

Blackboys Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	114547
Local Authority	East Sussex
Inspection number	326035
Inspection date	25 March 2009
Reporting inspector	Jacque Buttriss

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	105
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pat Herbert
Headteacher	Jonquil King
Date of previous school inspection	30 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Blackboys Uckfield TN22 5LL
Telephone number	01825 890423

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	25 March 2009
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Fax number

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- progress in writing
- the extent of challenge for more able pupils
- the context of a few parents' concerns, which emerged at the beginning of the inspection, about recent changes introduced by the new headteacher.

Inspectors gathered evidence from discussions with staff, governors and children, lesson observations, studying work in pupils' books and in displays around the school, analysing pupils' attainment and progress data and studying a variety of the school's documents. Parents' views were gathered through discussion and questionnaire responses. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation form, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average primary school in a rural area. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that found nationally, although there is a higher than usual percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. There are very few pupils from minority ethnic groups or for whom English is an additional language. A daily breakfast club is run in the school hall. All four classes have a mixture of age groups. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are in a class with Year 1 children. A new headteacher joined the school in January 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. It provides an excellent education for its pupils. The school has many strengths. Parents comment on its 'dynamic and forward thinking approach' and praise the headteacher for being 'very approachable' and for taking the school 'a huge step forward'. The strong leadership team is energetically led and its very clear direction is successfully driving forward improvements in all areas. An example of this is in the development of writing skills throughout the school, which has led to increased progress. There is outstanding capacity for further improvement.

The outstanding teaching ensures that all pupils, including the more able, are suitably challenged and supported. A parent commented: 'Teaching is exciting and varied... pupils have a thirst for learning.' A Year 6 pupil said that teachers are fun and another commented 'they push us as far as we can go'. As a result, pupils reach well above average standards. Children in the Reception year make good progress from their starting points across all areas of learning. However, there are limited opportunities for them to make choices about their learning when they are working in the outside area. Over time, learners' achievement is outstanding. It accelerates as pupils move through the school, so that by the time they leave at the end of Year 6, progress compared to their attainment at the end of Year 2 places the school in the top 2% nationally.

The very well enriched curriculum is continuously developing to meet the needs and interests of all pupils. A member of staff commented that 'the pupils appreciate all the new opportunities the headteacher has brought in'. In particular, the older pupils are very enthusiastic about the variety of outdoor zones and areas provided for their use at break times, delighted by the fact that 'the areas all have different personalities'. Three quarters of pupils participate in additional activities. 'We have brilliant clubs,' said one Year 5 pupil. All thoroughly enjoy the themed weeks, visits and visitors. As well as the excellent acquisition of core learning skills across the curriculum, learners enjoy strong musical and sporting traditions. A group of pupils are due to visit the BBC to receive a national award for their work in information and communication technology.

Outstanding personal development and well-being is characterised by pupils' exemplary behaviour, highly enthusiastic attitudes to learning and their growing confidence and independence as active members of their school and local communities. Pupils welcome villagers into their Friday café and take on a variety of responsibilities, such as being 'buddies' to care for each other and improve their school. They clearly enjoy school and talk animatedly about all their favourite activities. When asked what they liked least, the room was silent, until a Year 6 boy eventually said, 'I can't think of anything.' Attendance is broadly average. Attendance levels are affected by a very small number of persistent absentees, partly unavoidable because of medical reasons. Pupils have an outstanding awareness of how to keep healthy and stay safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils' awareness of the different cultures, faiths and circumstances of others has been enhanced through recent correspondence with a group of orphanage children in Ghana, sharing many details of their daily lives and experiences.

Outstanding pastoral care is a strength of the school. Adults and pupils all know each other well and form excellent relationships which provide great support for pupils' achievement and personal development. Outstanding links with other schools and organisations greatly enhance

learning opportunities and provide additional activities for pupils to enjoy. Teaching assistants provide excellent support for vulnerable pupils to enable them to achieve well. Parents of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are particularly pleased with the quality of support available for them. Pupils of all abilities know their individual learning targets and benefit from various forms of assessment, including their enjoyable 'buddy marking'. Learners know how well they are doing and teachers' marking helps them know how to improve their work still further.

Leaders have developed outstanding self-evaluation processes. They make excellent use of pupil progress data to set unusually challenging targets, most of which are exceeded by pupils in all year groups. There is outstanding equality of opportunity and the school promotes good community cohesion, supported by a clear action plan and a new steering group. Dedicated governors provide good support for the school and actively undertake a variety of monitoring activities to hold the school to account.

A large majority of parents are very supportive of the school, its staff and its leaders. A typical comment is: 'We are very happy our son is attending this school.' However, a small number of parents expressed concerns about the changes that have taken place over the past year. Inspectors investigated parents' concerns and concluded that these recent changes are well supported and are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement and well-being.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Reception children come into the school with attainment in line with expectations. As a result of good teaching and an exciting curriculum, they make good progress in all areas of learning so that by the time they go into Year 1 their standards are above average. Children are well prepared in the weeks prior to starting school and they receive very good support, so that they settle in quickly and confidently. Welfare provision is good and staff develop excellent relationships with the children, so that they socialise very well together. As one Reception child said to her group when searching for numbers in the sandpit, 'Let's work as a team.' Children's behaviour is excellent. Leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The classroom is well set out with inviting activity areas, a good range of motivating resources and colourful, lively displays. There is a small, secure outside area, but there are currently not enough resources or sufficient opportunities for children to explore and extend their outside learning in all aspects of the curriculum.

What the school should do to improve further

- Develop the resources and use of the outside learning environment in order to enable children to extend their skills across all the areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
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 learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

25 March 2009

Dear Children,

Inspection of Blackboys Church of England Primary School, Uckfield TN22 5LL

Thank you for being so friendly, polite and helpful when we came to inspect your school. You made us feel very welcome indeed. We very much enjoyed talking with you. Yours is an outstanding school. It helps you to do excellent work and cares for you exceptionally well.

These are the things we especially like about your school.

- You make outstanding progress and achieve very high standards in your work. Well done!
- Your behaviour is excellent.
- You have excellent relationships and look after each other exceptionally well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to be healthy and stay safe.
- You are taught exceptionally well and teachers work very hard to make your lessons exciting and fun.
- You very much enjoy school.
- You clearly enjoy the way the outside areas of your school are organised, especially your sensory garden and the various different play 'zones'.
- Your school has excellent partnerships with many local schools which give you opportunities to take part in a lot of extra activities to extend your learning.
- Your headteacher and staff lead the school outstandingly well.

This is what we think your school could do even better.

- Reception children need more resources and opportunities to make greater use of their outside area.

You can help the school by continuing to work hard. I would like to wish you lots of success in your future learning. Keep up the excellent work!

Yours faithfully,

Jacquie Buttriss

Lead inspector