

Blakehill Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107224
Local Authority	Bradford
Inspection number	287751
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	416
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Paul Dooley
Headteacher	Mr Trevor Patterson
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2002
School address	Highfield Road Idle Bradford West Yorkshire BD10 8QN
Telephone number	01274 414355
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blakehill is a larger than average size school in Bradford. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below average. The proportion from an ethnic minority background, and the proportion who do not speak English as their first language, are below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. The school holds ActiveMark and the Healthy Schools Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Blakehill is a satisfactory and improving school. It gives satisfactory value for money. The forward thinking headteacher has had to overcome major budgetary and staffing issues since his appointment in September 2005. These issues presented significant barriers both to the progress of pupils and to necessary change. Many have now been addressed and consequently standards are rising and achievement is improving

Pupils make satisfactory progress through the school. They enter Reception year with skills better than would normally be found in children aged four. Though teaching and standards in the Foundation Stage are good, progress is satisfactory because the children do not have enough opportunity to play and learn outdoors. Progress between Years 1 and 6 is satisfactory, but because pupils are not challenged consistently enough it is uneven from year to year. By the time pupils leave the school at age 11, they reach above average standards in English and mathematics and broadly average standards in science. Standards at the end of Year 6 are rising faster than the national average.

Teaching and learning is satisfactory. Relationships between teachers and pupils are uniformly good and pupils' behaviour in lessons is respectful and patient. Teachers plan carefully to provide work to suit the range of ability levels in their classes. However, in practice they do not always have sufficiently high expectations of what pupils of all abilities can achieve. In these lessons essential challenge is absent and learning slows. Across all years the quality of marking is variable. It does not help to move pupils' learning forward enough. The best examples are informative and very helpful, but too much merely acknowledges what pupils have done.

The curriculum is satisfactory. It is presently under review to ensure better progression in pupils' learning. The school works hard to enrich pupils' experiences through a wide range of extra-curricular activities which are enthusiastically supported and enjoyed.

Most parents believe that Blakehill is a friendly and welcoming school where their children are well cared for. Pupils' health and personal safety have a high profile and are promoted well. Pupils are confident that there are many adults to whom they can turn for help and support. This is reflected in pupils' good overall behaviour and their well above average attendance.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The leadership of the headteacher is good. He knows the strengths and weaknesses of the school well. He is building a new leadership team with a clearer focus on learning. However, some senior staff still do not expect enough of the pupils. The new curriculum team are working well to improve provision across the school through improved tracking and setting of targets. Some subject leaders are relatively new to their role. They have made a good start to addressing the weaknesses in their subjects, but the full impact of their work has yet to be seen.

There is clear evidence to show that the school is now moving forward. Management has been strengthened by the introduction of rigorous procedures for monitoring and evaluation. Governors are knowledgeable, dedicated and challenging. This indicates that the school has good capacity to make further improvements.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

What the school should do to improve further

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning in order to accelerate pupils' rates of progress.
- Ensure that all teachers focus on challenging pupils to learn as well as they can.
- Ensure that children in the Foundation Stage have a secure and designated outdoor provision in which to learn through play.
- Improve the quality and consistency of marking to ensure that pupils know clearly what they have to do to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children enter Foundation Stage with above average standards in most areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, many have reached the goals set nationally for children of this age and some achieve beyond them. Over recent years pupils have made satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1, so that standards achieved in the Year 2 national assessments have remained consistently above average. Until 2006 pupils did not sustain these standards to the end of Key Stage 2. Their progress up to this point in time was inadequate, though standards have been recently rising significantly faster than the national average. There is clear evidence in the school's accurate tracking system, and in pupils' books from Year 3 to Year 6, to suggest that progress is now satisfactory.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development is good. The comment, 'This is a good school because if you are feeling sad there is always someone to make you feel happy' exemplifies how safe and secure pupils feel. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. It is well supported through whole school assemblies and through the personal, social and health education curriculum which ensures that pupils learn how to cooperate and work well together. They have positive attitudes to learning and enjoy coming to school. Pupils in Year 5 organise fund-raising days for the whole school to raise money to buy new resources. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are proud to be members of the school council, they understand that they have been elected to help others and to suggest improvements for the school. Though pupils have above average standards of literacy and numeracy, their overall basic skills are satisfactory because the school does not yet make the best use of its information and communication technology resources to accelerate learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teachers and teaching assistants have good relationships with pupils, who enjoy their lessons, take pride in their learning and behave well. Classrooms are welcoming and provide pupils with a secure and interesting place to learn. In the best lessons pupils are actively involved in their own learning, pace is brisk and teachers' high expectations challenge pupils effectively to think for themselves. They are encouraged to become independent learners. In these lessons pupils make good progress. But this is not a consistent picture throughout the school. In some lessons teachers spend too much time on whole class activities, which can become mundane and

repetitive. Activities lack appropriate challenge and, as a result, some pupils do not make the progress they should. This is particularly evident in Year 6.

Good use of assessment means that teachers are able to focus more closely on how well pupils are learning. Though the school has recently adopted a clear policy for marking pupils' work, it is not applied consistently. Many pupils are not given clear enough guidance on how to improve the standard of their work. Pupils who do not have English as their first language and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive satisfactory support and consequently make the same progress as other pupils.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum contributes to pupils' enjoyment of learning and enables them to develop good personal and social skills. The school has correctly identified the need to review the curriculum regularly to develop more creative cross-curricular approaches to teaching and learning. Links between subjects are now being developed. A good range of clubs and extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning of new skills. These are much appreciated by pupils and parents alike. As one pupil said about a recent visit to Clarke Hall, 'It helps you learn about the Tudors and it's good fun too!' The school's strong emphasis on personal, social and health education has led to pupils' good understanding of the need for safe and healthy lifestyles. This is reflected in the national awards the school has received. The curriculum in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory, providing a well planned range of activities for children. However, children do not have enough opportunity to learn and play outdoors and this holds back the progress they make.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The care given to the pupils is good. A high priority is placed on ensuring pupils' welfare. The school works hard to ensure that all pupils' feel safe and happy. Child protection procedures are robust and pupils say they have adults in school they feel comfortable to talk to.

The support for pupils' personal development is good, and pupils say that the staff are 'really kind and they look after us'. Parents feel this way too. The school works effectively with a wide variety of agencies and professionals that help to meet pupil's diverse needs. All groups of learners are equally well supported and this enables them to make satisfactory progress in relation to their needs and abilities.

Detailed individual records of pupils' academic progress are kept and regularly updated. They show small steps of individual progress and as a result teachers can see readily where pupils' improvement is being made. However, teachers do not use marking sufficiently well to give pupils precise guidance about how to effect this improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The good leadership and vision of the headteacher has resulted in positive actions to help pupils to learn more quickly. There is a growing sense of purpose in the school, though some senior managers have yet to fully embrace this. Newly

empowered subject leaders and other managers who form the curriculum team are becoming increasingly effective. A sharper focus on tracking pupils' progress and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning is already beginning to raise standards. This priority given to learning and achievement is reflected in the clear school improvement plan. However, many of the new initiatives are so recent that their full impact is not yet proven.

Governance is good. Governors ask challenging questions and know the school's strengths and weaknesses well. The school has good capacity to improve.

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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>	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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
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?	3
The standards ¹ 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	3

Personal development and well-being

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

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

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.

Annex A

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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	2
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	2
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**

My colleagues and I would like to thank you for being so friendly to us when we inspected your school recently. Your conversations with us helped us to get a clear picture of the school. I am writing to let you know what we found out.

We judge Blakehill to be a satisfactory and improving school. You told us that the school takes good care of you, that it is a very friendly place to be and that you enjoy coming to school. We can see this in your good attendance and your good behaviour both in lessons and in the playground. Your parents told us this too.

We found that the headteacher and all the other staff clearly have your best interests at heart and want you to do as well as you can. Some good changes have been made recently to the way teachers check on the progress you are making and the subject leaders are beginning to make a difference to how you learn. However, we also found some things that the school could do better and which would help you to make better progress.

We have asked your teachers to do less revision, and to make their lessons move forward more rapidly. This will make lessons less repetitive. We have asked them to challenge you to learn new things more quickly. We have also asked them to tell you, when they mark your work, exactly what you have to do to improve. This means that you can expect lessons to be much more demanding, which will make you think more and work things out for yourselves. We know that this will benefit you in the end.

You have a role to play in this too. We ask that you keep your attendance up, that you continue to do as the teachers ask and that you maintain your good attitude to learning. We are confident that you will.