

# Blackwater Community Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	111866
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cornwall
<b>Inspection number</b>	289080
<b>Inspection date</b>	26 April 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anna Sketchley

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	81
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lynn Pearce
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lesley Harris
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	North Hill Blackwater Truro TR4 8ES
<b>Telephone number</b>	01872 560570
<b>Fax number</b>	01872 560570

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a small community primary school situated in the heart of the village of Blackwater on the outskirts of Truro. Children join the school with the skills normally expected for their age. They are taught in mixed age classes. The school building has recently been extended and this has made nursery places available. The number of pupils entitled to free school meals is below average and there are no pupils for whom English is an additional language.

## 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 successful school which provides good value for money. It is highly regarded by parents and the local community. In the words of one parent, 'Blackwater is a fantastic school and all the staff try their absolute best for the children in every aspect of school life.' The way in which this small school uses its links with outside agencies and other schools is outstanding. Due to this it provides its pupils with a wide range of very good learning opportunities, both personal and academic. There is a family ethos and an atmosphere of friendliness and calm because of the very good relationships that are fostered between adults and pupils. As a result pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Pupils behave well, enjoy coming to school and demonstrate very positive attitudes towards their work and extra-curricular activities. Despite this, attendance is below what is expected because a small minority do not attend regularly enough. In addition a number of parents take their children on holiday during school term time. Therefore, although the school has rigorous procedures in place it is very hard to maintain a good standard of attendance. On starting school pupils' skills are broadly what are expected and the new Foundation Stage unit for Nursery and Reception provides a good start. As a result pupils achieve well and continue to make good progress throughout the infant years. By the time they reach the end of Year 6 they are reaching standards well above those expected nationally in mathematics and science although standards in English are average. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is experienced and dedicated to improvement. She has built a committed and hard-working team of staff and governors. Improvement since the last inspection has been particularly good in information and communication technology (ICT) and physical education where, as a result of the extension to the building, new resources are being used extremely well. By using space creatively, a mother and toddler group has been incorporated as a precursor to nursery education. There is good capacity for further improvement because the school is aware of where development is needed. It consistently monitors aspects of its work, for example having identified writing as an issue, an 'Exciting Writing' programme has been introduced and its successful impact has been carefully monitored by a detailed look at pupils' books across the school. Teaching is good and thorough planning and assessment ensure that all pupils make similarly good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are well supported by well trained teaching assistants. Pupils are set challenging targets but they do not have a sufficiently clear idea, individually, about how to make progress and improve the standard of their work. The curriculum is well planned with enrichment activities of outstanding quality. However links between subjects are not yet developed sufficiently for pupils to practise their writing skills and apply them in different situations. Adults know the pupils very well and provide exceptionally good care. Blackwater School believes in 'sharing, learning and having fun together'. This aim is fulfilled because the adults know, care and provide for pupils very well indeed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of target setting to ensure that individual pupils have a clear understanding of how to improve their work.
- Ensure that links between subjects are developed and used to help pupils practise their writing skills and apply them.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Achievement and standards are good. Pupils join school with skills that are broadly average. The new Foundation Stage unit is providing a stimulating and appropriate experience for young children and as a result pupils are making good progress. Almost all Reception age pupils are on course to meet or exceed expected standards by the end of Reception. In 2006 standards by the end of Year 2 were below average. This was because the test results for this small group were heavily skewed by three pupils with very special needs; when considering the progress of all pupils in the group standards were above average. Standards in the current Year 2 are above average and progress is good. Year 6 achieved well in 2006 and standards were very high in mathematics and science with many pupils reaching the higher Level 5 in both subjects. Although all pupils gained Level 4 in English, none gained a higher level. The school has begun to address this and a successful programme is stimulating pupils' interest in writing. Plans are in place to ensure that pupils practise their writing skills across other subjects. One third of the current Year 6 is on course to gain a Level 5 in writing this year and progress is good across all three subjects. However, standards overall are not expected to be as high as last year because this group of pupils is much larger than last year and approximately one third has learning difficulties.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are well behaved, happy and friendly towards each other. They report that bullying is not a problem and enjoy school to the full. When a group was asked what they most liked there was a resounding 'Sport!' They are keen to keep fit and healthy and take good advantage of the clubs and sports provided for them. They know how to keep safe, for example when camping with the school, and who to go to if they have a problem. They are confident that any difficulties they may encounter which they cannot resolve for themselves will be sorted out by adults. Pupils readily take on responsibilities such as house captain and school council member. They know that they are an important part of the local community through the things they do for others and take part in a wide variety of activities in support of their village and wider world, in particular sponsoring a child in Romania over the last six years. Through these opportunities and the high standards they are reaching in English, mathematics and ICT they are learning appropriate skills to help them in their future lives. However, they have a limited awareness of living in a multicultural society. Attendance remains below the national expectation because too many children take holidays in term-time and a small minority do not come as often as they should.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are of good quality and are the key to the good progress pupils are making. Teachers plan very thoroughly for all abilities and ages in their classes and tasks are carefully matched to the pupils' needs. Lessons are made particularly stimulating and interesting through the use of the new interactive whiteboards which encourage pupils to participate fully in lessons and respond eagerly to questions. Adults manage pupils well. Warm, friendly

relationships abound in lessons and as a result pupils demonstrate good attitudes to their work. Teachers have high expectations and value pupils' work, marking books carefully and explaining what needs to be done next. As a consequence pupils take a pride in what they do and present their work neatly as is shown in their 'Exciting Writing' books, many of which are a delight to look at. Teaching assistants are very competent and are used well, especially to support those with learning difficulties and disabilities. Just occasionally introductions to lessons are a little long and pupils do not move quickly enough to their practical tasks. This causes the pace to slow and pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Assessment is thorough and used continually to plan the next stages of learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of the curriculum is good. It is well organised and carefully planned to take account of the age range within classes. The enrichment through extra curricular activities, visits and visitors is outstanding. Whole school projects such as art weeks allow pupils to produce work of an exceptionally high standard. Some beautiful clay work adorns the walls celebrating pupils' achievement. Provision for both ICT and physical education is much improved since the last inspection and pupils are reaching high standards in both areas. ICT, especially, is making a significant contribution to other subjects. The school is beginning to develop links more strongly across curriculum areas, especially in English, to give pupils more opportunity to practise their writing skills and make work more relevant and interesting, particularly for boys. There is evidence that this is improving standards. The new Foundation Stage unit situated in the hall, covers all six areas of learning very well and provides a spacious and effective learning environment.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 2**

The quality of care, guidance and support for pupils, including those who are vulnerable, is good. In particular, the pastoral care of pupils is a strong feature of the school. Every child is very well known and cared for. The high quality environment that the school now offers makes a considerable contribution to the pupils' well-being and their subsequent good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve especially well because they benefit from well organised support both within school and from outside agencies. One parent commented that her child had 'received tremendous additional support from the school' in helping him with his difficulties. Pupils have group targets for both literacy and numeracy and they know them well. However, these targets are not specific enough or sharp enough to allow individual pupils to identify clearly how to raise the standard of their work.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher is caring, determined and leads the school well. There is a clear direction set. As a result an excellent team spirit abounds and she, the staff and governors make a strong team focused upon improvement. They are dedicated to doing their best for each individual pupil. Despite a previous dip in standards due to staffing and buildings difficulties there has been good improvement since the previous inspection. Standards have continued to rise over the last three years. The schools' self-evaluation is accurate and is a good basis for their

development plan which identifies priorities clearly. Pupils' progress is rigorously tracked and any new programmes or actions are carefully monitored to gauge the impact upon achievement and standards. This is evident in the newly implemented programmes to raise standards in writing which are beginning to help more able pupils to reach the higher Level 5 in English. However, pupils do not have enough individual knowledge of what is required to help them improve. The school has identified the need to provide more opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills but plans are still in their infancy. Governors discharge their responsibilities well and parents are very supportive of the school.

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## Annex A

## 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?	1
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>	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	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.

## Annex A

**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	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

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

- 27 April 2007 Dear Children, Blackwater Community Primary School, North Hill, Blackwater, Cornwall, TR4 8ES Thank you very much for such a friendly welcome when we came to visit your school. We really enjoyed spending time with you and talking to you. Your parents told us that they think Blackwater is a good school and we agree with them. These are some of the best things we found:
- You make good progress at school and reach high standards by the time you leave.
- Your school has a real family feel. You enjoy coming to school and get on very well together.
- You are taught well and your teachers plan your lessons carefully to help you learn. Those of you who find learning difficult receive lots of help.
- You behave well and have a good attitude towards your school work.
- You are very well cared for and you told us that you feel safe and happy in school.
- Your headteacher, teachers and helpers and the school governors lead your school very well. Your school knows what it needs to do next, and we have asked your teachers to do these two things to make your learning even better:
- We have asked your teachers to make sure that you practise and use your writing skills in different subjects as well as in English.
- We have asked them to make sure that each one of you knows very clearly how to recognise what you need to do to improve your work. With best wishes, Anna Sketchley Lead Inspector