

# Blean Primary School

Inspection report - amended

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118356
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	312905
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 September 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Helen Hutchings

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	465
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stephen Hambrook
<b>Headteacher</b>	Keith Oliver
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 October 2002
<b>School address</b>	Whitstable Road Blean Canterbury CT2 9ED
<b>Telephone number</b>	01227 471254
<b>Fax number</b>	01227 787247

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<b>Age group</b>	4-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 September 2007
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## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report amended due to factual inaccuracy

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

The school is larger than most primary schools. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds are at an early stage of learning to speak English. Many pupils attend the breakfast or after-school clubs. The school holds the Artsmark Gold Award and the Department of Transport Platinum Award for its Walking Bus scheme.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

Blean Primary is a good school, with some outstanding features. It provides pupils with a happy, caring and harmonious learning environment. Parents are overwhelmingly in support of the school's work. This one comment summarises the views of many: 'The school is a wonderful place for our children.' A few parents raised their concern about the large class sizes. The school provides pupils with a range of teaching in smaller groups and inspectors found no evidence to indicate that pupils are disadvantaged by class size.

Pupils achieve well academically. All groups of pupils make good progress from the time they join Reception so that the school's overall performance in the national tests at the end of Years 2 and 6 is significantly above national averages. Pupils now have a much stronger understanding of how they learn and a good general awareness of the quality of their work. However, some marking is not sufficiently detailed to show them exactly what they have to do to improve further. The curriculum interests pupils and makes learning fun. This leads to a busy and purposeful ethos in classrooms. However, on occasions, tasks given to pupils in lessons do not always give them enough challenge, and this is particularly evident in mathematics.

The school is exceptionally effective in developing pupils' personal qualities. Pupils work very well as individuals, within small groups and as a whole class. They apply their basic skills successfully in new and different situations, which prepares them extremely well for the next stage of their education and for their future lives. Organising fund-raising activities and managing the 'healthy tuck shop' develop enterprise and initiative to a high degree. These examples also illustrate how pupils are thoughtful and take responsibility for themselves and others around the school, which also keeps them safe. They enthusiastically enjoy an exceptionally wide range of extra-curricular activities. The school works extremely well with outside agencies to provide exciting educational experiences and give the individual support needed by particular pupils.

The headteacher's sensitive and considerate manner sets the tone for the whole school's work. Leadership and management at all levels have ensured that there is a realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses because performance is monitored rigorously. The school meets its challenging targets because it takes robust action to tackle those areas where it knows it could improve further. This year, for example, the school is focusing its attention on mathematics. There is a resolve to do even better in the future and staff know what needs to be done, giving the school a good capacity to improve further.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

A very safe and secure environment in Reception enables children to build strong, positive relationships. Children integrate quickly into school routines so that they feel confident and enjoy starting school. The vast majority of parents are very happy about the way their children settle in school.

Children enter Reception with the attainment expected of this age. Children's personal development is given a strong emphasis so that their early skills in reading, writing and numeracy are successfully developed, whilst embedding extremely good attitudes to learning and independent learning skills. As a result, by the time they transfer into Year 1, most children achieve the goals expected of them, with more attaining above the expected levels than when

they first started school. Children find the curriculum stimulating and enjoyable. Assessment systems have been revised recently, but the school is well aware that these need further development so that this information is used more effectively to refine support for individuals.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Ensure that marking consistently gives pupils clear guidance on what they have to do to improve the quality of their work.
- Implement the plans to provide clearer challenge in the mathematical tasks set for some pupils.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Children's attainment when they join the school is broadly as expected. School tracking data show that pupils make consistently good progress in developing their basic skills as they move through the school. Pupils' work also shows good achievement across a broad range of subjects. Improvements to assessment practices have resulted in much more reliable data for Years 1 and 2, and the school's most recent information shows standards to be significantly above average at Year 2. Pupils continue to achieve well thereafter. This good progress is reflected in the Year 6 national test results, which show that pupils reached significantly above-average standards.

The school systematically reviews each subject to identify where further improvements need to be made. For example, two years ago it began to give pupils more stimulating opportunities to practice their writing skills in other subjects. This resulted in high standards in the Year 6 tests in 2006, and this picture was maintained in 2007. The school brought the same sense of purpose last year to improving pupils' scientific knowledge, with significant improvements in the 2007 Year 6 test results. Whilst mathematics results have been significantly above national averages each year, the school feels that pupils can achieve even more if tasks were to be more challenging, and has put in place plans to address this.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding, clearly reflecting the considerable attention given to fostering pupils' personal skills and understanding. A particular strength of pupils' personal development is their strong sense of responsibility and care for others. Year 6 pupils who presented their own assembly, successfully involving and engaging the younger pupils, demonstrated these qualities well. Pupils' behaviour is excellent, which makes the school environment very positive and helps pupils to grow up as confident learners. Pupils enjoy coming to school, reflected in their high attendance.

Pupils have a very clear understanding of the importance of adopting healthy lifestyles. They show a highly developed awareness in their enthusiastic participation in a wide range of physical activities and the careful choices they make at lunch. Many take advantage of the 'Walking Bus' and 'Cycling to School' programmes. Pupils share their views very sensibly with others to reach a consensus, for example, in the work of the school council. They develop an excellent sense of community through their fundraising activities and visits from members of the local community.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 2

Throughout the school, adults manage pupils very effectively and establish classrooms where pupils feel relaxed, valued and are ready to learn. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils very well and relationships are excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge; they use questioning well to check pupils' understanding and give instructions clearly. Pupils listen attentively and then are fully committed to trying their best. Pupils have very good opportunities to talk about what they know as they discuss issues very sensibly and maturely with their 'talk partner'. The tasks pupils are given are generally effective in helping them to make good progress in lessons, but sometimes they do not fully stretch all. There are many examples of marking which shows pupils exactly what they have to do to improve, but this is not yet consistent enough across the school.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 2

The curriculum is well balanced and is especially successful in its promotion of pupils' personal development. For example, the 'Green Group' helps to encourage pupils' social responsibility. The curriculum makes effective links between subjects whilst placing a good emphasis on developing pupils' basic literacy and numeracy skills. Planning takes account of pupils' earlier learning but does not always focus sharply enough on matching work exactly to the skills or knowledge that will enable pupils to make even better progress, particularly in mathematics.

A highly varied range of extra-curricular activities, trips and visitors – from the Japanese puzzles club and the school choir, to the Isle of Wight residential visit and visits from 'Vikings' – add much interest and enjoyment to pupils' learning. The local area is used very effectively as an important resource, additionally helping to keep the school at the heart of the community. Appreciation of other cultures is encouraged well, for example, through the teaching of French and the school's charity support for Vietnamese students.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 1

The high priority placed on treating each child as an individual results in excellent relationships across the school. Pupils know that they are very well cared for and they express considerable confidence that they have an adult to talk with should they have any problems. Health and safety arrangements are robust and procedures to safeguard children's well-being are well established. Parents appreciate opportunities offered by clubs before and after school, which make a significant contribution to the personal development of those pupils attending. The involvement of parents, volunteers, learning mentors and a wide variety of external agencies means that the needs of all children, including those who are most vulnerable, are met very well. Pupils' progress is monitored regularly. This information is used effectively to provide good support, particularly for pupils with learning difficulties or those who speak English as an additional language, so that they often exceed their targets. Currently, all assessments are being refined to make them even more useful for planning work for any individual who might be in danger of falling behind.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

An important strength of the school's leadership is the way the headteacher secures the commitment of the whole-school community to its work. The care of pupils is clearly at the heart of the day-to-day life of the school. The clear and consistent way in which pupils are valued and encouraged is a main reason why they achieve well.

The contribution of the senior management team is good and the strength of teamwork across the wider staff team means that all are well informed and involved in evaluating the school's work. For example, all understand that the use of data to set clear targets for overall school improvement is a key focus for further development this year. Teachers have used their evaluation of pupils' mathematics attainment effectively to develop the mathematics curriculum to improve achievement further. Governors are knowledgeable and well informed. They use their interests and expertise well to support and challenge 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	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?	2
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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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

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

26 September 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blean Primary School, Canterbury, Kent CT2 9ED

Thank you for the very friendly welcome you gave us when we visited recently. We very much enjoyed meeting you and I said that I would let you know what we had found.

- I agree with you that Blean Primary is a good school.
- You work hard in lessons and this helps you to make good progress.
- You mostly reach standards above those of other pupils of your age.
- You all get on very well together and this makes the school a really enjoyable place to be.
- You behave exceptionally well in lessons and around the school.
- The children in Reception have settled into school very well in a short time.
- Adults make sure that you have interesting things to do in lessons and exceptionally exciting clubs and visits.
- You understand about the best things to eat and why it is good to exercise.
- You enjoy taking responsibility for things like fund raising to help others.
- You say that you can always speak to an adult who will help to sort out problems if you are worried.
- The headteacher and the staff think very carefully about how well the school is doing and take action quickly if they think something needs improving.
- We have agreed with your teachers two things that should help you to make better progress.
  - To give you clearer guidance about exactly how to improve your work.
  - To give some of you harder tasks in lessons to make sure that you are really challenged to do your best and show what you can do, especially in mathematics.

We hope that you will read your teachers' comments carefully and concentrate on these in your next piece of work.

We hope that you will continue to work hard to make your school and your parents proud of you, and wish you every success in the future.

Best wishes

Helen Hutchings Lead inspector

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Lead inspector