

# Blackwell Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125963
<b>Local Authority</b>	West Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	328431
<b>Inspection date</b>	25 March 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Eileen Chadwick

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	202
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>	Helen Rowe
<b>Headteacher</b>	Alison O'Neill
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 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>	Blackwell Farm Road East Grinstead RH19 3JL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01342 323906
<b>Fax number</b>	01342 300676

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- The evenness of good achievement across the school and the impact of mobility on standards attained, especially in Year 6.
- The consistency of good teaching across the school and its impact on raising achievement, especially in writing and for more capable pupils.
- The impact of leadership and management on raising achievement, especially through monitoring, evaluation and target setting.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, discussions with pupils and staff, a review of the assessment data the school uses to track pupils' progress, and an analysis of pupils' work. 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, were not justified, and these have been included, where appropriate, in this report.

## Description of the school

This school, average in size, is situated close to the town. It serves a mixed population including the local community and further afield. Most pupils are of White British heritage and, although the proportion from minority ethnic backgrounds is similar to most schools, the number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is a little above average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average but, compared with most schools, a higher proportion have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils' difficulties are mainly speech and language, physical, emotional and behavioural. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are in the Reception class. The overall proportion of pupils joining or leaving the school other than at the usual time is above average in Key Stage 2. The school has gained the Healthy Schools, Sports Activemark and Eco Schools Silver awards. Since the previous inspection, the school has moved into a new building. There is a Children and Family Centre as well as a pre-school on the same site, although these are separately managed.

## 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 school. It has some outstanding features. The school really nurtures its pupils and, as a result of the excellent levels of care and an exciting curriculum, pupils' personal development is exceptional; they behave extremely well, feel very safe and come to love learning. The headteacher provides very good leadership and strikes a balance between striving for academic achievement and promoting pupils' personal development. Pupils receive a very well-rounded education which enables them to successfully develop their academic, creative, practical and sporting skills. The great majority of parents justifiably hold the school in high regard. One parent echoed the views of many when saying, 'My children look forward to going to school. Blackwell School is a fantastic environment for them to grow and learn.'

From starting points that are below those typically expected for their age, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage although standards on entry to Year 1 are a little below average. Standards have recently improved in the Early Years Foundation Stage because the teaching of phonics and reading has been strengthened. Pupils' good progress continues in Years 1 and 2 and by Year 2, standards are average in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils' progress in reading is excellent in Years 1 and 2.

Good progress continues in Years 3 to 6. The unvalidated end-of-Year 6 test results for 2008 showed pupils reached above average standards in English, mathematics and science. Standards are generally above average for the current Year 6 although not quite as good in English as they are in mathematics and science. Pupils achieve well compared with their starting points. There has been high pupil mobility for this year group and later entrants often arrive with gaps in their skills and knowledge, limited English or with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good progress because there are robust and effective programmes for helping these and any other pupils who have previously underachieved to catch up. Pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve well due to the good support they receive. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning.

Senior leaders provide strong leadership and management systems and, in partnership with a dedicated and effective teaching team, ensure that a focus on accelerating pupils' achievement is always a priority. The arrangements for self-evaluation are good. Senior leaders rigorously monitor teaching and promote good practice and middle leaders are given the opportunity to check and manage their areas of responsibility. Thorough assessment systems have led to the school having an accurate view of its own performance. Teachers are becoming more adept in judging the impact of their own teaching on the progress that pupils make towards their demanding targets. However, the school acknowledges that there is more work to do to ensure this is consistent throughout the school. Governors are very well led and provide both good support and challenge.

Teachers' general skills in planning and delivering lessons, as well as their subject strengths, are evaluated rigorously and areas for improvement are linked to clear performance targets and training. This has led to much good teaching. Teachers capture pupils' interest and bring learning alive by very good use of resources and whiteboard technology. They manage pupils very well and their high expectations bring out good work habits in their classes. Occasionally, however, assessment information is not used well enough and, at such times, work is rather hard for lower-attaining pupils or too easy for the more capable.

The curriculum is excellent. Very strong links between subjects make learning meaningful, exciting and relevant to pupils' lives. The strong focus on information and communication technology (ICT) supports pupils' learning across the curriculum and stimulates their research skills exceptionally well. Subjects such as art and design and technology, as well as a rich programme of visits and visitors, bring learning alive and are often used to underpin academic learning. This approach is used very well to enable pupils to develop their writing across the curriculum and to engage the pupils' interest in high quality literature, for example in the poem 'The Highwayman' by Alfred Noyes. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities for extra-curricular activities and sport with specialist teachers providing some high quality learning opportunities, for example, in dance. Very close partnerships with local schools, including secondary schools, strengthen curricular and social opportunities. Pupils develop an extremely good understanding of healthy lifestyles and thoroughly enjoy all the exciting sports activities that are offered to them.

Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development provides them with a high level of respect and concern for the views and feelings of others. Positive attitudes and relationships permeate every aspect of school life. The school works very effectively with outside specialists and parents to support vulnerable children, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. Safeguarding arrangements are very rigorous and fully meet statutory requirements. Pupils have a strong sense of belonging and make a significant contribution to their own and wider communities. They take excellent care of their beautiful environment through activities such as picking up litter, recycling, gardening and energy conservation. The school rigorously promotes pupils' good attendance. Community cohesion is good. The school celebrates cultural diversity and strives to reach out to all the different groups of pupils and their families. Pupils learn to understand and value each other's cultures and faiths from an early age. The school is now developing links further afield. The rate of improvement shows the school has a good capacity to improve.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Many children join Reception with understanding and skills that are below those typical for their age. Leadership is good and there are excellent induction procedures for helping children adjust when they join the school. Parents are delighted with how quickly children settle. Children achieve well in a stimulating and happy learning environment and by the time they begin Year 1, most have reached average standards, including in literacy and numeracy. Few, however, achieve at higher levels so standards overall are still somewhat below average. Children make rapid progress in their personal development because they are exceptionally well cared for and feel very safe. They greatly enjoy school because there are plenty of interesting and worthwhile things to do. A good balance is struck between children learning for themselves and the direct teaching by adults. Assessment data indicated some underachievement in the past in literacy. Recently, the school has increased the time spent on direct teaching of basic skills and this, and the stepped-up programmes for teaching phonics and reading, are having a positive impact on raising achievement. Teaching is good. Some outstanding teaching was seen in mathematics, where an excellent match to children's different needs produced rapid progress for all. Children's progress is rigorously assessed and the school is developing new tracking systems to enable this process to become more efficient. The outdoor learning area is developing well although role-play opportunities are not yet well catered for.

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

- Make sure teachers consistently use assessment information well to match work to the learning needs of lower-attaining and more capable pupils.
- Develop greater consistency in the way teachers evaluate the impact of their teaching on pupils' progress towards their targets.



## 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?	1
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?	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?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<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	2
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	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
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>	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**

25 March 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Blackwell Primary School, East Grinstead RH19 3JL

Thank you so much for making us so welcome and for helping us with the inspection when we visited your school recently. Your views are important as you are the school's customers. You said your school is a good one and we agree. Here are some good things about your school:

- You make good progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Those of you in Reception get off to a good start.
- Your behaviour is excellent and you are a credit to your school. This helps to make your school a happy one.
- You have very interesting things planned for you in lessons and really good opportunities for sport, ICT, and for after-school clubs.
- Teachers take excellent care of you and make sure you are kept very safe.
- You take excellent care of your beautiful school through recycling, picking up litter and saving energy.
- Your headteacher leads you all very well and teachers and school governors are working hard to make the school even better.

This is what we are asking the school to improve:

- Make sure your work is never too easy or too hard.
- Help teachers make better checks on how well you are progressing towards your targets.

We hope you will continue to enjoy school and work hard in all you do.

Yours faithfully

Eileen Chadwick

Lead inspector