

# Blue Coat CofE Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	115734
<b>Local Authority</b>	Gloucestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	326260
<b>Inspection date</b>	17 June 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	321
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Chris Glover
<b>Headteacher</b>	Joanna Woolley
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 May 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Symn Lane Wotton-under-Edge GL12 7BD
<b>Telephone number</b>	01453 525020
<b>Fax number</b>	01453 521080

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors who evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues.

- The effectiveness of actions taken to narrow the gap between reading and writing.
- How effective the new assessment systems are in ensuring the early identification of potentially underachieving pupils.
- The success of curriculum adaptations to make learning, especially in the outdoor environment, more relevant and exciting for the pupils.

Evidence was gathered from examination of the school's documentation, parents' questionnaires and pupils' work, observations of pupils in classes, around the school and in the playground, as well as interviews with subject leaders, pupils, governors and parents.

Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, are not justified. These have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average primary school. Nearly all the pupils attending are of White British extraction and of the small number of pupils from minority ethnic groups, none are at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average although the proportion of pupils with statements of special educational need is average. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in two Reception classes. The school has achieved several awards including that of Healthy School.

## 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 has sustained the high standards identified at the last inspection and provides an exciting and stimulating curriculum which inspires the pupils and enables them to achieve highly. Parents wholeheartedly support the school: one wrote, 'We have been delighted with all aspects of the school'; whilst others identify particular strengths, 'The school has a caring and positive atmosphere', 'The school not only covers all aspects of the curriculum but also manages to integrate a wide variety of other projects and activities', and another, 'My child appreciates the efforts of her teacher to make the curriculum come alive.' The new headteacher has quickly established an excellent knowledge and understanding of the school. She has the vision and drive to move the school forward building on the strong Christian ethos and the high standards. She is supported by an outstanding and committed staff who are enthusiastic, well motivated and work exceptionally well together. There is an excellent team spirit and a feeling of whole-school ownership of decisions made. Everyone strives to further improve what is already an exceptional school.

Children in the Reception class get an excellent start to their education. The exciting range of activities provided in the stimulating environment means that they learn effectively and make excellent progress. They are supported exceptionally well because staff have an extremely good knowledge of each child's individual needs. In Years 1 to 6, pupils continue this outstanding progress. Pupils greatly enjoy their learning and the challenges they are faced with. They particularly enjoy 'topic launch' days which set the tone for the forthcoming project with a special event or challenge. As a result of this imaginative approach they reach standards that are high, not just in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but also in other subjects such as information and communication technology (ICT), history and geography. Achievement is outstanding. This is because the school constantly analyses how well it is doing and takes action to try to improve even further. To enable them to do this effectively, the school has introduced an excellent assessment system. It means that pupils requiring additional support or challenge are quickly identified and as a result, few pupils fall behind in the progress they make. The new assessment system has proved to be particularly useful in monitoring and tracking pupils' progress in writing and identifying which areas need reviewing or reinforcement. As a result, the topic structure has been revised with more boy-orientated topics being introduced. In addition, more opportunities for extended imaginative writing, as well as developing writing across all areas of the curriculum, have been introduced. Consequently the gap between reading and writing in the school is narrowing.

Teaching is excellent and staff work hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils. They ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. Teachers are skilled at planning a wide range of tasks. These are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that they are appropriately challenged or supported. Specific projects, such as the mini-enterprise initiative, are excellent and pupils learn to work exceptionally well together as part of a team. However, occasionally, lessons are dominated by the teacher and pupils do not always have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning on a day-to-day basis. As a result not all pupils are developing their independent learning skills systematically. Pupils appreciate the guidance they receive. They understand the levels they are working at, and say marking is particularly helpful. Pupils' achievements are valued and celebrated. This is evident from the quality of pupils' work displayed around the school and in classrooms. Displays illustrate the breadth of the exciting curriculum. Excellent

links are made across a range of subjects, and this has had a particular impact on progress because pupils have many opportunities to practise their skills across many different subjects. The whole of the magnificent school environment, indoors and out, is used to very good effect. The Forest School initiative is extremely well received and pupils relish the use of the outside classroom. The use of ICT is fully integrated into all topics. A wide range of visits and visitors as well as an excellent range of out-of-school activities provide pupils with many additional opportunities to enhance their learning.

'This is not just a school, not just a place to learn, it's more than that, it's a place to socialise with your friends', and 'The teachers really support you, you don't have to be shy of them', were just two comments from pupils. They express the joy pupils have in attending this school and this is reflected in their high attendance. Pupils thrive, and parents are particularly happy with this. The care, guidance and support for pupils are excellent and at the time of the inspection all safeguarding procedures were fully in place. A comprehensive programme for their personal, social and health education contributes very effectively to their outstanding personal development. When asked what they particularly enjoyed, pupils bubbled with enthusiasm. Their examples covered a full range of activities from visits and out-of-school activities to lessons and worship. They are lively and energetic and have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy and keep safe. Pupils are thoughtful and reflective, assertive and confident. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. The school council works very effectively. When asked if they were playground 'buddies', they replied, 'We sort out playground arguments as a matter of course; the teachers trust us to be responsible for that anyway.' Behaviour in and around the school is excellent and all the play spaces are happy and harmonious places. Through projects such as, It's not Fair, pupils are learning highly effectively about their wider, global responsibilities and about a wide range of different cultures. These, together with their very good literacy, numeracy and ICT skills, ensure they are getting an excellent grounding for the future.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. The school has set challenging targets for future development but they are achievable. The self-evaluation is a little cautious. However, as one governor said 'There's no room for complacency; you need to keep pushing on.' There is an outstanding capacity for further improvement, as illustrated by the success of actions taken to narrow the gap between attainment in reading and writing. The school uses data exceptionally well to check its performance and the robust monitoring system ensures that the quality of teaching and learning is rigorously evaluated. Governors regularly visit the school and they check for themselves the success of such projects as the Forest School. They promote community cohesion extremely well and have set up a task force to ensure that this is effective. They have an excellent perception of the need for pupils to understand that they are growing up in a culturally diverse society and to this end have established a link with an inner-city school. The school improvement plan and propriety development plans are excellent, and are vital constituents in the concerted efforts to drive this school forward.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 1**

Children entering the Reception class are articulate and their speaking skills are above average. However, in other areas of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum their attainment is broadly average. They benefit from an exciting and stimulating curriculum and this enables them to make outstanding progress. As a result they reach above average standards in all areas of learning. Teaching is lively and interesting and activities are closely related to their interests

and needs. This ensures learning is relevant to all. The 'garden centre' provides very good opportunities for practising their mark making and early writing skills, using money, making lists when taking orders and endless chances for discussion and cooperative play. It appeals to the imagination of both boys and girls and thus both make outstanding progress. The number trail planned by Snap and Ee'or inspired the children – and the inspectors – to follow this and solve the number problems en route. There is an excellent balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. The use of the outside area is outstanding and children happily pursue activities related to all areas of the curriculum in both environments. The care and attention given to children's welfare are outstanding and children with specific difficulties are particularly well provided for. Leadership and management are excellent. There is an excellent understanding of the needs of young children and their progress is carefully monitored, allowing activities to be planned at exactly the right level to help children develop and learn.

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

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop their independent learning skills in lessons.

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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?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	1
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

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<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.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	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
The extent to which 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

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	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

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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?	1
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	1
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**

18 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blue Coat CE Primary School, Wotton-under-Edge GL12 7BD

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. The many of you who were kind enough to speak to us showed how proud you are of your school. You are right to be, because it is an outstanding school!

What we found out about your school.

- The children in Reception get a wonderful start to school life; we loved the problems posed by Snap and Ee'or!
- You all really enjoy school and make excellent progress to reach much higher standards than those found in most schools.
- You behave extremely well, both in class and out in the playground.
- You get on exceptionally well with other pupils and always look after each other.
- You know a lot about how to stay safe and live healthy lives.
- The leaders are excellent at running the school and understand how they could make it even better.
- The excellent topics planned for you make learning very interesting, and you really relish your sessions in the outdoor classroom.
- Your teachers are doing an outstanding job. They work hard to plan interesting lessons and always mark your work carefully.
- All staff at the school take exceptionally good care of you and keep you safe.

What we would like the school to do now.

- We would like to see you have more opportunities to work independently and take charge of your own learning.

We hope you continue to enjoy school as much as you do now. Good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely

Christine M Huard

Lead inspector