and secure by a combination of excellent procedures and practice by staff that ensure their personal needs are best supported. There are clear procedures for safeguarding pupils that are understood by all staff. There is excellent communication between all staff ensuring that there are consistent approaches and support for all pupils. The monitoring and recording of pupils' progress are carefully undertaken and there is ongoing and effective guidance that helps pupils to make excellent progress with their personal development, language and communication skills. The relationships between staff and learners are excellent and the personal dignity of the deaf is respected at all times. There is excellent partnership work with support agencies which ensures that pupils' needs are well met. The partnership and communication with parents is excellent and one parent wrote, 'I am always informed of any issues that need addressing and I am able to discuss any concerns I have with an appropriate person'.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good overall and both the headteacher and deputy headteacher efficiently run the secondary and primary departments respectively. The deputy headteacher has close working relationships with the headteacher of the primary school that ensures the learning opportunities for all pupils are fully maximised. It is too soon for the impact of some of the strategies identified for improvement to show on pupil achievement. The roles and responsibilities of all staff are clearly understood

and team work is a strength. This focused team work is ensuring the high quality care and personal development for all pupils. Learning and teaching are systematically monitored. Opportunities for further professional development are very good. The headteacher has ensured that school self-evaluation involves all staff and governors and consequently everyone feels they have a part to play in whole school development. The governors have become more involved in evaluating the school provision since the last inspection, but have less involvement than they should in the monitoring and strategic management of the school.

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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
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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
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

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

The quality of provision

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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you for welcoming me into your school and special thanks to those pupils who met with me to tell me all about the school. You obviously enjoy coming to school and working in your lessons and you all get on with each other so well. I agree with you and your parents: Blanche Nevile is a good school that works hard at supporting your needs and ensures that you make good progress in your learning. The school knows what it has to do to make things even better for you and you can help by working hard on your literacy and language skills and by paying close attention in lessons. I particularly liked the fact that:

- * You all benefit from the excellent partnerships and opportunities you get in the mainstream schools.
- * All staff care, support and guide you exceptionally well.
- * Your relationships with each other and all staff are excellent. Staff know you very well and help you to become more confident.
- * You make excellent personal progress, particularly with your communication, language and independence skills.
- * The youngest children have an excellent start to their education and are very well prepared for when they move up the school.
- * You learn important skills that will help you when you leave school and you benefit from your contact with the community outside school.
- * Your parents/carers are really happy with what the school does for you and there is excellent communication between the school and your home
- * The school ensures that you learn as well as you can and works successfully with other people to ensure you receive the support you need.

There are a few things the school knows it can improve upon:

- * By ensuring your teachers record your progress in a consistent way so they can tell you how well you are doing as you move up the school.
- * By further developing teachers' assessments of the levels at which you are working.
- * By ensuring that governors see for themselves how the school is doing and become more involved in managing the school and its improvements.

Once again, thank you for being so friendly and making my visit such a pleasant one.

Yours sincerely

Mike Smith Additional Inspector