



# Bligh Junior School

## Inspection Report

---

**Unique Reference Number** 118470  
**Local Authority** Medway  
**Inspection number** 291142  
**Inspection dates** 5–6 December 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Carole Skinner

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Bligh Way
<b>School category</b>	Community		Strood
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11		Rochester ME2 2XJ
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01634 718802
<b>Number on roll (school)</b>	248	<b>Fax number</b>	01634 291107
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair</b>	Sharon Alimo
		<b>Headteacher</b>	Robin John Kingman
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 February 2003		

---

<b>Age group</b> 7–11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 5–6 December 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 291142
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

---

---

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## **Introduction**

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## **Description of the school**

The school is situated in an area of significant deprivation. Most of the pupils are of White British heritage. A few come from minority ethnic backgrounds but almost all speak English as their first language. Attainment on entry to the school is similar to the national average, but a third of the pupils have learning difficulties or disabilities and this is above average. In common with many other local schools, the number of pupils on roll is declining. It has dropped by almost 100 since the last inspection.

## **Key for inspection grades**

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is an improving school which provides a satisfactory standard of education for its pupils. It has faced a number of challenges in recent years, including a major building programme, difficulties with recruiting staff and governors and the budget constraints resulting from a steady drop in numbers. Standards remained stubbornly below average for three years following the last inspection and, historically, pupils have not made enough progress. The school has now turned a corner and there is a renewed sense of optimism and determination amongst the now stable staff. Standards are rising; 2006 saw the school's highest ever results in English and pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Standards are just above average in English, average in mathematics and below average in science. Problem solving skills are the weaker aspect in mathematics and investigative skills in science, particularly for the more able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because teachers give them work that meets their widely differing needs.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and improving. It is consistently good in Year 6. The proportion of good teaching is steadily increasing in other year groups, especially in English and mathematics. This is because the school has focused its attention on implementing new teaching strategies to raise standards in these subjects. The satisfactory curriculum is currently being refined to create more effective links between different subjects. New procedures for tracking pupils' progress towards challenging targets throughout each year are beginning to accelerate progress for many pupils, especially in writing where they were first introduced. In mathematics and science, they are not fully effective in ensuring that all pupils are given work that challenges and extends them.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. They enjoy learning, work hard in lessons and generally behave well. They do not always take enough responsibility or initiative in day-to-day school life. Satisfactory guidance and support underpin pupils' academic development, and good care and support ensures their safety and well-being. The 'Healthy Schools' initiative is successfully encouraging pupils to eat healthy snacks and meals and take plenty of exercise.

The satisfactory leadership and management are showing signs of improvement. Several recent initiatives to improve teaching, learning and the curriculum are beginning to bear fruit. The headteacher has created a strong team of year group and subject leaders with considerable expertise and high expectations for the school. The impact of their work is now becoming evident. The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Staff and governors know exactly where improvement is needed and what needs to be done, but this is not adequately reflected in the school improvement plan. This is not a sufficiently useful working document to assist governors in checking how well the school is doing.

## What the school should do to improve further

- Improve pupils' problem-solving skills in mathematics and their skills in scientific investigation, particularly of the more able.
- Make consistent and rigorous use of assessment and tracking data to ensure that all pupils are given suitably challenging work in lessons.
- Sharpen the school improvement plan to provide a clear agenda for the future strategic development of the school with clear targets for measuring its success.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

The school is gradually overcoming a legacy of underachievement which resulted from inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and assessment. Pupils' achievement is now satisfactory. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they are given appropriate support in lessons. Standards are rising steadily in response to recent improvements and are now broadly in line with those in similar schools nationally. Pupils do best in English because good teaching strategies are embedded throughout the school. Standards in writing have improved enormously because teachers show pupils how to improve their writing by using more exciting words and better sentence structures. Speaking and listening skills are developing well because of a greater emphasis on drama and discussion. Pupils are doing much better in mathematics than they were a year ago because teachers are less reliant on text books. They place far greater emphasis on encouraging pupils to work things out mentally and explain how they did it. A number of pupils still have difficulty in using their mathematical knowledge to solve problems. Science remains the weakest subject because too few pupils have a really good understanding of how to devise and carry out investigations and how to interpret their findings.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Pupils enjoy school. They are enthusiastic about most aspects of school life and are keen to contribute in lessons. Most behave well and occasional instances of unacceptable behaviour are handled firmly. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is satisfactory. They have an adequate understanding of their rights and responsibilities but do not always show initiative or express their views confidently. Their cultural development is good and is developed well through the school's links with India and Pakistan and the 'East Meets West' club. Most pupils respond positively to the opportunities they are given to play an active role within the school and wider communities, such as representing their class on the school council and acting as 'peer mediators'. Their involvement in decision-making and the day-to-day running of the school is more limited. Enterprise projects for Year 6 pupils help to improve their financial awareness but some pupils still struggle when faced with mathematical problems.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

There is enough good practice in each year group to sustain continued improvement. High quality teaching in Year 6 helps pupils to make up lost ground and to reach the standards expected by the time they leave. There is some variation in other year groups as teachers do not always have high enough expectations of different groups of pupils. As a result, the work that is planned for the more able pupils does not make enough demands on them. This is mainly because the new assessment and tracking systems are not being used to their full effect. There are inconsistencies in the way teachers mark pupils' work. Some show pupils clearly what they need to do to improve, while others simply add ticks and brief compliments. Brisk question and answer sessions are a good feature in most lessons. These extend pupils' speaking and listening skills and enable teachers to correct misunderstandings. Pupils with learning difficulties are given suitable support in lessons to ensure they understand what is expected of them.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is evolving and becoming more responsive to pupils' differing needs, although it does not always provide sufficient challenge for the more able pupils. Work is adapted appropriately to meet the needs of pupils with learning difficulties. The school has rightly identified a need to place greater emphasis on problem-solving in mathematics and on scientific investigation. There have been significant improvements in the provision for information and communication technology (ICT) since the installation of a 30-station computer suite. The school is now seeking ways to make better use of ICT to enhance learning in other subjects. Teachers are beginning to find more interesting ways of developing pupils' writing skills through other subjects. There was a splendid example in Year 6 where pupils wrote a newspaper report about the Blitz, having first 'experienced' it through drama and visual images. The curriculum is enriched by a good variety of clubs, visits, visitors and links with other schools. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to take part in vigorous physical activities.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The main reason why pupils underachieved in the past was a lack of rigour in setting challenging targets for them and checking their progress at regular intervals throughout each year. This is now happening but is a recent innovation and is not fully effective in ensuring good progress for every pupil. Pupils are not sufficiently involved in setting and reviewing their own targets. Good relationships between pupils and adults help to create a supportive atmosphere where pupils feel safe and well cared for. There is a strong focus on promoting healthy eating and taking regular exercise through initiatives such as the 'Walking Bus' and the 'Healthy Schools' project. The 'Oasis'

lunchtime club provides a welcome haven for pupils who prefer a quieter alternative to the playground. Good links with external agencies provide valuable support for pupils with learning and behavioural difficulties.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has guided the school with a steady hand through the ups and downs of the past few years. He has overseen significant improvements in the premises and in the provision for ICT as well as dealing with the problems presented by a falling roll and reduced budget. Weaknesses in teaching, learning and pupils' achievement have proved more difficult to overcome. Improvement has been slow but several key factors have finally come together to create the necessary momentum for more rapid improvement. Senior managers now have clearly defined responsibilities and considerable expertise which they share readily with colleagues. Teachers are receptive to new ideas and initiatives and are keen to improve their own practice. Subject leaders play an increasingly important role in monitoring provision and driving up standards. Teaching assistants have received additional training to enhance their support for pupils with learning difficulties.

Staff and governors have identified the right priorities for improvement and are taking action to tackle them but these are not adequately reflected in the school improvement plan. It only covers the current academic year and gives too little information about what steps will be taken to tackle the identified shortcomings. It gives no indication of how governors are to evaluate how well the school is doing.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**



## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	<b>School Overall</b>
---	-----------------------

### 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?	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	2
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 for your help when we visited your school. We enjoyed meeting you and sitting in on some of your lessons. We think your school is giving you a satisfactory education and that it is improving all the time. Here are some of the good things, and some that need to improve:

- Many of you have not made as much progress as you should have done as you moved through the school. Now you are making satisfactory progress and achieving the standards you should be reaching by the time you leave the school.
- This is because all of the teaching is at least satisfactory and some of it is good. You are doing best in English (we saw some really good writing in Year 6), but not quite as well in mathematics. This is because you need to get better at problem-solving. You also need to do quite a bit better in science, especially in learning how to plan investigations and interpret your findings. We have asked your school to help you improve in these subjects.
- Now that the school has given you targets and the teachers are checking your progress more often, we have asked them to make sure this is done really well so you are all given work that is hard enough for you in every lesson.
- The teachers look after you well and make sure you are safe. We were pleased to see that you are doing well in keeping fit and healthy. You do not always get the chance to take enough responsibility or use your own initiative.
- The way the school is run is satisfactory, but it is getting better all the time. One thing that we have asked the staff and governors to do is improve the plans that are written to show how the school is going to develop in the future. They need to be clearer and have some targets that governors can check to make sure they have been achieved.

You can help your school to improve by continuing to work hard and perhaps come up with some of your own ideas about how to make it even better.