

Blackhorse Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109121
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	309886
Inspection dates	3–4 December 2007
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	288
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jo Bezzant
Headteacher	Deborah Frazer
Date of previous school inspection	30 June 2003
School address	Blackhorse Lane Emersons Green Bristol BS16 6TR
Telephone number	01454 866570
Fax number	01454 866571

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blackhorse is a larger than average primary school. About 93% of the pupils come from a White British background. There is a below average proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language and very few of these are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above average. The school moved into new accommodation in 2004. Blackhorse also provides a 20-pupil Resource Base for those with social and communication difficulties. Pupils in the Base come from the school's catchment area and beyond. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. The number of pupils who join the school, other than at the normal starting point, is higher than average.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The overall effectiveness of Blackhorse Primary School is satisfactory. There are a number of good features to its work. Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because of the effective care, guidance and support provided. Their academic achievement is satisfactory. The headteacher and senior leaders have successfully seen the school through changes to accommodation. With her staff, the headteacher has created a very welcoming and positive school climate which is much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Parents hold the school in high regard and give it good support. Pupil numbers are increasing. Leadership roles and responsibilities have been recently shared more widely. New leaders are developing well and are becoming increasingly more effective in monitoring and improving their areas of responsibility. Recent improvements to the Foundation Stage mean that children are now getting off to a good start in Reception. There have also been good improvements to the curriculum. The school is now in a solid position to raise pupils' achievement further and this is where school leaders are focusing their attention. They are aware that there is more to do before teaching and pupil achievement are consistently good. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils' personal development is a clear strength of the school. Pupils enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance and their keen participation in activities. Pupils are friendly and polite and relate very well to others. At Blackhorse, pupils are particularly good at supporting and helping their fellow pupils. Behaviour is consistently good in lessons and around the school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and have a clear understanding of the importance of healthy eating, keeping safe and taking regular exercise. They readily take on responsibilities and make good contributions to the local and wider community. Pupils enjoy the good range of additional activities that enrich the curriculum. The school works well with a range of external agencies to provide well-targeted support for any pupils who need extra help. Satisfactory teaching and learning and a sound curriculum enable pupils to make satisfactory progress overall. Provision in the Resource Base is good and pupils make good progress. Across the school, teachers have good relationships with their pupils. Instructions, questioning and explanations promote learning well. Pupils make good progress when they are challenged, and tasks are well matched to their abilities. However, this good practice is not consistent across the school. A few lessons are too teacher-directed and the pace of learning can decline. For example, when teachers talk too much, pupils are not sufficiently involved in their own learning. Standards by the end of Year 2 are normally below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is taking positive steps to raise achievement in Years 1 and 2 but these changes are too recent to have had a full impact on raising standards. Standards by the end of Year 6 are usually average. National tests results in 2007 dipped to exceptionally low levels, particularly in English. This year group had an unusually high proportion of pupils with learning difficulties.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children enter the Reception with attainment below that expected at this stage. Provision has improved recently and is now good. Good teaching and an interesting curriculum give children in Reception a good start. Children are enthusiastic about their learning and make good gains in all areas of learning. Outdoor learning equipment and facilities are limited but there are plans to improve these.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the rate of pupils' progress from Year 1 to Year 6 so that pupils attain higher standards.
- Improve the consistency of teaching by ensuring that all lessons are suitably challenging, maintain a brisk pace and involve pupils fully in their learning. A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Achievement is satisfactory overall. Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and most attain the expected levels in all areas of learning by the end of Reception. Standards by the end of Year 2 are usually below average in reading, writing and mathematics. The school is increasing the range of strategies to develop literacy and numeracy skills in Years 1 and 2 but these initiatives are recent. There are early signs that this action is having a positive impact on pupils' progress but it is too soon to see the longer-term effect on standards. Pupils at an early stage of learning English receive good support and suitable learning activities. They make good gains in acquiring English. National tests for Year 6 in 2007 indicated that standards were exceptionally low, particularly in English. Whilst pupils had made good progress in science, they had not made sufficient progress in English. Assessment and monitoring in the current Year 6 indicate that pupils are making better progress and that standards in the current Year 6 are broadly average. Pupils in the Resource Base make good progress because of effective teaching and support. One parent remarked, 'My child has made great progress in the Resource Base and has settled well'.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are enthusiastic about school and show positive attitudes to learning. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with the moral and social aspects being particularly strong. Clear and consistent expectations by staff and positive relationships lead to consistently good conduct. Pupils form very good relationships with adults and amongst themselves. They work well collaboratively in a range of activities. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and possess a good understanding of the importance of healthy diets and taking regular exercise. They thrive on additional responsibilities. Those on the school council take their responsibilities seriously and have contributed to the formulation of school rules and expectations. The raising of funds for a variety of charities such as Children in Need contributes to the wider community. Pupils are reasonably well prepared for their future. They have welldeveloped personal and social skills and a sound base of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory, with examples of good practice. Teaching is consistently good in Reception and in the Resource Base. Across the school, teachers have established positive relationships with pupils. Teachers' instructions and explanations are clear and informative. Pupils are attentive and respond well to their teachers' instructions and effective questioning. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss their work in pairs and this develops their speaking and listening skills well. When teachers use assessment information effectively, tasks are well matched to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are suitably challenged and they make good gains in their learning. In a few lessons, the level of challenge is not appropriate to all pupils' needs. Not all lessons proceed at a brisk pace and the rate of learning slows. Overlong introductions by teachers can mean that pupils are not sufficiently involved in their learning. Teaching assistants are effectively deployed and contribute well to learning, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties or at an early stage of learning English.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum promotes pupils' personal development well and enables them to make satisfactory progress. The planning of the curriculum has improved since the previous inspection. Good emphasis has been placed on the development of language, literacy skills and numeracy skills. However, opportunities for pupils to apply and develop literacy and numeracy skills in a range of subjects are not fully exploited. There is good provision for pupils in the Resource Base but outdoor learning opportunities are limited. Across the school, healthy lifestyles and personal safety are promoted well. A good range of additional activities contributes to pupils' enjoyment and interests. Popular clubs include art, choir, chess, French, football, ICT, tennis, recorders and Spanish. Visits and visitors enhance pupils' learning. A successful residential visit to an outdoor centre in Wales for Year 6 provides new activities such as climbing and kayaking as well as building pupils' personal and team-building skills.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Strong pastoral care and support contribute well to pupils' personal development. Procedures to ensure pupils' protection and safety are effective so pupils are safe and secure at school. Staff know the pupils well and have established very good relationships with them and their parents. Parents say, 'Teachers and the staff are very approachable'. Effective induction arrangements enable children in Reception and other new arrivals to settle quickly. Good support is provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Systems for assessing and tracking pupils' attainment and progress are effective. Assessment information is usually used well to plan teaching. Assessment is now being used effectively to set individual learning targets in English and mathematics. Consequently, pupils know what they are working towards to improve.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management have been effective in providing effective care, guidance and support and in promoting pupils' good personal development. Senior staff have successfully managed the change to the new site. The Resource Base is very well led and managed and this leads to effective provision and good progress for pupils. The school has forged a strong partnership with parents. Parents give good support and are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. The headteacher, the school's positive atmosphere, and the approachability of the staff all come in for praise. Typical parental comments from the survey included: 'The atmosphere of the school is warm and friendly' and 'The headteacher and staff maintain a high level of visibility which ensure they are always approachable'. Self-evaluation is satisfactory. Senior staff have identified the right priorities for improvement. New leaders are developing their role in terms of monitoring and evaluating provision and standards. The need to raise achievement particularly in Years 1 and 2 has been identified and positive action is being taken but it is too soon to see the full impact on standards. Challenging targets are set as part of the school's drive to raise achievement and standards. Leaders are aware that there is more to do to ensure that teaching is consistently good. Governors are committed and supportive. New governors are developing their role and acquiring a clear understanding of the school's performance.

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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?	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	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	3

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?	2

¹ 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

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	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 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	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

- 6 December 2007 Dear Pupils Inspection of Blackhorse Primary School, Bristol, BS16 6TR
Thank you so much for welcoming us into your school and showing us your work. We enjoyed our visit and would like to tell you what we found out. Blackhorse is a satisfactory school with good features. These are strengths of the school:
 - you clearly enjoy school and take part in activities with great enthusiasm
 - the school is a friendly and pleasant place to be
 - children in Reception get off to a good start
 - pupils in the Resource Base make good progress
 - an interesting range of additional activities is provided for you
 - you are friendly and polite and get on very well with other pupils and adults
 - your behaviour is good in lessons and around the school
 - you show a clear understanding of how to be fit and healthy
 - staff know you very well; they take good care of you and give you good support
 - your parents are very pleased with the care and education provided. The following things would help your school to improve further, and we have asked your headteacher and senior staff to ensure that the improvements continue:
 - some of you could make even more progress in English and mathematics
 - some of the teaching could challenge and involve you in your learning more; this would help you to make more progress. Finally, thank you once again for all your help. We wish you all the best for the future. With kind regards Derek Watts Lead Inspector



6 December 2007

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With kind regards

Derek Watts
Lead Inspector