

# Blackwell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112506
<b>Local Authority</b>	DERBYSHIRE
<b>Inspection number</b>	289301
<b>Inspection dates</b>	26–27 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Hall

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Brian George
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Joy Thompson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	13 January 2003
<b>School address</b>	Primrose Hill Blackwell Alfreton Derbyshire DE55 5JG
<b>Telephone number</b>	01773 811281
<b>Fax number</b>	01773 813722

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is an average size primary school serving a former mining community in Derbyshire. While there are pockets of disadvantage in the area the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The large majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils of statutory school age speaking English as an additional language. The proportion with learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average as is the number with a statement for their needs. The headteacher took up post less than two years ago. The school has an initial award from the Derbyshire Anti Bullying Commitment.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with Section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to standards and achievement especially in writing.

In recent years standards have been inconsistent. Pupils' weak skills in reading and poor progress in writing have affected achievement in other subjects. This was recognised by the local authority which has put in place a programme of intensive support. This is starting to make a difference and following many necessary changes the school now has satisfactory capacity to make further improvement.

Pupils enter the nursery with skills that are slightly below what is expected, especially in the key area of communication, language and literacy. Pupils in the Foundation Stage make satisfactory overall progress but when they enter Year 1, their skills in speaking and listening, reading and writing are generally below expectations. In 2006 teacher assessments, standards in Year 2 were below average and boys did not do well. In Year 6 national tests, standards were very low and girls did not do well. Information shows that the progress pupils made between the ages of seven and eleven was very limited. This picture is beginning to change. Early information from unvalidated national tests and assessments indicates that standards have risen and are close to last year's national averages. However, because of the gaps in their learning pupils do not yet achieve all they are capable of, which does not help them prepare well enough for their future. The school provides unsatisfactory value for money.

The personal development of pupils is satisfactory overall. The majority behave well and have positive attitudes to learning. However, the behaviour of a minority of older boys is poor. This is thought by many parents to be a major concern but is something the school is taking a firm stance on and records show behaviour is improving. Pupils enjoy practical activities. Most have a satisfactory understanding of how to ensure they and their friends stay safe, including at playtimes. Pupils recognise the benefits of exercise but there is much to do to convince them of the benefits of a healthy diet in snacks and packed lunches.

The care, guidance and support of pupils are satisfactory. Teaching and learning are now satisfactory and have improved in the current year because of the better level of challenge in most tasks. However, while staff make reasonable use of assessment information to challenge pupils, this is not secure and more could be expected in some activities, including from those of higher ability. The curriculum is satisfactory and there is a reasonable range of activities that enrich learning.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is working to good effect to identify where further improvements need to be made. Staff are generally backing the many recent changes. Governance is satisfactory. There are sound procedures to monitor the work of the school, however subject leaders are not well informed enough to help identify the areas for further improvement.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards, especially in writing, by ensuring all pupils make good progress in developing the skills to write with confidence.

- Make full and effective use of assessment information so that teaching is consistently challenging enough for all pupils.
- Ensure that staff, and where appropriate governors, rigorously implement the systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of actions taken to bring about whole-school improvement.
- Improve the behaviour of pupils through consistently applying the school's behaviour policy.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils enter the school with a range of early learning experiences, and with skills and knowledge which overall are slightly below expectations for their age. Speaking and listening skills are often restricted and many pupils have a limited vocabulary. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is also constrained by their experiences. Whilst most make satisfactory progress, they enter Year 1 with skills that are slightly below average.

In 2006, the standards attained by pupils in Year 2 were below the national average in reading, and especially in writing and mathematics. Few pupils attained standards above the average. In Year 6 standards were exceptionally low. While pupils with learning difficulties achieved satisfactorily, fewer average and higher attaining pupils achieved either the expected levels or the higher levels in English, mathematics and science. In a reverse of the Key Stage 1 situation girls did less well than boys. Information indicates the Year 6 pupils had done quite well in Key Stage 1 assessments, but these pupils made little or no progress in some years in Key Stage 2 and the value added to their earlier achievements was amongst the lowest in the country. Because of this, the local authority started to provide a programme of intensive support for the school. During this current year there has been an improvement in the rate of progress pupils make. Early indications from the 2007 national tests indicate that standards have risen to close to the picture seen nationally last year. The majority of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities, now make satisfactory progress. However, because of the gaps in their previous learning pupils do not yet achieve all they can. While skills in several subjects are still limited, achievement in writing is the weakest area. This affects progress in other subjects and is rightly recognised by the school as the main priority for improvement.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are satisfactory as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Most pupils take pride in being part of the school community and look after their friends and the environment well. Pupils generally demonstrate the importance of keeping safe and healthy. Due to the school's effective measures, attendance has improved and is now satisfactory. Most pupils enjoy coming to school and many demonstrate positive attitudes. However, the very low level of literacy and numeracy skills of those leaving the school mean that too few are properly equipped for their future. The school has recently introduced a system to improve behaviour. Whilst this has not been welcomed by all pupils and therefore some parents, they are clear about the rewards and sanctions to be applied and this strong stance is having a positive impact. However, although conduct has improved, there is still a minority of older boys who display unsatisfactory standards of behaviour.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. Staff ensure all pupils know what they are expected to do and learn in lessons. Where teaching is most effective, staff plan activities that include opportunities for pupils to discuss their ideas with a partner, and review what has worked well at the end of lessons. However, in other activities staff miss opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills further. Most staff manage the behaviour of pupils at least satisfactorily so lessons are conducted in a purposeful manner. The planning of activities for groups of pupils who make different rates of progress is improving, although at times this is still weak and leads to inadequate learning. While staff make growing use of information from checks of pupil progress, this could be used even more consistently to challenge all groups of pupils, particularly those of higher attainment.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory curriculum. The local authority has been providing an intensive programme of support and this is having a positive impact on curriculum planning. There is a growing emphasis on literacy and numeracy, although more work remains to be done. For instance, there is too much use of work sheets and this limits the opportunity for pupils to develop skills in recording their own ideas and writing in depth. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. They enjoy a range of visits and after school activities which extend learning. While curriculum plans are in place they are not rigorously monitored to assess their impact. Furthermore, planning does not consistently reflect the varying learning needs of pupils, with the result that inadequate progress is made by some. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is adequate, and they make satisfactory and sometimes good progress in their learning when they are well supported.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. Procedures to ensure pupils' health, well-being and safety, including child protection procedures and checks of those who help in school, are securely in place. Staff know pupils well and there are strengths in the pastoral care of pupils, as illustrated by the warmth shown to a tearful child at lunchtime. Pupils with learning difficulties and those demonstrating challenging behaviour are benefitting from additional support. This includes attending a nurture group or pupil referral unit, where appropriate. Pupils' progress is now tracked and recorded, so that extra support can be provided to help them catch up when they fall behind. This has recently contributed to improved progress for some pupils. The use of target setting is developing, but is not yet consistently in use across the school.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory overall. The headteacher has a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in provision. She has worked to growing effect with the deputy headteacher to develop the focus on raising standards through more consistent approaches. This new vision for the school is reflected in the imminent re-organisation of the work of the nursery and reception classes into a Foundation Stage and the development of the role of literacy leader by a recently appointed, but very experienced, teacher. The school has also extended the ways in which staff check and track the progress pupils make. Nevertheless, there is room to organise this better so that all staff use the information to plan challenging work for different groups of pupils. There are satisfactory procedures to monitor and evaluate the quality of provision across the school. However, some of this work has lacked rigour and not all coordinators have a good grasp of what still remains to be improved. Governance of the school is broadly satisfactory although some governors are not well enough informed of standards, or the improvement still necessary across the school.

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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>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
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	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
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	3
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	4

### 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.

## 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	4
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?	Yes

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

28 June 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of Blackwell Primary School, Alfreton, Derbyshire, DE55 5JG

Thank you very much for the way you looked after us and helped us when we visited your school. You told us that most of you enjoy school and that staff take good care of you when you need a bit of help.

These are some of the best things about your school.

- You have good relationships with each other and the adults around you.
- Most of you behave well and you like how behaviour is improving.
- Many of you have pride in your school and look after it well.
- You enjoy practical activities and active playtimes.
- The headteacher has good ideas for improving the school and ensures you are cared for well.

These are areas that we think could be improved

- Your work in English should be better than it is, so we've asked your teachers to help you even more, especially with your writing.
- We would like your teachers to use all the information they have about your progress to make sure your work is a bit harder.
- We want your headteacher, staff and the governors to check more carefully to see what else needs to be improved.
- We would like staff to help you even more to understand how to behave in and around school.

Your school will be visited again by an inspector to check on the school's progress. To help, you could all try even harder in lessons and make sure you are always on your best behaviour. We would like to wish you every success in your future education and encourage you to think of the benefits of a healthy diet.

Yours sincerely

Sue Hall

Lead inspector