

Blueberry Park

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	133691
Local Authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	316195
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Denise Shields

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	314
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Miss E Newton
Headteacher	Mr Bernard Lawton
Date of previous school inspection	15 March 2004
School address	Ackers Hall Avenue Liverpool L14 2DY
Telephone number	0151 2332480
Fax number	0151 2201970

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2008
Inspection number	316195

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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

Blueberry Park is a larger than average sized school. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. An extremely small proportion is from minority ethnic backgrounds, although this figure is increasing. Eligibility for free school meals is extremely high. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is almost twice the national average. A much higher than average proportion of pupils has a statement of special educational need. There is a 'resource provision' based at the school that accommodates 12 pupils with complex learning needs. The school gained the Healthy School Status in 2007. Since the previous inspection the school has moved into a new building having previously been based on two sites.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 4

Inspection findings do not support the school's judgement that it provides a satisfactory education for all its pupils. In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (HMCI) is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement. Significant weaknesses are evident in relation to: pupils' achievement and standards in English, mathematics and science; the quality of teaching and learning; the curriculum; care, guidance and support, and leadership and management. Consequently, the school gives inadequate value for money.

Staff and governors provide sympathetic and often caring support for pupils and their families, of whom a significant proportion experience considerable difficulties in their lives. The school has good links with an extensive range of outside agencies and these are used well to promote pupils' emotional and social welfare. However, this focus on care diverts leaders' and managers' attention. As a result, there is no clear direction provided to drive up pupils' achievement and standards. Children enter the Nursery with skills that are very low compared to those typical for their age and get off to a satisfactory start. From Years 1 to 6, the vast majority of pupils do not make sufficient progress during their time at school. Achievement is inadequate. Significant groups of pupils underachieve, including the more able, those from minority ethnic backgrounds and pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those who attend the 'resource provision'. By the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards are exceptionally low; they are in the bottom 5% when compared to all schools nationally and generally have been for the last five years. Pupils' personal development is satisfactory. Pupils say they enjoy school but this is not always reflected in their attendance, which, despite the school's very rigorous efforts, remains lower than it would like. In most classes pupils have positive attitudes to learning. However, they are not well equipped to make the most of secondary school because their basic skills are very poor.

The quality of teaching and learning is inadequate because it is too inconsistent and there is not enough teaching that is sufficiently strong to eradicate poor achievement. Teachers do not use assessment information well enough to plan lessons that meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Academic guidance is not given consistently enough to ensure that all pupils understand how to improve their work. However, there are strengths in the pastoral care teachers provide for pupils and in the way that most teachers use new technology to capture pupils' attention. The curriculum is inadequate and does not fully meet the needs of all pupils, particularly the more able and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The curriculum for pupils with complex learning difficulties who attend the 'resource provision' is inadequate. Nevertheless, there are strengths in the curriculum such as a strong emphasis on addressing pupils' emotional well-being and a good focus on healthy and safe lifestyles. Care, guidance and support are inadequate. However, child protection procedures and those to safeguard pupils meet requirements. The governing body has not held the school to account for pupils' inadequate progress. Given the above weaknesses, the school does not demonstrate the capacity to bring about the necessary improvements.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

By the time they transfer to Year 1, very few children reach the learning goals expected for their age. However, their achievement and progress is generally satisfactory in most areas of learning from their very low starting points. At times, children's learning and development is good when the quality of teaching is good but this is not consistently the case. There is a strength in children's personal, social and emotional development. Children achieve well in this area due to the effective support and guidance they receive. Independence is encouraged and children have some say in what and how they learn. As a result, they grow in confidence and in their ability to work cooperatively alongside others. The curriculum provides a satisfactory range of adult-led activities as well as opportunities for children to make choices and learn through play indoors. However, the outdoor curriculum is not as well developed as it should be. Assessment systems are satisfactory overall. Observations of children are used well to plan the next steps in their learning. However, there are currently no effective systems by which overall progress can be measured accurately. As a result of staff encouragement, parents are becoming more involved in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards and improve pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science throughout the school.
- Ensure leaders and managers at all levels, including governors, check rigorously on the quality of the school's work and take decisive action to improve it.
- Improve the quality of teaching and learning, ensuring greater but realistic challenge in lessons so that the proportion of good or better teaching increases substantially.
- Make better use of assessment information to plan lessons that precisely match pupils' needs and provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve their work.
- Ensure the curriculum is planned effectively to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities including those in the 'resource provision' and, for those in the Foundation Stage, through outdoor activities.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 4

Pupils enter Year 1 with skills and knowledge that are significantly below those expected for their age. They do not make sufficient progress as they move through the school and by the time they leave in Year 6, their achievement in English, mathematics and science is inadequate and standards are too low. Since the last inspection pupils' test and assessment results have not improved. At the end of Year 2 and Year 6, standards have been exceptionally low for the past five years. Significant groups of pupils underachieve year-on-year. This is because teachers do not always plan work that is precisely matched to their abilities. More able pupils, for example, are given work that is too easy for them; this prevents them from reaching their potential. Similarly, pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities do not make enough progress because often their work is too complex. The pupils like the new programmes to improve standards in writing. They say they really enjoy writing about lots of different things. As a consequence, pupils' progress in writing is starting to improve in some classes but the pattern is uneven throughout the school. New initiatives to raise pupils' standards in reading and mathematics are having a similar uneven impact on pupils' progress. This is because the quality

of teaching varies between classes and not all teachers challenge pupils effectively enough to bring about improvement.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory. However, many pupils have a limited awareness of life in multi-ethnic British society. Behaviour is satisfactory. Most pupils are polite and well mannered and show respect for one another. However, a very small but growing number of pupils have very challenging behaviour which is not yet consistently managed. Most pupils state they feel safe at school and have an adult that they can turn to for help if they should need it. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance has improved since the last inspection but still has some way to go to reach the national average. The school has very thorough arrangements to both monitor and encourage regular and prompt arrival at school. Nevertheless, a significant minority of pupils persistently arrive late each day. Pupils understand what it means to live safe and active lifestyles. Many enthusiastically take part in the after-school sports activities. All are proud of the school travel plan, which encourages exercise. They understand the need for a healthy diet. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to school life and the community. They feel they have a voice in school and that their views are listened to. This can be seen through the work of the school council. Pupils willingly carry out routine tasks as monitors, recycle paper and help at lunchtimes. However, they are not sufficiently equipped for their future lives because their basic skills are very weak.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 4

Pupils do not learn well enough because teaching is not sufficiently effective. Relationships are generally sound and so pupils are willing to 'have a go' and usually try hard with their tasks. Sometimes, the intention of the lesson is clearly explained and so pupils are clear about what they are to learn, but this is not the case in all classes. Similarly, the ends of lessons are used on occasions to consolidate what pupils have learnt and to check on their understanding, but this, too, is not consistent practice. Teachers do not always plan work that will help pupils take the next steps in their learning. Tasks are not always well matched to individual needs and as a result, pupils do not make the progress they are capable of. In the best examples of teaching, the teaching assistants work closely with pupils who find learning more difficult. As a consequence, these pupils are fully included in the lesson and make steady progress. Pupils appreciate and are starting to use the new literacy displays as a resource to aid their learning. At its best, marking of pupils' work is clear and constructive and pinpoints what pupils need to do to improve, but in too many instances comments are cursory. Teachers willingly undertake a wide range of courses to update their professional skills. There are some positive signs of the impact of this. For example, some teachers are encouraging pupils to assess their own learning. However, teaching quality is inconsistent between classes and is not good enough overall to ensure all pupils reach their potential and overcome the legacy of underachievement.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 4

The curriculum does not meet the needs of all pupils. There is an emphasis on English and mathematics lessons, which fail to have sufficient impact on pupils' learning and limit the amount of time for teaching other subjects. This, in turn, limits the opportunities for pupils to practise and develop the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology in other subjects. The curriculum provided for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, particularly those in the 'resource provision' is inadequate. This is because their learning programmes are variable in quality. They do not always take into account these pupils' complex learning needs, including the small steps needed to ensure they reach their learning targets. There are few planned opportunities to ensure more able pupils reach the levels they are capable of. The use the school makes of visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, to enrich pupils' learning, is satisfactory.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 4

Pupils can visit the lunchtime sanctuary room if they are experiencing difficulties in their lives. This gives them time for reflection and is greatly appreciated by those who attend. The learning mentors and the inclusion coordinator generally provide good pastoral care and support for pupils. However, this support does not always help individuals to rejoin their classmates and continue with their learning. In addition, the care and support provided does not always meet pupils' needs. On more than one occasion, for example, pupils who had very recently experienced great difficulties in their home lives were left sitting in a corridor for most of the afternoon without work or support. The school is aware that current arrangements are not effective enough to support the very small number of pupils who have very challenging behaviour. The school makes every effort to work well with parents. This is acknowledged by a typical comment, 'the school is always trying to involve parents and carers'. The school has made vigorous efforts to improve attendance and punctuality but a persistent number of parents do not ensure their children attend regularly and on time. Academic guidance is inconsistent. In a few classes it is developing well and here pupils have a growing understanding of their learning targets and say these help them know what to do to develop their work. In many others, guidance is inadequate and does not tell pupils how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 4

Leadership and management at all levels are having too little impact on improving pupils' achievement and their standards, and is heavily reliant on the direction provided by the local authority (LA). Since September 2007, the LA has provided extensive support for the school. As a result of this support, the subject leaders for English, mathematics and science are beginning to check the quality of their subjects well, but these measures are new and have had limited impact on improving pupils' progress. A new and more robust system is being developed to check pupils' progress but has not yet made an impact. Data are being recorded throughout the year and school leaders are beginning to hold teachers to account for the progress the pupils make. However, the information gained is not used well enough to improve teachers' day-to-day lesson planning. The school does not use challenging enough targets to raise

standards. Self-evaluation is weak; the school does not have an accurate view of its strengths and areas for improvement. Insufficient account is taken of the impact of the curriculum, teaching and assessment on pupils' learning. The governors, although well intentioned, have not held the school to account for pupils' very low standards and inadequate achievement.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

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

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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	4

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	4
The standards ¹ reached by learners	4
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

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	3
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?	4
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	4
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	4

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?	4
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	4
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	4
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
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	4
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	Yes
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Inspection of Blueberry Park, Liverpool, L14 2DY

Thank you for making us welcome when we inspected your school recently. We listened carefully to what you had to say about your school and what you enjoyed most about it. It is good that you enjoy school and that you usually try your best for your teachers. We were impressed by the work of the school council and think the playground markings that you helped to select are super. We were also pleased with the good links your school has with a wide range of people from outside who help you to become better people.

It is our judgement that your school needs additional help to give you a better education and so we have placed your school into 'special measures'. This means that your school will get extra help and support. Inspectors will return regularly to check that the school is making progress. We want the school to:

- help you all do better and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science
- improve the work of leaders and managers, including governors, so that they carefully check the school's work and take action quickly to improve matters if they find that something is not right
- improve teaching so that more of it is good or better and you get lots of different tasks in lessons that challenge you and help you to make better progress
- ensure that your teachers help you know what you need to do to make your work better
- make sure you have lots of opportunities to learn new things and that your lessons are not too hard or too easy for you and younger children are given more outdoor learning activities.

You can help your school by attending regularly and on time - remember, if you are not in school you cannot learn!

You should also continue to try your best at all times in your lessons.