

# Blenheim Primary School and Nursery

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	134008
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bromley
<b>Inspection number</b>	316231
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Thomson

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

---

<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	207
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Gillian Harding
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Alison Whiting
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	17 May 2005
<b>School address</b>	Blenheim Road Orpington BR6 9BH
<b>Telephone number</b>	01689 819955
<b>Fax number</b>	01689 600830

---

<b>Age group</b>	3–11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 June 2008
<b>Inspection number</b>	316231

---

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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 two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Blenheim is an average sized primary school. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much higher than average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and those who do not speak English as their first language is very high. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is much higher than average. This includes a group of pupils who have behavioural, emotion and social difficulties and a group of pupils who have speech, language and communication difficulties.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

Blenheim School is providing a satisfactory and improving standard of education. The personal development of the pupils is good and their achievement is satisfactory. Parents are overwhelmingly positive and these comments sum up the views of many, 'The atmosphere of Blenheim Primary is consistently one of a close and friendly school' and 'Pupils are well behaved, cheerful and eager to be there.'

The personal development of the pupils is a strength of the school. Behaviour is much improved since the previous inspection. This is due to the school's careful attention in consistently promoting the importance of high standards of respect and tolerance. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They say that school is fun and that the teachers are 'kind and help us when they find things difficult'. They understand well what it means to be healthy and take a major part in monitoring just how healthy packed lunches are. They feel that the school listens to their views and they welcome the many opportunities to take on the responsibility of helping to look after the younger children.

The school has a diverse mix of pupils, including a significant number who arrive during the year, some of whom speak little or no English. The school provides good support for these pupils, which helps them to settle in well. From starting points that are well below those expected, particularly in language and communication, pupils reach average standards at the end of Year 6. Children's progress is good in the Foundation Stage because of the careful attention to individual needs and the good curriculum. Pupils' progress is satisfactory throughout the rest of the school, although it is less strong in writing. This is because pupils are not given enough opportunities for extended writing. Satisfactory teaching and learning accounts for pupils' progress. Teachers do not always match the work well to the needs of the higher attaining pupils. As a result, they are not always adequately challenged and do not achieve as highly as they might do. The curriculum is being increasingly adapted to meet the different needs of pupils. This has already increased pupils' enjoyment. Pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities make progress in line with other pupils because of the school's focus on guidance in small groups.

The headteacher has managed the school well during a period of many staff changes. Along with her senior leadership team, she has instilled a culture of reflection amongst the staff. The senior leadership team has guided the subject leaders well and is encouraging them to become more accountable for their areas. The subject leaders work well together as a team and value the support they receive. However, their knowledge and enthusiasm is not capitalised fully at present to bring about improvements fast enough. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and acknowledges that, having improved behaviour, it now needs to raise the quality of teaching and learning to bring about more rapid improvements to achievement and standards. Governors support the school well, but at present do not offer enough challenge. Since the previous inspection, the school has made satisfactory improvements. This indicates that its capacity to improve even further is satisfactory.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children enter the Nursery with knowledge and skills well below the expected level for their age. The warm and caring atmosphere and the good relations that all adults develop with the

children are much appreciated by the parents. One parent's comment that her daughter 'enjoys spending time there and telling me what she has learnt' reflects that of many others. Teachers and support staff work as an effective team and are planning well for future developments. Children's progress is carefully tracked and monitored so that their individual needs are met. There are many opportunities for children to play and work together. The curriculum provides a good balance between independent work and adult directed activities. The Nursery space promotes these activities well, but the layout of the accommodation for the older children limits similar opportunities. In the Nursery, all activities have a sharp focus and adult interactions with the children are of a high quality. In the Reception class, however, sometimes not all activities are as purposeful. In recent years, by the end of Reception most children reach the expected level for their age in all areas of learning, except language development, in view of their weaker starting points.

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

- Improve the standard of writing throughout the school.
- Ensure that teachers consistently challenge more able pupils to achieve as well as they can.
- Further develop the role of subject leaders to bring about improvements in achievement and standards more rapidly.

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 before their next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress during Years 1 to 6. This includes pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities and those for whom English is not their first language. Although standards are below average at the end of Year 2, particularly in writing, pupils' progress has improved overall this year. This is particularly evident in mathematics, through a strong focus on problem solving. Progress from Year 2 to Year 6 is also satisfactory and standards at the end of Year 6 are broadly average in English, mathematics and science. At present, the school sets targets for classes and groups. The school recognises the need to set targets for individual pupils, because currently, some pupils do not have a clear idea of the standards that they should be achieving.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils behave well in classes and around the school. They are polite and well mannered and take good care of each other. The feelings of one pupil echoed that of many when she said, 'You don't feel lonely as pupils are kind and friendly.' Many report that they enjoy school and all that it has to offer. Over the last year attendance has improved and is now broadly satisfactory. Pupils say that adults at the school help them and they know what to do when faced with the rare incidents of bullying. However, pupils are not always sure how to manage risk in their own lives. Pupils willingly and proudly take on many roles and responsibilities such as 'Play Pals', and participate in school and community based theatrical and musical events. Members of the school council are mature and they are proud of the contributions they have made, such as systems to control the noise level in the dining hall at lunchtime. Most pupils adopt a healthy life style. They participate in many different sports and most eat healthily,

although the latest minutes from the school council state that some packed lunches still contain unhealthy food items! Pupils are adequately prepared for the next stage of their education. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is good although their understanding of different faiths and communities in Britain and abroad is narrow.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent. There is much good practice within the school, which currently is not shared well enough. There are good relationships between the pupils and the teachers, and pupils show respect for each other. Teachers show enthusiasm for their subjects, but sometimes they do not match the work well to the needs of all the pupils, with the most able pupils finding the work easy. Teaching assistants work well with pupils who have learning difficulties in small support groups. However, sometimes there are not enough opportunities in lessons for teaching assistants to be as effective as they might be. This is because there are not enough tasks for the pupils to work on individually. Marking is carried out regularly and, in many instances, informs pupils clearly how to improve their work. In a particularly good lesson in mathematics, pupils worked effectively with each other to solve challenging practical problems. In addition, they were encouraged to assess how effective their learning had been.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 3**

The school's re-structuring of English lessons so that pupils are taught by ability (known as 'Success For All') has met with some success. Pupils say they enjoy it and it has helped raise achievement, especially in linking letters and sounds. However, improvements have been limited because the pupils do not have enough opportunities for extended writing. At present, there are not enough links between subjects. This school is planning to develop further and extend the links they currently have next year. The school's focus on developing creativity by focusing on the performing arts has resulted in pupils proudly contributing to their local community. There is a wide range of well-attended clubs. Pupils regularly go on trips that enrich the curriculum but opportunities to use these visits to promote pupils' cultural development are missed. There are few visitors to the school, although a very effective Tudor Dance teacher was seen during the inspection. There are regular opportunities for pupils to discuss their emotions and any concerns and these support pupils' personal development well.

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

#### **Grade: 2**

Procedures to promote pupils' welfare and safety are well embedded. All adults work hard to create a school where pupils feel safe and secure. The annual review of the behaviour policy means it is understood by all and consistently applied. Vulnerable pupils are well supported as they are given the time and the space to talk. Pupils' progress is carefully tracked and monitored. The information is used well to identify those who need support, including those who are gifted and talented. Intervention groups are sharply focused and pupils in these sessions make good progress. Links with outside agencies support pupils' academic and personal development well, especially those with communication and behaviour difficulties. Pupils learning English as an

additional language make sound progress due to the emphasis placed on language development in all lessons. Pupils often know their group targets, but these are not personalised to help each of them know exactly what they need to do next.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

The school has moved forward under the sound leadership of the headteacher and it is poised to improve further. The headteacher and her deputy have been successful in establishing a culture of accountability and improvement that is shared by all the staff. Until now the main focus has been to raise the quality of behaviour. This has been successful and behaviour is now good. Pupils are ready to learn and the school is now beginning to concentrate on improving teaching and learning. Middle leaders are being given responsibility, but they do not monitor the quality of teaching in their areas at present. The school has recognised areas where they need to make improvements, such as improving standards in writing. There have been some carefully thought out strategies, such as problem solving in mathematics, which are already showing evidence of impact through improved progress.

**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](http://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?	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?	3
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 <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?	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	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
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

<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	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

02 July 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blenheim Primary School and Nursery, Orpington, BR6 9BH

We enjoyed our visit when we came to inspect your school. Thank you very much for the very warm welcome you gave us. We enjoyed talking to you and seeing all the interesting work that you do. We believe that the school is satisfactory.

Here are some of the things that we liked best.

- You behave well and you enjoy school.
- You work well with each other in lessons.
- You look after each other well in many ways.
- You know how to be healthy by eating the right food and by exercising.
- Adults in school ensure that you are safe and well cared for.
- You have many interesting lessons and opportunities for clubs and visits.

Here are some of the things that we have asked your headteacher and teachers to do:

- improve the standard of writing across the school
- make sure that you always have good opportunities to learn as well as you can in all your lessons
- ask the teachers in charge of your different subjects to help check how well you are learning in them.

You can help by working with your teachers to check how well you have understood your work. You can share with them things you like writing about.

We enjoyed our visit to your school. Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

Alison Thomson

Lead Inspector