

Blaydon West Primary School

Inspection report

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| Unique Reference Number | 108349 |
| Local Authority | Gateshead |
| Inspection number | 331070 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 June 2009 |
| Reporting inspector | Margaret Shepherd |

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 3–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number on roll | |
| School (total) | 213 |
| 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 | Interim executive |
| Chair | Miss Jean McKay board |
| Headteacher | Mrs Paula Bailey |
| Date of previous school inspection | 1 October 2007 |
| Date of previous funded early education inspection | Not previously inspected |
| Date of previous childcare inspection | Not previously inspected |
| School address | Blaydon Bank Blaydon on Tyne Gateshead Tyne and Wear NE21 4PY |

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|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Age group | 3–11 |
| Inspection dates | 17–18 June 2009 |
| Inspection number | 331070 |

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

The school serves an area with challenging social and economic circumstances. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is more than double the average and more pupils move in and out of the school during the year than is usual. The great majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is higher than normal. The Early Years Foundation Stage has separate Nursery and Reception classes and a shared outdoor area. At the previous inspection the school was judged to need special measures. There have been four termly monitoring visits since then and a considerable number of staffing changes.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that Blaydon West Primary School no longer requires special measures. It is providing a satisfactory and improving education for its pupils. The key factor in this improvement is the determination of the headteacher, senior staff, the Interim Executive Board and local authority to work in partnership to develop provision and raise standards. These leaders ensure that the school's weaknesses are tackled systematically, that high quality external support is provided and that key strengths are identified and shared across the school.

The school has efficient tracking systems which it uses very well to analyse pupils' individual progress. The inspection confirms the accuracy of these systems, which shows that overall achievement and progress are at least satisfactory and are good in Years 2 and 6. Standards are rising. Standards were well below average at the previous inspection. The national tests and assessments show that standards were significantly below average last year. They are now average in Year 2 and below average in Year 6. This reflects the improvements this year especially in the quality of teaching and learning, which is consistently satisfactory with good features. Many lessons go at a brisk pace with tasks targeted closely to individual needs, but this is not yet consistent throughout the school. The school is in a positive position to extend the good features and improve the quality of teaching and learning still further. There is a similar picture in the curriculum, which is satisfactory. The basic skills curriculum is firmly in place but it is not stimulating or enriching and does not create enough links across different subjects, particularly for writing.

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory. The school has worked hard to provide effective academic guidance for individuals to help them to improve their work, which is supporting the increase in their progress. Alongside this guidance all staff support and care for pupils, which helps them to feel safe and secure. Personal development is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy their learning and their behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Their understanding of healthy living is satisfactory, as is the preparation for their future lives. Attendance rates are lower than they should be, despite the school's efforts to improve them and a few pupils are late for school in the mornings. Pupils gain good experience of citizenship from features such as the school council, but are not as confident in understanding their place in the wider community and world. The school has only just begun to develop links with the local community to strengthen these aspects of provision and not enough opportunities exist for pupils to develop an understanding of multi-cultural or global issues.

The school now has a very good senior leadership team that monitors the school's work thoroughly, sets challenging targets and takes carefully planned action based on accurate self-evaluation. The rate of improvement has accelerated over the past year and all staff are keen to play their part in moving the school forward. This results in a good capacity for future improvement.

The Interim Executive Board took over from the governing body after the school was put into special measures.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and reflects the great commitment of the good leadership from the headteacher and coordinators to systematically develop provision. Achievement is good. Children enter the school with skills that are lower than those typical for their age and by the end of Reception the great majority of children have reached average standards. They make consistently good progress in their personal development. All staff work very well together to support individuals and promote their welfare. Very efficient systems ensure that children receive a good balance between direct support from adults and independent learning. These systems have ensured that children have continued to make good progress despite changes in key staff. Provision is outstanding in the Nursery where staff use questioning particularly well to support individuals. The quality of the shared outdoor learning area is outstanding, providing an excellent balance across each of the areas of learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Increase the pace in lessons, and respond more effectively to individual pupils' different rates of learning.
- Provide a more stimulating and enriching curriculum that makes links across different subjects to raise standards, particularly in writing.
- Increase rates of attendance and punctuality.
- Plan and implement an approach to developing community cohesion in the locality, nationally and globally and extend pupils' awareness of the diverse cultures of the wider world.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness 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

Achievement is satisfactory. Progress is at least satisfactory through the school and in Years 2 and 6 it is good. Standards in Year 2 are broadly average, with reading higher than writing. This is a considerable improvement on previous national assessments and is due to the consistently good teaching and curriculum in this year group during the past year.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average, with those in mathematics and reading being higher than those in writing. This is a considerable improvement from previous years where the results of national tests show that standards were significantly below average. Most pupils have made satisfactory progress from their starting points at the end of Year 2. The improvement is a result of the considerable efforts the school has made to raise standards through rigorous and efficient assessment, through targeting individual pupils and by using a national pilot scheme to increase staff support. These changes have accelerated progress especially in Year 6. Standards reached by pupils in the early part of Key Stage 2 are lower as they have had more disruption to their provision in previous years. The strategies for raising standards in Year 6 have been implemented successfully in these younger classes and tracking data show progress in these classes is now also satisfactory. Standards in both key stages are highest in mathematics, which is due to consistency in the coordination of this subject and effective planning.

Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have benefited from improved support. They make satisfactory progress in contrast to the previous inspection where it was inadequate.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 3

Personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is satisfactory. Younger pupils are confident and their personal development is good. Pupils enjoy learning and concentrate well in lessons, although the pace of their learning sometimes falters when working independently and some are reticent about responding to teachers. They work well in pairs and groups, and are appreciative of one another's ideas and views. Their respect for teachers results in good behaviour and a sense of responsibility around school. Some behaviour is inappropriate but pupils know that such incidents are dealt with promptly by staff, and they feel safe. They clearly enjoy school although their attendance remains lower than it should be, and is not improving despite the school's concerted efforts. A small minority of pupils are not punctual.

Pupils have successfully lobbied for extra activities after school, including sport. They know the benefits of exercise, although many are not involved in sport out of school. They understand what the healthier foods are but are not wholly clear about the importance of a balanced diet. Pupils acquire some good citizenship skills, especially as members of the school council, and were involved in the creation of the new library. There is some interaction with the local community, such as involvement with an arts group to produce posters for a litter campaign. However, pupils' awareness of the diverse cultures of the wider world is limited. Overall, pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their life ahead.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory with good features. A key feature of teaching is the effective partnerships between teachers and teaching assistants, which ensures that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make at least satisfactory progress. Planning is very thorough, with clear strategies for assessing progress. Good account is taken of this assessment in identifying different tasks for group work. Staff manage behaviour well and expect pupils to complete tasks. This leads to calm and purposeful learning in lessons. In the good lessons, teachers set a brisk pace both to introducing new learning and in consolidating pupils' understanding. They respond flexibly to pupils' responses and vary their teaching approaches accordingly. This is based carefully on their understanding of each pupil's different styles of learning and ensures that progress is consistently good across all the different stages of the lesson. The best teaching also includes the generation of pupils' enthusiasm through the use of interesting tasks and imaginative use of resources, which result in pupils having a very positive approach to the learning. In the satisfactory lessons, teachers do not use these strategies as successfully. The pace of learning slows and individual needs are not always fully met.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactory. It fulfils statutory requirements and has an appropriate balance across different subjects. The school has rightly concentrated on strengthening basic skills in

literacy and numeracy and the national strategies are firmly in place. The curriculum for using and applying mathematics is well structured. The school has addressed the need to provide investigations in the science curriculum and this is evident across all year groups. The school has improved resources for information and communication technology (ICT) appreciably and pupils are beginning to use computers more confidently across the curriculum. The curriculum is not creative or imaginative enough and misses opportunities to create links across different subjects, especially in writing. The curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities meets their needs. The provision for pupils' personal, social and health education is good. Outside agencies are used well, for example, to improve pupils' awareness of the dangers of drugs.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Pastoral care is good and staff support the pupils well. Pupils feel safe and appreciate that staff readily and sensitively help them with personal issues. Vulnerable pupils are looked after well, aided by the expertise of outside agencies. An outreach worker from the Salvation Army is very effective at supporting pupils and their families. The school works closely with the attendance officer, although attendance is proving difficult to improve. Behaviour management systems are good and staff use them consistently, resulting in good levels of behaviour throughout the school. Procedures for safeguarding pupils are rigorous and meet statutory requirements. Staff are well trained in child protection and first aid.

The school has good systems to check pupils' progress in their work. Staff are improving the use of this information and most teachers now identify pupils' needs and meet these with more support in lessons or individual sessions outside lessons. Pupils appreciate the advice they receive from teachers in lessons and in their books, especially in English, as well as their informal targets. This guidance is beginning to have a discernible impact on standards.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and a clear focus on setting challenging targets are key factors in the school's good improvement since the previous inspection. The headteacher has a great determination to improve, coupled with excellent management skills that ensure weaknesses are tackled systematically. The senior leadership team leads and supports staff in developing their expertise very effectively. The Interim Executive Board works in very close and effective partnership with the headteacher. Its support and induction of the shadow governors ensure that the school is in a very good position to institute the new governing body. Good use has been made of the support of National Leaders of Education and staff from other schools, particularly in the implementation of efficient pupil tracking systems and in providing examples of good quality teaching and learning. The close and very productive partnership between the school leaders and the local authority has ensured that high levels of external support have developed the work of the school systematically. The management and promotion of community cohesion is improving and is currently satisfactory. The strategies and skills of the school leaders, combined with the keenness of all staff to develop their practice, mean that the school has a good capacity for future improvement.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

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| Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate | School Overall |
|---|----------------|

Overall effectiveness

| | |
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| 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 | 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

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|---|---|
| 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? | 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/or disabilities make progress | 3 |

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? | 3 |
| The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles | 3 |
| The extent to which learners adopt safe practices | 2 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education | 2 |
| The attendance of learners | 3 |
| The behaviour of learners | 2 |
| 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 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 |

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 | 3 |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion? | 3 |
| How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money | 3 |
| 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**

19 June 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blaydon West Primary School, Gateshead, NE21 4PY

Last time that an inspector wrote to you, it was to tell you that inspectors would be returning to check how well the school was improving. I have really enjoyed my visits over the past two years and I am delighted to tell you that the headteacher and other leaders have succeeded in carrying out many improvements and your school is satisfactory.

Standards are higher and the progress through the school is satisfactory. In Years 2 and 6 it has got even better and progress is good. You will have noticed that you are doing different things in the curriculum and things have improved in English, mathematics and science. The school is going to develop further to provide more stimulating activities and to help you make links across different subjects, particularly in writing. The teaching is now satisfactory with some good features. We think that the school can work to make all of the teaching and learning good. The children in the Nursery make an excellent start to their education. You will have seen all the very interesting things that they do in their outdoor area.

Mr Scott and I were impressed with your behaviour, both in lessons and around the school. You told us that you feel safe and secure because all the staff take good care of you, and we agree. We think that the guidance you receive to improve your work really works well. We know that you enjoy learning about being a member of the school community through the school council. The school is going to give you more opportunities to learn to be a member of the community in Blaydon and in the wider world. Most of you come to school regularly but not all of you do and it is very important that everyone does this.

We are sure that you will keep doing your best to make school an even better place and we wish you every success in your future lives.

Yours faithfully

Maggi Shepherd

Lead inspector