

Blidworth Oaks Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	131560
Local Authority	Nottinghamshire
Inspection number	328614
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Reporting inspector	Martin Newell

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	306
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Carol Wright
Headteacher	Mrs Celia Lassetter
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Haywood Avenue Blidworth Mansfield Nottinghamshire NG21 0RD
Telephone number	01623 792348
Fax number	01623 797419

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	11–12 June 2008
Inspection number	328614

© Crown copyright 2008

Website: 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This above-average sized school is a newly designated school formed from the amalgamation of Robert Jones Infant and Junior Schools in April 2007. Pupils were automatically transferred into the new school and there were no significant changes to the school population or numbers. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. More pupils than nationally need additional help with their learning though the proportion with a statement for their special educational need is below the national average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds and, of the small number of pupils from different ethnic backgrounds, none is at an early stage of learning English. Children's attainment on starting school is well below national expectations. The school has gained the Healthy Schools Gold award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This satisfactory school that has come a long way in the 14 months since its formation. It is improving at a significant pace and has good capability for further development. The relentless drive forward owes much to the strong leadership of the headteacher and the shared commitment of all staff to improve further and to make this a good school. The recent record of improvement suggests that the school is well placed to achieve this vision. As one pupil said, 'The head can change anything.' Most parents speak well of the school and are appreciative of its efforts in making this a unified community after operating as separate infant and junior schools.

Test and assessment data indicates that, while progress has been good in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2, progress in Years 3 to 6 has been too slow. Hence, standards have been significantly below the national average by the end of Year 6. The situation is improving well and progress overall is now satisfactory, although standards remain below the national average and there is still some legacy of underachievement. There continue to be strengths for the younger pupils and it is in Years 3 to 6 where progress is not yet consistent enough in all classes, though improvement is gathering pace. This inconsistency is down to variability in the quality of teaching. In some classes, teaching is outstanding and pupils' learning moves along at a cracking pace. Here, teachers have high expectations, both in terms of the quantity and quality of work and of how well pupils behave and contribute to lessons. However, these factors are not yet evident in all classes.

Pupils' personal development and the curriculum on offer are satisfactory, with some good features. Significant improvements have been seen in behaviour, although some pupils still struggle in terms of self-discipline. The school has rightly identified the need to develop pupils as independent learners who take initiative and responsibility because, at present, this is a weaker aspect. Pupils have a good awareness of what is needed to keep fit and healthy and to manage risk in their own lives. By the time pupils leave school, they are adequately prepared for their future education and lives. Despite a wide range of strategies, rewards and sanctions to help drive home to parents the importance of their children coming to school regularly, attendance levels remain below average. The curriculum is improving and already has good enrichment opportunities. In order to accelerate pupils' progress, the school is beginning to develop pupils' key skills through a more cross-curricular, exciting, relevant and innovative approach but this is not yet fully embedded. All staff play their part in ensuring that pastoral care and guidance are strengths of the school. Academic guidance, although improving, is satisfactory because pupils have only limited knowledge of their targets.

The headteacher provides very good leadership and has played a significant role in bringing about improvements to key aspects of school life. She has left no stone unturned in the quest for better achievement and higher standards and, although she recognises that there is still much to be done, the seeds of success have been sown. The contributions of the senior leadership team, subject leaders and governors, together with the strong sense of team spirit and commitment from all staff, indicates that the continued development of the school is in safe and accomplished hands.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make good progress in the Foundation Stage and achieve well, although attainment on entry to Year 1 is still below expectations. Teaching is good. Especially good levels of interaction encourage the children to be independent and to initiate their own learning. Questioning techniques and the balance of activities, whilst effective, do not always fully extend learning. Nevertheless, all children receive the support necessary to help them achieve and behave well. Leadership of provision is good. Strong links with the 'Little Learners' group on site, with other agencies and with parents and carers ensure children are settled and happy.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the incidence of good and better teaching by ensuring lessons are challenging and motivating and pupils' behaviour is managed well.
- Enable pupils to develop as independent learners who take initiative and responsibility for their own learning.
- Provide systematic and well-planned opportunities for pupils to develop key skills across different subjects of the curriculum.
- Ensure that the importance of good attendance continues to be communicated to parents and carers.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall performance is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Although limited national data is available for the academic performance of Blidworth Oaks because of its newly formed status, data was evaluated relating to the performance of the schools as infant and junior schools. Test data shows that, over time, standards by the end of Year 2 have been close to the national average and this indicates good progress, which the inspection findings confirm. Historically, standards at the end of Year 6 have been well below average and progress has been inadequate through Key Stage 2. However, the situation is changing rapidly. Improvements to teaching, assessment and behaviour means that pupils now make satisfactory, and sometimes good, progress. Nevertheless, because of the legacy of underachievement, standards remain below average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

The school's efforts to improve pupils' behaviour have led to a significant reduction in inappropriate behaviour and exclusions. However, a small number of pupils still demonstrate a lack of self-discipline. Pupils' enjoyment of school is satisfactory and improving as the school offers an increasing range of stimulating activities, both within and outside of the curriculum. Their knowledge of what is needed to keep fit, safe and healthy is good. Steps are being taken to increase the range of opportunities for pupils to make a more telling contribution to the school and wider community. They make satisfactory progress in developing literacy, numeracy and other key skills to help them in their future lives.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Across the school, teachers make good use of the interactive whiteboards, planning is mostly good and teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Some of the teaching is outstanding because it is challenging, with high expectations being made clear to pupils. Organisation is highly structured and work is broken down into tasks the pupils can easily understand. These factors, together with excellent behaviour management, keep pupils fully engaged and progressing really well. Where teaching is less strong, it is because work is not challenging enough or behaviour management is weaker. The good marking of pupils' work, giving them clear pointers for improvement, is evident in a number of classes but not in all.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory, although shoots of improving consistency are clearly evident. The school plans to develop literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and other skills across different subjects and through activities that would challenge, motivate and enthuse pupils in equal measure. However, these still have to be implemented fully. The provision made for pupils who need support with their learning is good and continuing to improve apace. Curriculum enrichment is good. There is a good range of visits, visitors and special curriculum days or weeks to add further interest. Extracurricular activities are varied and the wide range ensures that there is always something to match pupils' preferences.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good. Staff go the extra mile to ensure that the social and emotional needs of pupils are quickly identified and dealt with. Pupils talk about how behaviour over the last twelve months has improved significantly; how bullying has been dealt with swiftly, and how they are listened to and respected. All these factors help them feel safe and valued. Good links with outside agencies, alongside the school's internal mechanisms, mean that help and support are quickly provided for pupils experiencing difficulties with their work or personal lives. Safeguarding procedures are robust. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Very good systems are in place for assessing and tracking progress but, as yet, pupils do not play an active role in setting their own targets for improvement.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher's very good leadership is a pivotal reason for the school's improvement. She has tackled weaknesses with a determination and rigour that has seen significant improvements in key areas such as achievement, teaching, assessment and behaviour. She is a realist, however, and recognises that there is still work to be done if good achievement is to be the norm. The school's evaluation of its own effectiveness is spot on, clearly demonstrating that the headteacher has an excellent grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses. There is good support from the capable, committed and skilful senior leadership team, and subject leaders.

Governors are very supportive and ask the right questions about the school's performance. All now recognise the need to measure the impact of initiatives they have introduced in terms of improvements in standards and achievement.

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.

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	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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?	3
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	3
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	3
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3

¹ 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

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 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	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

13 June 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of Blidworth Oaks Primary School, Blidworth, Nottinghamshire, NG21 0RE

You will probably remember that we visited your school not too long ago and I am now writing to let you know what we found out. But before I do, I would just like to say thank you for making us feel welcome and for being so ready to share your thoughts about Blidworth Oaks. We had a chance to talk to quite a lot of you and I have told your teachers how you were so helpful and polite. It was good to hear that many of you enjoy school, that bullying is not an issue and that you feel that there have been a lot of improvements recently.

We found that staff care for you well and make learning enjoyable through the clubs and other activities. The school is good in helping you to keep fit, safe and healthy. Mrs Lassetter is a very good headteacher and, together with all the staff and governors, wants to make the school an even better place to learn. I know that you want the same! Many of you behave well but occasionally some children could behave a little better. However, I am sure the good behaviour of many can spread across the whole school!

We have talked to your teachers about how they can help make the school a more exciting place for you to learn. They are going to make teaching even better so that all of you make good progress, help you all to work more independently and to provide you with lots of exciting opportunities to test out your literacy, numeracy and other skills in different subjects. We have also asked the school to keep up the good work they do in reminding parents and carers of the importance of making sure you attend school regularly.

The staff and governors want the school to improve. I know you will want to play your part by continuing to work hard and behave well. We wish you every success in the future. It was a pleasure to meet you.

Martin Newell Lead inspector