

# Blenheim Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	107884
<b>Local Authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	309528
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 April 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Swallow

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	171
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Sam Zaghloul
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Moo Duffy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 March 2004
<b>School address</b>	Lofthouse Place Leeds West Yorkshire LS2 9EX
<b>Telephone number</b>	0113 2930808
<b>Fax number</b>	0113 2930808

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<b>Age group</b>	3–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Blenheim is a smaller than average primary school in the inner city of Leeds. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone a major reduction in staffing, due to falling pupil numbers, and a new headteacher has been appointed. The vast majority of pupils come from minority ethnic groups representing over 30 different nationalities. Over half the children have little or no English when they join the school. Many more join and leave the school at different times than is seen in most primary schools. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above the national average. The proportion identified as having learning difficulties and/or disabilities, is below average. The school holds the Healthy School award and Active Mark accreditation.

## 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, 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 the Foundation Stage.

The Nursery and Reception classes give children an inadequate start to their education. Too many children make insufficient progress. Many have weak speaking, reading, listening and mathematical skills on entry to the school and, as a result of limited progress, these skills remain too low on entry to Year 1. Staff do not make sufficient use of assessment to involve children in purposeful activities to challenge and develop their learning. Teaching is insufficiently stimulating to support and extend children's play effectively.

Achievement is satisfactory across Years 1 to 6. Most children attain well below average standards in English and mathematics by the time they leave school, but average standards in science. Although rates of progress are improving, particularly in Years 1 to 2, this is not consistent across the rest of the school; progress has been uneven in reading, writing and mathematics in Years 3 to 6.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 1 to 6, and there is some good practice, but this is not consistent. Several teachers are new to the school, but have already established positive relationships with, and appropriate expectations of, their pupils. Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory; they show a growing interest in their lessons. Enhanced opportunities for pupils to work independently to improve their speaking and listening skills, and to think for themselves, are good features in some classes. Marking of work is inconsistent and does not always inform pupils how to improve. The curriculum is satisfactory and offers a suitable range of cultural and sporting opportunities.

Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Most attend school regularly and say they enjoy their lessons. In particular, they show a good understanding of how to keep healthy. They derive pleasure from the responsibilities they are given, although are not yet prepared adequately for later life because of their low levels of literacy and numeracy. The school places appropriate emphasis on pupils' pastoral care. Parents say that staff are very caring and supportive and are always ready to go the extra mile. Academic guidance is at an early stage of development. The school knows that assessment information is not yet being used consistently well by teachers to enable all pupils to build carefully on what they know and understand.

Following a period of significant instability in the school, the headteacher now provides satisfactory leadership and has introduced a range of measures designed to raise achievement. These are beginning to take effect. Senior leaders are fully involved in the drive to secure improvement. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and has identified the right priorities to move the school forward. For example, strategies are already in place to improve provision in the Foundation Stage, although these have not had sufficient impact. Governors are increasingly involved in checking how well the school is doing. All this means that leadership and management are satisfactory, and that the school has satisfactory capacity to improve.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 4

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is well below the level typical for their age. Relationships are satisfactory and the care provided keeps children safe. However, most children do not make the progress of which they are capable and provision in the Foundation Stage is therefore judged as inadequate. Routines and organisation do not facilitate good learning. 'Free flow' activities are not planned well enough to provide a clear focus or direction to help children achieve well. Classroom displays do not provide sufficient models of written English and adults are often not used to best effect. Opportunities to develop key language skills, especially for the many children for whom English is an additional language, are missed. The environment lacks the excitement and stimulus to help motivate and enthuse children. Assessments are not precise enough to enable teachers to build carefully on what children know and understand. As a result, children are sometimes occupied rather than challenged, and do not always behave well. Consequently their achievement is inadequate.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the quality of work in the Foundation Stage to enable all children to achieve well.
- Increase the rates of progress made by all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics, especially across Years 3 to 6.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning so that it is consistently good or better throughout the school.
- Improve the quality of marking so that pupils have a better understanding of how well they are doing and how to improve their work.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 3

Pupils enter Year 1 with very low starting points in reading, writing and mathematics. By the time they leave Year 6, their standards have improved. Standards in English and mathematics are well below average, and are broadly average in science. This represents broadly satisfactory progress overall. Pupils' progress has increased across Years 1 and 2, and is now good, largely due to improvements in teaching and learning. Progress across Years 3 to 6 has been uneven; recent improvements in teaching are making a difference and the school's current assessments show a growing number of pupils making better progress in Key Stage 2. Specific strategies to improve pupils' writing and mathematical skills are beginning to take effect. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of English language acquisition make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 3

Good healthy meal options, excellent outdoor facilities and daily 'Wake Up and Shake Up' sessions help pupils develop healthy lifestyles and explain why the school has achieved the Healthy School Award. Most children enjoy school and say that it is a safe place to learn, and that 'problems are always fixed'. Behaviour has improved and is satisfactory, although a small number of pupils occasionally behave inappropriately. Pupils say that when bullying occurs it is dealt with effectively. The school does much to promote good attendance. Attendance levels are rising and are now close to the national average. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development is satisfactory. The school celebrates very well the wide cultural diversity of its pupils. The school council gives pupils good experience of working together. Its members are proud of the anti-bullying policy they compiled and which has the support of the whole school community. However, pupils' low literacy and numeracy skills hamper their preparation for the workplace and later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, with some good lessons. The school is working hard to improve teaching and learning, and the proportion of good lessons is rising. In these lessons activities are stimulating and engaging. Resources are well-chosen and help pupils to work with increasing independence and confidence. Effective questioning prompts pupils to think for themselves. For example, in a Year 4/5 literacy lesson, pupils reviewed the quality of reports of their peers; in a Year 1 lesson, pupils were inspired to talk through their ideas for a fantasy story by thought-provoking music and images. In these good lessons pupils enjoy their learning, know how well they are doing and feel challenged to do their best. In some lessons, pupils' learning is less effective, because activities are not demanding enough and teachers do not check rigorously how well they are doing. Not all pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) regularly to develop effective communication and research skills. Suitable tasks and support from teaching assistants are appropriate to the individual needs of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those at an early stage of English language acquisition.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's curriculum reflects the cultural diversity of its learners and caters satisfactorily for the many pupils for whom English is a second language. For example, it gives much emphasis in Years 1 to 6 to speaking and listening, and to topics that are particularly accessible for pupils. However, it has not yet introduced a modern foreign language to add further variety. ICT is not used widely enough to support work across all subjects. Steel band visits enrich music and art work is developing in quality and variety. Teachers are starting to link subjects together to make learning more interesting. However, work is not always matched well enough to pupils' needs to enable them to make good progress. Visits, such as to a local farm, and visitors, such as theatre groups, help to bring learning to life and broaden pupils' horizons. Pupils benefit from a range of clubs, including break-dancing and 'mad science'. As well as adding to their enjoyment of learning, these rich experiences help to develop healthy and varied lifestyles.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 3**

Staff have a high concern for the welfare of their pupils. As a result, pupils say they always have someone to turn to. The government's requirements for safeguarding pupils are met. The school has effective policies for promoting race equality. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is sound because their needs are assessed and they receive appropriate tasks and support. All staff work hard to ensure that the many pupils for whom English is an additional language are well supported. This enables them to settle quickly into

school life and make the same progress as their classmates. The Parents' Support Adviser helps to ensure effective communication with parents who are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. Academic guidance is improving. Most pupils have targets to help steer their learning. Pupils' progress is tracked increasingly carefully so that they can be given extra support if needed. However, the quality of teachers' marking is inconsistent. It usually acknowledges effort and achievement, but does not always help pupils to reach the next step in their learning.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The headteacher has led the school well through an unsettling period. She has established a very clear direction for the work of the school which focuses on raising achievement. Teachers speak highly of the way she gains the support of staff and encourages them to seek and share good practice. The senior leadership team is supportive of the headteacher's drive to ensure that all pupils achieve their potential. This has started to make an effective contribution to the school's arrangements for checking how well pupils are learning. Refined tracking procedures provide a clear picture of pupils' progress across Years 1 to 6, highlighting those who are not achieving as well as they can. Self-evaluation is largely accurate and strategies are in place to boost pupils' performance in reading, writing and mathematics. Many of these approaches are too new to show their full effect. The school recognises that leadership and provision in the Foundation Stage are inadequate, and that strategies to improve provision have had too little impact. Governors are supportive of the school and largely fulfil their responsibilities. Processes are now in place to enable them to feel more confident in understanding the school's strengths and areas for development, and in holding staff to account. As a result of the inadequate provision of the Foundation Stage, the school provides inadequate value for money.

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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	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?	4
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	4
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	3
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	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

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?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	4
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**

Inspection of Blenheim Primary School, Leeds, LS2 9EX

As you know, inspectors visited your school recently. We enjoyed joining your lessons and were very interested to hear about all the things you do and what you thought about your school. We were particularly impressed by the School Council and how conscientiously Council representatives carry out their roles. You all have a really good understanding of the importance of a healthy lifestyle and the way you join in the morning 'Wake up and Shake up' routine is really refreshing.

Your behaviour in lessons and around school is satisfactory. At times some of you do not cooperate as well as you might with your friends and adults. You say that you enjoy your lessons, for the most part, and your attendance is certainly improving. Well done! Your school takes care of you and you told us that you feel that it is a safe place in which to learn and play.

We found some things in your school need significant improvement and so we have given it a 'Notice to Improve'. Inspectors will visit your school again in six to eight months time to check on how well it is doing. In order to make things better we have asked your teachers to:

- improve teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage so that you make better progress
- help you to do better in your reading, writing and mathematics, and make sure that you all do as well as you possibly can, especially those of you in Years 3 to 6
- plan their lessons to make them all effective
- make sure they all mark your work in a way that helps you improve what you do.

You can help by working extra hard and making sure you know what the teachers are asking you to do to reach your targets. Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. We really do hope that you continue to enjoy your time at Blenheim.