

Blacko Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119167
Local Authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	326957
Inspection date	19 November 2008
Reporting inspector	David Earley

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	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	89
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	Mr Andrew McLean
Headteacher	Mr Mark Harrison
Date of previous school inspection	1 November 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Gisburn Road Blacko Nelson Lancashire BB9 6LS
Telephone number	01282 616669
Fax number	01282 616669

Age group	4–11
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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:

- achievement and standards in Key Stages 1 and 2;
- the consistency of teaching;
- progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Evidence was gathered from the observation of lessons, discussions with staff, pupils and governors, looking at pupils' work, school assessment data and documentation. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence that the school's own assessments, as given in its self evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in the report.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average school in the village of Blacko. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average. The school provides extended provision for pupils before and after the school day. The school has achieved the Healthy Schools Award. The headteacher was appointed in May 2008.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This is a good and improving school with some outstanding features. It gives good value for money. Achievement for all pupils whatever their gender, age, ability or circumstances is good. Standards are usually well above average in Year 2 teacher assessments and Year 6 national tests. However, in 2008 standards at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics dipped to average levels. This was because the school made inconsistent use of assessment and tracking systems and pupils did not make the expected progress. Pupils in the current Year 2 joined the school with lower than the usual skills and understanding but made good progress and have achieved well to be on track to reach average standards. This is because the school has taken swift and decisive action to ensure that closer monitoring of learning ensures better progress.

Results in the national tests in 2007 at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science were significantly above average. The provisional results for 2008 are similar. Pupils in the current Year 6 are on track to reach above average standards. This represents good progress for most pupils because there is a large proportion of them who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. However, some of the more able pupils at Key Stage 2 are not challenged sufficiently to make expected progress in writing and science.

Pupils' personal development and well-being, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall although understanding of wider international cultures is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils say they enjoy school. One pupil said, 'This is a great school to come to. I look forward to each new day.' Behaviour is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning and know how to keep safe and healthy. They take regular exercise and help to run the school allotment. The children's council has a real voice in the life of the school and pupils are considerate of those less fortunate than themselves. For instance, they are involved in fundraising for the local children's hospice. The older pupils take their responsibilities seriously and play leaders provide valuable support for their peers. Pupils support community events enthusiastically.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are generally lively and interesting so that pupils enjoy learning and want to learn. For example, in Year 2 the teacher made good use of illustrations on the interactive whiteboard in order to extend skills in doubling and halving. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this effectively to provide clear explanations and ask challenging questions. Good use is usually made of assessment to ensure that work is well suited to pupils' different abilities. Occasionally, there are missed opportunities to further challenge more able pupils. Teaching assistants are well deployed, particularly in support of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils are confident to talk to teachers and peers about their work and have a good understanding of how to improve their learning.

The curriculum is good. It is well planned to ensure that pupils build securely on what has gone before. There is a good focus on the skills of literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and these are increasingly used in other subjects in order to give a purpose and relevance to learning. Enrichment is good. There are lots of visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities. For example, when pupils visit a science museum or work in role with an expert on Aztecs, their learning is extended and horizons are widened. This enrichment is further enhanced by weeks with a particular focus on books or the arts, and by strong links

with other schools. The before- and after-school clubs make a good contribution to meeting the needs of the local community by enabling the school to provide full day care.

Care, guidance and support are good overall. Pastoral care is excellent. Pupils say that they are looked after 'superbly'. All required safeguarding and child protection procedures are in place. There is an extremely strong family atmosphere where each pupil is highly valued and there are very close links with parents. Very effective links with external agencies ensure that pupils and their families are supported well. Parents appreciate that their children are very well cared for. One parent who commented, 'It is a caring school with a very good ethos', endorses the view of the majority. There are rigorous systems for assessing and tracking progress. However, targets for improvement are not used consistently across the school, resulting in missed opportunities to extend learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides strong leadership. He has a very clear vision for improvement, building on the school's existing strengths. He is well supported by staff and governors who work well as a team to set challenging targets and provide the best for each pupil. Performance is evaluated rigorously and this leads to clear and realistic development planning focused on raising standards and improving provision. The promotion of community cohesion is good overall although the school is aware of the need to provide further opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider global community. Governance is good. Governors have a good understanding of the school and provide both support and challenge in the drive to ensure the best for each pupil. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection and the school has good capacity to improve further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children join the EYFS (Reception) with skills and abilities that are generally in line with those expected for their age. However, this varies considerably from year-to-year. In the current Reception class, for example, the children entered the school with attainment above expectations, especially in mathematics and communication, language and literacy. Children get off to a flying start and achievement and progress are excellent. By the time they start Year 1 most reach well above the goals expected for their learning. Excellent induction arrangements enable the children to settle quickly. Very good links are forged with parents and the staff provide regular feedback to them about their children's progress. All areas of learning are exceptionally well planned for and resourced. Staff are very diligent in maintaining a stimulating learning environment. Rigorous assessment helps to ensure that the wide range of activities is appropriately challenging. Very effective use is made of the recently developed outdoor area. Children have very positive attitudes to learning. For example, when helping 'Bob the Builder' they built walls with great enthusiasm and enjoyment. Personal development and well-being are excellent so that children grow in confidence and independence. Children are very well cared for and the EYFS is very well led and managed.

What the school should do to improve further

- Accelerate progress and raise standards for more able pupils in Key Stage 2 in writing and science.
- Ensure that all pupils know their targets for improvement so that they know clearly what they need to do in order to improve.

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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?	2
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?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

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?	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	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

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

20 November 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blacko Primary School, Lancashire, BB9 6LS

Thank you for making us welcome when we came to inspect your school. Your school is good and some parts are excellent. We really enjoyed talking to you about your school and your work because you were so polite and helpful. We were impressed by your understanding of how to keep fit and healthy. We think that the children's council and people like the playground leaders do a good job in helping to make the school a better place.

These are some of the things we liked about your school:

- children get off to an excellent start in the Reception class
- your work is good and you enjoy your lessons
- you behave well and your attendance is good
- there are lots of interesting visits and visitors and this helps you to learn
- the school takes really good care of you and keeps a careful check on how well you are doing.

These are some of the things the staff are going to do to make your school even better:

- ensure that more of the older pupils reach the higher levels in their writing and science
- help you to make better use of your targets in order to help you to improve your work.

Thank you once again for your politeness and courtesy. We really enjoyed seeing some of you working with Bob the Builder and learning how to build a wall.

David Earley

Lead inspector