

# Blackmoor Park Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104521
<b>Local Authority</b>	Liverpool
<b>Inspection number</b>	286969
<b>Inspection dates</b>	12–13 March 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Colin Smith

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	360
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr D Moore
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr M Davies
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 June 2001
<b>School address</b>	Leyfield Road Liverpool Merseyside L12 9HB
<b>Telephone number</b>	0151 2283250
<b>Fax number</b>	0151 2288828

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

In this large junior school, pupil numbers have remained high over recent years because of its popularity. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. However, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average, reflecting some degree of social disadvantage in the area served by the school. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A small number are of Pakistani, Chinese and African heritage or from mixed backgrounds. A very small number of these pupils are at an early stage of learning English. Since the previous inspection two thirds of the staff has changed, including the headteacher.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Blackmoor Park provides children with a satisfactory quality of education. However, as new staff have joined the school, and have worked together and shared their expertise and enthusiasm, the culture is changing. The desire to improve the quality of education provided is noticeable. The very good level of care in school and strong links with outside agencies help to ensure that pupils are safeguarded. Vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly well supported. Pupils are treated as individuals and their welfare is paramount. As one pupil explained, 'It's good to be different and it's good to be me.' These factors contribute significantly to pupils' good personal development. Pupils are well behaved, courteous and cooperative learners who fully appreciate the importance of healthy and safe lifestyles. A good and stimulating curriculum significantly enhances their enjoyment of school. Their literacy and numeracy skills are at least adequate and information and communication technology (ICT) skills are very good. A strong foundation is being laid on which their future can be built securely. Parents' high regard for the school is reflected in comments such as: 'The headteacher and staff are very approachable and caring. We are always kept very well informed.'

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Whole-class teaching is often good, but the tasks provided to help pupils to practise and improve their skills are not always sufficiently well matched to their different learning needs, particularly in mathematics. This is why they make better progress in some lessons than others. Pupils' achievement is satisfactory overall and standards are broadly average by the time pupils are ready to transfer to high school. Although calculation skills are secure, pupils' understanding of how to use them to solve mathematical problems is not keeping pace. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language achieve well in relation to the targets set for them. The most able pupils achieve satisfactorily overall, but not as well in reading as in other subjects.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. However, the headteacher's drive for improvement is having a positive effect. The school's self-evaluation is accurate in most aspects. The areas requiring improvement have been correctly identified because greater rigour is now being injected into checking the work of the school. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection. Although standards in English, mathematics and science are broadly similar to those at the time of the previous inspection, achievement in ICT has improved dramatically. The school provides satisfactory value for money and its capacity for improvement is satisfactory and improving. However, it is not as good as the school believes. This is because many of the good initiatives to improve the school have been implemented within the last two years and have not yet had time to raise achievement and standards.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the work provided closely matches pupils' different learning needs in every lesson.
- Improve pupils' problem-solving skills to raise achievement in mathematics.
- Provide more challenging and stimulating reading experiences to accelerate the progress of the most able pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

The school assesses pupils' attainment very carefully and objectively when they join the school and at the end of each school year. This shows that pupils make satisfactory progress overall. However, their progress in the problem-solving aspects of mathematics is not keeping pace with their calculation skills. Standards are average in English and mathematics and have been for four out of the previous five years. Standards in science improved in 2006 and are above average. Pupils make good progress in science. This is largely because of the strong emphasis placed on developing pupils' skills of investigation, which in turn strengthens their knowledge and understanding. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress, largely because of the increasing number and effectiveness of learning support assistants. Pupils with English as an additional language and those from minority ethnic groups also make good progress because of the additional support they receive. The most able pupils achieve as well as others in writing and mathematics, but not as well in reading. This is because the planning for guided reading and the encouragement to read for pleasure have not received sufficient attention. Pupils achieve very well in ICT and reach standards higher than expected for their age.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They are respectful, courteous and well behaved. Pupils enjoy school, particularly the practical activities. They are very eager to participate in the in rich assortment of additional activities because 'Learning is fun.' Attendance is average, but has improved this year in response to persuasive incentives. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, ActiveMark and Sport England awards. Consequently, pupils have very good awareness of the importance of diet and exercise in keeping healthy. They have learned to make informed choices regarding the dangers of smoking, alcohol and drugs. Pupils feel safe in school and show distaste for any form of bullying and racism. They contribute well to the school and the wider community. Their responsibilities, for example as school council representatives and playground leaders, are taken very seriously. As one pupil explained, 'We feel we make a difference to the school.' Pupils learn to work well independently and in teams. They are equipped with adequate literacy and numeracy skills and very good competence in ICT. They have satisfactory understanding of the world of work and are eager to protect the environment. These factors contribute positively towards their future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

Pupils are well managed and lessons are purposeful. This encourages pupils to work hard and give of their best. Pupils are always made aware of what is expected of them. This encourages them to take greater responsibility for their own learning. Their interest and enthusiasm for learning is maintained because lessons move along at a brisk pace. Interactive whiteboards are used particularly well to make learning visual. This helps pupils to understand new ideas such as different methods of calculation and how sound can be measured and recorded on a graph.

On the whole, teachers assess pupils' learning accurately. However, the extent to which this information is used to provide tasks at just the right level for individuals is not consistent. In good lessons, when the challenge is high and the tasks provided are very closely matched to pupils' different needs, all pupils make good progress. However, when pupils are all given the same work, irrespective of their different needs, their learning slows. Occasionally, when teaching is outstanding, pupils are inspired and desperate to learn more, for example by searching the Internet.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The well planned curriculum largely matches pupils' needs. A very good range of additional activities contributes significantly to their enjoyment of school. Many pupils love the clubs and all agree that 'ICT is brilliant.' The curriculum is sensitively adapted to cater for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those with English as an additional language. This enables them to experience success. Pupils' literacy and numeracy skills receive sufficient attention. Their investigation skills in science and ICT skills are particularly well developed. However, progress in mathematics is restricted by lack of opportunities to acquire good problem-solving skills. Similarly, reading, for the more able pupils, is not sufficiently stimulating. Good provision in sport, music and drama nurtures pupils' talents well and increases in their confidence in performing in public. These opportunities, along with the good personal, social and health education programme, significantly enhance their personal development.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

The school provides a high level of care. Well established procedures are in place to safeguard pupils. Pupils say: 'Adults are always there to help you.' The personal and learning needs of the most vulnerable pupils are very well understood. Teachers and support staff, in partnership with parents and health professionals, are very successful in removing any barriers to learning and raising pupils' self-esteem. Teachers have worked hard to mark pupils' work constructively and set individual targets to help them to know what they need to do to improve. Much time and energy is being channelled into tracking their progress. However, these are relatively new initiatives which have yet to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as they can. This is why the inspection team judges the overall care, support and guidance to be satisfactory rather than good, as the school believes.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Under the determined and sensitive leadership of the headteacher, the management of the school has developed considerably over the last two years. A clear and shared vision for improvement has emerged along with the drive and energy to achieve it. Governors provide satisfactory support overall and have a good grasp of the financial implications of change. Although it has taken some time, there now exists an effective system for measuring how well pupils are achieving as they move through school. This is helping staff to reflect on the quality of their teaching and helping to ensure that any pupils whose progress falters are put back on track. Similarly, the arrangements made for senior staff and subject leaders to observe lessons and examine pupils' work have been developed and improved. The information gleaned from

checking teaching, learning and achievement has enabled the senior leadership team and subject leaders to identify key areas for improvement. Consequently, the school is now in a secure position to target its resources, provide additional staff training and intervene to remedy any weaknesses, such as pupils' problem-solving skills. Although the school improvement plan identifies the right priorities, the intended impact of these changes, particularly on pupils' learning and achievement, is not made sufficiently clear. This makes it harder for staff and governors to evaluate how successfully their goals are reached.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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>	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
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	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	3
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	2
<b>How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?</b>	3

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
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

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school so politely and answering our questions so helpfully. We thoroughly enjoyed our visit. We would like to point out the good features of your school and explain how the school can improve further.

Your school is satisfactory and there are quite a lot of good features. The progress you make is satisfactory and standards you achieve by the end of Year 6 are average in English and mathematics. Your investigation skills in science are good. This helps you to understand more about living things, materials and forces. This is largely why standards in science are above average. ICT appears to be your favourite subject. This is not surprising since there are so many lessons and extra activities that involve the use of computers. Standards have shot up in ICT since the last school inspection and you are making very good progress in this subject.

After talking to you and observing lessons, we could see just how well cared for you all are. Those of you who need extra help and reassurance are never left to worry. Yours is a happy school where teachers and children get on well together. We believe that this is largely why behaviour is good and you try your best. We know how much you all enjoy the practical subjects such as art, music, PE and design and technology. Many of you explained how much you enjoyed the extra activities such as clubs and visits. We believe that this is why you enjoy school.

The headteacher and staff are working very hard to make your school even better. We have three suggestions that will help.

- In the best lessons teachers provide activities that stretch the children who find learning easy and help those who find learning difficult. We want this to happen in every lesson.
- Your calculation skills in mathematics are mainly good, but you find more difficulty in using your skills to solve mathematical problems. We want teachers to help you to improve these skills.
- Most of you make at least satisfactory progress in reading, but the more able children could do better. We have therefore asked teachers to make reading more stimulating and challenging.