



# Blackrod Church School

## Inspection Report

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**Unique Reference Number** 105211  
**Local Authority** Bolton  
**Inspection number** 287157  
**Inspection dates** 20–21 September 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Brenda McIntosh

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 address</b>	Vicarage Road West
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled		Blackrod, Bolton
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11		Lancashire BL6 5DE
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01204 333520
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	163	<b>Fax number</b>	01204 335320
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Mrs M Jones
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr James Royal
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2001		

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<b>Age group</b>	<b>Inspection dates</b>	<b>Inspection number</b>
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Blackrod Church School is smaller than average but numbers are steadily rising due to its increasing popularity within the community. The school has a waiting list for admission into the Nursery. Most pupils are of White British background. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is about average as is the proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals. The school was awarded the nationally accredited Activemark Gold in 2005. Only a small number of schools within the borough currently hold this standard for sports and physical education provision. The headteacher has been in post two years.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school where pupils' personal development is outstanding. The pupils and parents rightly see this as a caring, friendly place. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school; they comment warmly about the headteacher and staff, citing many improvements they feel have been made over the last two years. Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils enjoy coming to school to learn; this is reflected in their comments such as, 'I think this is a happy school because the teachers are nice and make it so'. Parents are confident in the knowledge that their children are happy and well looked after. The headteacher leads the school well and ensures a very positive Christian ethos in which everyone works together to help pupils achieve well academically and flourish personally. Ably supported by the senior leadership team, he has evaluated the school's performance in an accurate and self-critical manner. The school continually seeks ways to improve things for the children, so much so it sometimes forgets to celebrate what it does really well. Staff work very well together as a team and this ensures improvements are implemented successfully. A good example of this can be seen in the improved provision in the Foundation Stage that is now good; staff are already looking for ideas to further develop the outdoor play area. Here, the children get off to a good start learning many new skills and have lots of interesting things to do. Pupils go on to make good progress throughout the school and by Year 6 attain standards that are above average. It is no surprise that the quality of teaching is good and inspires pupils to learn and give their best. Pupils do particularly well in reading, mathematics and science. They rise to the challenges in mental mathematics and as a result develop high level skills. Their achievement in writing is not as good as it might be but strategies have been put into place to help them do better. These are beginning to take effect as seen in pupils' work but there is still more to do. For example, when marking work teachers do not always give pupils enough information about how well they have done or constructive guidance on what they should do next to improve. The headteacher has led the way in developing sharper systems for assessing pupils' attainment and using the information to raise standards and achievement further. As a result, pupils' progress is generally tracked well but it is not always done with sufficient rigour throughout the school and teachers do not yet routinely set precise individual targets for improvement with pupils.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. A real strength is their impeccable behaviour that contributes significantly to the good progress they make in lessons and the very good atmosphere in school. A high priority is given to developing good social skills and pupils are well prepared for future adult life. Relationships at all levels are excellent; pupils are thoughtful and show an impressive level of care and consideration for each other. They value their friendships and as one pupil added, 'There is no bullying here, we are all nice to each other'. Pupils take on responsible roles with pride and enjoy contributing to the day-to-day running of the school. The curriculum is good and meets the needs of all pupils well; it promotes good basic skills and is effective in developing pupils' personal qualities. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have weekly French lessons; this opportunity develops their linguistic skills and interest in the culture of another country.

Pupils have ample opportunities for physical exercise, participate eagerly in a wide range of sporting activities and make healthy choices at meal and snack times. 'Golden Time' (a weekly timetabled session of activities) provides enrichment opportunities for pupils but there are missed opportunities during these sessions to develop the skills they learn in lessons because the activities do not always make it clear to pupils what they are expected to learn. Recent improvements to the provision for pupils with learning difficulties and or/disabilities ensure these pupils receive good support and achieve well. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, much of this happening over the last two years. Taking this into account, the leadership demonstrates a good capacity to improve further. The school gives good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Track pupils' progress consistently throughout the school and set meaningful individual targets for pupils to help raise achievement further, especially in writing.
- Ensure teachers' marking informs pupils how well they are doing and how they can improve their work.
- Make better use of 'Golden Time' and ensure that activities have a clear purpose and contribute more effectively to pupils' learning.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement is good because pupils make good progress in each stage of their development building well on what they have learned as they move up the school. On entry to the Foundation Stage children's attainment is as expected for their age. They make good progress in all areas of their learning. By Year 6 standards are above average in reading, mathematics and science. The school is aware pupils' achievement in writing could be better and has introduced various new teaching methods to tackle this; there are clear indications in pupils' work that standards here are improving. The school meets its challenging targets. In 2006, the test results at the end of Year 6 improved again in English, mathematics and science. The biggest gains are seen in the number of pupils reaching the higher levels expected of them in mathematics and science. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities also make good progress and achieve as well as the others.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils develop a very clear sense of right and wrong because the reward systems encourage self-discipline and allow pupils to make choices; through this they learn to understand which choices are good and why. Pupils have daily opportunities for quiet reflection during worship that help them to consider their own actions and the needs and feelings of others. Behaviour across the school is outstanding. The respect pupils have for

others is evident in their very good manners and the polite way in which they conduct themselves. Attendance is consistently above average and a good sign of how much pupils enjoy school. Pupils make healthy choices with regard to their lifestyle. This is seen in the good number of pupils that take advantage of the healthy snacks offered and the level of involvement of pupils in the after-school clubs that promote physical exercise. Older pupils apply to take on meaningful responsible roles and carry out their duties with pride. School councillors have helped to improve aspects of the school and represented local schools in a national workshop on developing the role of the school council.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning is good. At the start of lessons it is made clear to pupils what they are expected to learn and activities are planned well to ensure that all pupils' learning needs are catered for. Teachers manage pupils' behaviour well; expectations of how pupils should conduct themselves are high. As a result, pupils behave impeccably and this allows lessons to flow at a good pace. Relationships are very strong and lead to a positive atmosphere in classes where pupils enjoy their learning. Teachers are introducing a range of worthwhile initiatives aimed at improving pupils' standards and achievement in writing. For example, a drama week helped pupils to produce some imaginative pieces of work. The marking of pupils' work is regular but comments are too general and do not indicate clearly to pupils how well they are doing or guide the next steps of their learning.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum provides a varied range of interesting learning experiences that enable pupils to make good progress in their academic and personal development. It meets the needs of all pupils well. Pupils particularly enjoy the practical aspects of science and mathematics that enliven these subjects well. Themed weeks give pupils opportunity to use and develop their skills across different subjects and add to their enjoyment of learning; further approaches to linking subjects are being developed. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are catered for well, enabling them to make good progress. Visits, including a residential to an outdoor activity centre, and a range of visitors into school enrich the curriculum. A good variety of well attended after-school and lunchtime clubs helps to develop a whole range of pupils' interests. Children in the Foundation Stage learn well through lively, imaginative activities; the school is aware that there is scope to develop the outdoor play area further.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The school takes good care of pupils. Pupils speak well of the staff and are confident they can turn to them if they are troubled or upset. Procedures for child protection, health and safety and staff recruitment are all in place. Parents find the school welcoming and work closely with staff to support their children's education. The 'wrap around care' facility for nursery children helps develop their social skills and understanding of mealtimes very well. Some parents express delight that their children are now attempting a broadening diet at home as a result of their eating in school. Arrangements for new children starting the Foundation Stage are effective; already, after a matter of days, children appear settled and happy in their learning. Pupils who need extra help with their learning are provided with good support. Pupils' academic progress is generally tracked well though this is not with the same level of rigour from class to class. Teachers do not yet consistently set pupils clear individual targets to help them monitor their own progress and improve their work further.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

Leadership and management are good. Since his appointment the headteacher has led the school well and together with the senior leadership team has brought about some good improvements. Development planning is soundly based on the school's accurate self-evaluation. Over the last two years much has been achieved in raising the profile of the school within the local community. The work has resulted in a substantial increase in the number of pupils entering the nursery. The role of the school as a community resource is developing well; the school now offers facilities to a range of local clubs and groups that are well attended by pupils from the school as well as others in the community. Governors have supported this work well. Their systems for monitoring the work of the school for themselves are not rigorous enough and therefore they make an overall sound contribution to its development. Parents, pupils and staff are given the opportunity to express their views on how well the school is doing and what it needs to do to improve. The school has developed some good partnerships to broaden pupils' learning experiences.

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## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<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>	2
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	2
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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
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

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

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	2
<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>	2

<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.

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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	2
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 very much for being so welcoming to Mr Blackburne and myself when we visited your school. I would like to share with you a few of the school's main strengths and the things we have asked the school to do to make it even better.

We found you very polite and well mannered not just to us and other adults in school but to each other. Your behaviour was impressive. This is a big help to you in lessons and making your school a happy, friendly place. The staff look after you well and work hard planning interesting lessons that help you reach good standards. You told us that you enjoy your lessons and all the other activities in school. We can see that the older children are really pleased with the jobs they are given and they do help the school run smoothly.

I have to mention the youngest children in nursery as it is amazing how quickly you have settled and get on with your activities with so little fuss. It is a delight to see you are learning good table manners and trying different kinds of food.

When teachers mark your work we have asked them to make sure the comments tell you how well you are doing and how you can improve your work. You can help with this by letting your teacher know if you really understand what it is you have to do next. We have also asked your teachers to set you individual targets to work towards particularly for helping you to improve your writing. 'Golden Time' looks fun and we can see how much you enjoy these sessions. We have asked that the activities have a learning objective that is shared with you just like your teachers do in other lessons.