

The Blake Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123192
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	314535
Inspection date	7 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Arnalena (Nina) Bee

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	5-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Eaton
Headteacher	Mrs Marilyn Trigg
Date of previous school inspection	23 February 2004
School address	Cogges Hill Road Cogges Witney OX28 3FR
Telephone number	01993 702840
Fax number	01993 709439

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector. The inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- whether higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged
- if teaching ensures that all pupils achieve well
- whether provision for personal development and pupils' well-being, the curriculum, care, guidance and support and leadership and management are outstanding.

Evidence was gathered from observing pupils working in classrooms; discussions with staff, governors and pupils; analysis of pupils' work and parental questionnaires; observations of pupils during break times and assembly; and a review of the school's systems to track pupils' progress and improve the quality of teaching.

Description of the school

Blake Church of England is larger than most primary schools. Most pupils come from White British backgrounds. The number of pupils who have difficulty acquiring literacy and numeracy skills, behaviour difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. However, numbers are not distributed evenly throughout the school and proportions are sometimes larger in some year groups than in others.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This calm, friendly and very welcoming school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has many important features that are outstanding, such as the way pupils are cared for, the personal support they are given and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils grow into confident, well-rounded individuals who are very respectful; of one another and of the many adults they work with and meet. They enjoy coming to school and their behaviour is exemplary. This is reflected in the above average attendance figures. Pupils spoke proudly of the responsibilities they are given, particularly about their job as playground mediators and the confidentiality expected of this role. The way pupils contribute to the local community and that of the wider world is exemplary. The school has forged excellent links with a local nursing home, where pupils regularly visit or invite the residents into school. Discussions with residents inform pupils well of life in the past and this helps to support the high standards they reach in history. They have also linked with a local restaurant and worked with chefs to develop their, already good, awareness of the importance of eating healthily. Pupils have excellent opportunities to learn about different religions and beliefs and about how other people live in different parts of the world. Strong links with Nigeria have enabled them to raise money to build a school and a shelter for the many children who live on the streets. By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they are very well prepared, personally, for their next school and soundly prepared academically. The pastoral care that pupils receive is exemplary. Very thorough attention is given to health and safety arrangements. Pupils know they are well looked after and confidently say they feel safe and secure in school.

Achievement is satisfactory and standards average. The children in the Foundation Stage get off to a good start and make good progress. Standards at the end of Year 2, in 2007, were broadly average. The current Year 2 are on course to reach similar standards to last year. Achievement is satisfactory in relation to pupils' previous performance. In Year 6, standards in English, mathematics and science are average and are similar to last year. School data shows that, although most pupils are currently making satisfactory progress in English and mathematics, a few pupils have not done as well as they should have done. A very small minority of parents feel that their children could make more progress. The system used to track progress is not yet rigorous enough to ensure that all pupils make at least satisfactory progress. Pupils who have difficulty acquiring literacy and numeracy skills and those who have problems related to behaviour achieve well because they receive good quality support, especially when taught in small groups. In addition, good links with external agencies ensure that pupils with specific needs are well catered for. Teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching assistants are well prepared and give good quality support, especially when they work with pupils who find it hard to acquire literacy and numeracy skills. Relationships are good and adults have high expectations with regard to behaviour. However, teachers do not always make sure that their questioning or activities are involving all pupils. At times, activities are either too easy or too difficult for some pupils. This affects the pace of learning and results in a few pupils lacking concentration. Some pupils are confused because of inconsistencies when teachers set targets. There is some good marking, especially in literacy, that informs pupils what they need to do to improve. However, the quality varies from class to class and much does not indicate what pupils have to do to improve and reach their targets.

A strength of the good curriculum is the excellent way that it has been enriched by well-planned visits and interesting visitors. They are invited into school to reinforce learning in most subjects

and further develop personal and social skills. The pupils really appreciate this. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6. Good links have been developed between information and communication technology (ICT) and other subjects and results in pupils doing well in ICT by the time they leave.

The leadership of the headteacher is good. She and her deputy work tirelessly and very successfully to make sure that pupils receive the very best quality care to support their personal development. Most parents are supportive of all that the school does. The way the school views itself is mainly accurate, although their judgements are optimistic when deciding how well pupils learn in lessons and achieve over time. Subject leaders have started to work on improving achievement and standards in their subjects. For example, a focus on science, which was an issue in the previous inspection, has resulted in standards improving at the end of Year 2 and achievement improving in Year 6. School data shows progress in science for the current Year 6 has been good as they have moved through Key Stage 2. In addition, the recent focus on the achievement of higher attaining pupils has started to raise standards. More pupils in Year 6 are on course to reach Level 5 in mathematics and science this year. Governors are well informed and fully involved with the work of school, so that they are able to support and challenge the school effectively. These successes show that the school has a good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

When children start school, their levels of attainment are below those expected for their ages. Information collected on individual children shows that they make good progress. Most children are on course to reach at least the expected levels by the time they start in Year 1. Teaching is good and children have good opportunities to learn effectively, both in the classroom and in the secure and well resourced outside area. The children work hard at all activities offered to them and their behaviour is excellent. Good learning was seen as children independently used computers to paint pictures. They followed instructions well and quickly learned how to log on and off as well as how to save their work. Other children selected activities themselves and worked and played amicably both inside and outside the classroom. They were keen and eager to show their good knowledge of sounds and how they could write and work out 'hard sums', expertly using individual white boards. Because children mainly work on paper, rather than using books, they cannot clearly see for themselves the good progress they make as they develop literacy and numeracy skills. The care and support that these children receive is very good. Parents are very supportive of all that is done for their children when they start school and are pleased with how quickly they settle in.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve the system used to track pupils' progress so that it clearly identifies how well pupils are doing from term to term and then use this information to match activities better to pupils needs.
- Improve the consistency of the target setting and teachers' marking so that the process contributes more effectively to pupils' learning and progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged as satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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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?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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	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	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	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	2

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?	2
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	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

19 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Blake Church of England (Aided) Primary School, Witney, OX28 3FR

I really enjoyed my recent visit to your school. I think you are all very polite and respectful towards each other and the many adults who work with you each day. It was clear that you thoroughly enjoyed the assembly taken by the vicar. I was very impressed with the sounds on the 'sock' cards that the Reception children have learnt and I particularly enjoyed talking to the older pupils in Years 5 and 6. Your school is satisfactory but some things are good or even better.

These are the main things I found out about your school.

- Teachers plan very exciting visits out and invite interesting visitors into school to make learning fun. You also have lots of out of school activities to choose from.
- Children make good progress in the Reception classes. Progress is steady in Years 1 to 6.
- You learn such a lot about how different people live in our country and in countries all over the world. You should all be very proud of how you are making life better for children in Nigeria by raising money to build a school and a shelter for them.
- During your time in school, you are very well cared for and looked after and your parents agree that this is so. Your behaviour is excellent.
- By the time you leave, in Year 6, most of you reach levels that are expected for your ages in English, mathematics and science.

I have asked the school to do two things to improve the education you receive.

- Improve the way the teachers check how well you are doing so that they can see exactly how much progress you are making, and make sure your work is just right for you.
- Make sure that when teachers mark your work they make it clear what you need to do to improve and reach your targets.

You can help by continuing to work hard and having fun as you learn.

Yours sincerely

Nina Bee

Lead Inspector