



# Blaise Primary School and Nursery

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 109118  
**Local Authority** Bristol, City of  
**Inspection number** 288285  
**Inspection date** 9 January 2007  
**Reporting inspector** Patricia Davies

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Clavell Road
<b>School category</b>	Community		Henbury
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3-11		Bristol BS10 7EJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	0117 3772424
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	388	<b>Fax number</b>	0117 3772423
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Dave Wood
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Yvonne Roberts
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 April 2001		

<b>Age group</b> 3-11	<b>Inspection date</b> 9 January 2007	<b>Inspection number</b> 288285
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one Additional Inspector.

## Description of the school

Blaise is a large primary school serving an area with challenging features. With some yearly variation, children's attainment on entry to the Nursery and Reception is well below expectations, particularly in relation to communication, literacy and personal and social skills. Children join the school in Reception without having attended the school's Nursery and a high level of pupils move in and out of year groups throughout the school. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average and higher in some year groups than others. A very small minority of pupils have significant emotional and behavioural difficulties. Most pupils are from White British families. Other pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds and a very small minority are learning to speak English as an additional language. There has been disruption to staffing during the last two years, including changes to senior staff.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Blaise is a friendly and welcoming school whose overall effectiveness is satisfactory. Pupils feel safe and valued and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere to the school's everyday life and work. Care, guidance and support are satisfactory, as are pupils' personal development and well-being. The close attention given to pupils' personal needs creates a valuable foundation for learning. Tailored support for those with particularly challenging behaviour is proving successful and behaviour is now good. Links with outside agencies are strong and those with parents and carers have been greatly extended. Many pupils take part in the wide range of clubs and readily embrace initiatives to encourage a healthy lifestyle. Despite much hard work to improve the poor attendance of a small minority of pupils, resulting in some recent improvement, attendance remains below average. Achievement is satisfactory. Provision in the Nursery and Reception classes is satisfactory. From a low starting point in these classes, children make steady progress in all areas of learning and develop positive attitudes to school. Progress is satisfactory in other year groups but standards are still generally below average by the time pupils leave the school at Year 6. The curriculum and teaching and learning are satisfactory, with some pockets of good practice. The school has put in place many initiatives to raise standards in English and mathematics. Improvements to planning and assessment give teaching a secure structure and ensure activities are suitably matched to ability. When lessons have an added liveliness, pupils enthusiastically immerse themselves in their tasks and learn well. Nevertheless, there is still more to do to ensure all lessons are enlivened by imaginative and stimulating activities. As a result, there is not yet enough good teaching to accelerate achievement in order to lift standards to expected levels. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Much has been done to share the accountability for the school's effectiveness across all staff members. Those new to key and senior responsibilities are already making a valuable contribution. Detailed scrutiny of pupils' academic performance and more robust monitoring of teaching and learning give the school an accurate view of its overall performance. The governing body makes a sound contribution and is improving its systems for evaluating the school's work. Capacity for future improvement is satisfactory.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate achievement in English and mathematics in order to raise standards to expected levels.
- Provide more opportunities for imaginative and stimulating activities in all lessons so that teaching and learning are consistently good.
- Increase the attendance of the minority of pupils with persistently poor attendance.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils achieve satisfactorily, including those with learning difficulties and those learning English as an additional language. Weaknesses in language, literacy and personal and social skills are significant barriers to learning when children first join the Nursery and Reception classes, where attainment is well below expectations. Progress during this time is satisfactory, with good progress in personal and social development. This early success means that most children are settled and interested by the time they move in to Year 1, providing an important starting point for future learning. The school works hard to improve standards and has met with some success. For example, national test results at Year 2 for reading and mathematics have shown improvement over time. Year 6 test data also indicates some good levels of progress over Years 3 to 6. Nevertheless, test results show a great deal of variability in academic performance. Standards in writing are not as high as they are for reading and test results in 2006 were lower than the previous year in Year 2 and Year 6. Although this fall in results can be accounted for to some extent by the lower-than-usual attainment of these particular groups, there is not yet enough good or better teaching to ensure that pupils make consistently good progress over time and reach higher standards. Standards in English and mathematics in the current Year 2 and Year 6 reflect the more usual picture of attainment, and are below average.

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

### **Grade: 3**

The value placed on nurturing pupils' personal development is evident in their polite, confident and friendly manner and their satisfactory spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. These attributes enable pupils to make constructive contributions to their learning, work cooperatively and share and exchange their views thoughtfully. There is a real sense of community when pupils come together for assembly. Behaviour has improved considerably and is now good. Pupils move around the school safely and sensibly and carry out their responsibilities with initiative and maturity. They report little bullying and swift action taken by staff to resolve any incidents. Pupils greatly enjoy school. They say they like the school's friendliness and the 'fun' of its activities. Indeed, one pupil remarked, 'I can't wait to come to school, imagining all the nice things we are going to do'. Many take part in the school's clubs and sporting activities. School council members are proud of their responsibilities and the chance to improve, for example, the facilities at play time. Pupils contribute to the wider community through musical and sporting events within the local area and by raising money for charities.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching is secure and competent. Teachers generally use structured, tightly organised strategies that are applied consistently and make the best use of time. Planning is thorough, with a clear focus on building basic skills and extending vocabulary. In most cases, there are high expectations of behaviour. These ensure pupils pay good attention and behave well, even where classes contain pupils with the potential for disrupting the learning of others. Teaching assistants play a valuable and, often, skilled role supporting small groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties. These features ensure that pupils' learning is never less than satisfactory. Where there are good elements to teaching, pupils are enthusiastic and motivated. Increasingly, pupils are benefiting from imaginative and practical tasks. For instance, a 'story box' readily held the interest of Reception children, and was a stimulating starting point for discussion and role play about 'Little Red Riding Hood'. Pupils are particularly attentive and responsive when discussion is lively and moves along at a good pace. Nevertheless, not enough teaching has these more engaging qualities to ensure that pupils are always fully interested and involved in order to learn as quickly as they might.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school has readily adopted a number of initiatives to improve its curriculum, but is aware that it still has some way to go for these to be fully successful. Some are already beginning to have an impact. For example, planning for English and mathematics is tightly structured and provides a secure framework for teaching basic skills. A close focus on teaching the use of letter sounds at the lower end of the school is clearly improving reading skills. The school is also keen to draw on pupils' interests to promote good learning, but is not yet consistently planning for activities that capture and hold pupils' imagination and attention. Activities such as 'history fortnight' and recycling projects link subjects well. The school is now introducing greater opportunities for pupils to use and apply their basic literacy and numeracy skills in other subjects to extend these skills further in readiness for adult life. The many and varied visits, exciting cultural events and wide-ranging lunchtime and after-school clubs are strong elements of the curriculum. So, too, is the focus on personal and health education, so that pupils participate regularly in sporting activities and readily understand the need to select healthy foods.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Relatively recent improvements to assessment mean that targets are sufficiently challenging and work is suitably matched to pupils' needs, but the impact of these new initiatives is not yet fully evident. Progress is now monitored more rigorously and

those in need of extra support are identified quickly. Pupils are happy with the guidance they are given and are increasingly involved during lessons in evaluating how well they are getting along. Written feedback is encouraging, but does not always point out to pupils how they can improve their work. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are extremely robust. Pupils know there is always an adult to turn to if they are in trouble. Difficult issues are tackled openly in discussion groups and those with a high degree of personal need are given carefully constructed and systematic support within school. These strategies are now making inroads on the recent high numbers of short-term exclusions among the very small minority of pupils with especially challenging behaviour. There are productive links with outside agencies, including those involved with promoting good attendance.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Disruptions to staffing have had an impact on the academic progress of some year groups and on the rate of improvement. Currently, the school is consolidating its new leadership structure, but those new to key roles as senior staff and subject leaders are already making a positive and successful contribution. Senior leaders are very committed to improving the school's academic performance and have successfully improved behaviour in order to establish a good foundation for this to take place. Links with parents and carers have grown successfully and many parents are very pleased with the school. There is now a shared responsibility across the teaching staff for raising achievement. Analysis of academic information gives the school a clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses in attainment. Nevertheless, the school has not had the same level of success in raising standards as it has in improving aspects of pupils' personal development. Despite the increasing effects of several closely focused initiatives and more robust monitoring of lessons, good teaching is not yet widespread enough to bring about more rapid progress in order to raise standards further. Many members of the supportive governing body are new. Key governors have a good understanding of the school. There are appropriate plans in place to improve the governors' effectiveness in monitoring and contributing to the school's improvement.

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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>	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	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	3

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
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	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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>	3
<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.

## 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

## **Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

- Thank you very much for welcoming me when I visited your school. You were polite and friendly and those of you who shared your views about the school were very helpful. Your school is satisfactory. It is a caring place where staff work hard to make sure you are safe and enjoy your activities, but the school is aware that it still has some way to go for all its work to be fully successful. It was good to learn how much you enjoy all the activities that go on and how much your parents and carers like the school. Here are some other important things about your school
- Behaviour is good and you said that any bullying is dealt with quickly.
- You have a good understanding of how to keep fit and healthy.
- Staff take good care of you and you know there is always an adult you can turn to if you have any difficulties.
- The small numbers of you who find it difficult to settle down in lessons get lots of help to improve your behaviour.
- You make satisfactory progress as you go through the school and make good progress in lessons when activities are imaginative and discussion is lively and interesting.
- You take your responsibilities seriously and those on the school council are proud to be members.
- There are lots of exciting visits and events and many of you take part in the school's lunchtime and after-school clubs. Here are some things your school has been asked to do to make things even better
- Ensure you make quicker progress in English and mathematics so that you reach higher standards.
- Make sure that all lessons have exciting and interesting activities so that teaching is always good and you are always learning well.
- Make sure that those of you who do not come to school as often as you should attend regularly. You could help by coming to school as much as you can.