

Blenheim Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107884
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	331274
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Linda Murphy

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	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	176
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	Dr Sameh Zaghoul
Headteacher	Mrs Mo Duffy
Date of previous school inspection	22 April 2008
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Lofthouse Place Leeds West Yorkshire LS2 9EX
Telephone number	0113 2930808
Fax number	0113 2930808

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	10–11 June 2009
Inspection number	331274

© Crown copyright 2009

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

When Blenheim Primary School was inspected in April 2008 it was given a Notice to Improve and asked to address issues related to the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils' progress in reading, writing and mathematics especially across Years 3 to 6 and the quality of teaching, including marking. It was subsequently visited in November 2008, when it was judged to be making satisfactory progress.

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school that serves a diverse inner city community. The pupils in the school represent forty different countries: 36 different languages are spoken. There are a growing number of refugees and asylum seekers. The largest minority ethnic groups, represented at about 20% each, are Black African and White British. Over half the pupils speak little or no English on joining the school and a high proportion of pupils join and leave the school throughout each year: many pupils only stay for a few years because a significant proportion of pupils are from international families studying at the local university. Eligibility for free school meals is higher than average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school holds the Healthy School's Award, Activemark, the Stephen Lawrence Award and the Financial Management Standard in Schools. The Early Years Foundation Stage provision comprises a joint Nursery and Reception unit.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. It has made good progress since its last inspection and is placed in a good position to continue its improvement. The school fulfils its mission well to 'aim high in the heart of the city'.

Pupils achieve well throughout the school. Since 2007, from standards well below expected levels on entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils have attained average standards by Year 2. Because of the very high proportion of pupils leaving and joining, standards are lower in the present Year 2 than in previous years. However, in Year 1, standards are at the expected levels for pupils' ages. Importantly, pupils attain well from their individual starting points. By the end of Year 6, standards have improved greatly since the last inspection, when they were well below average, to a level that is now below average in English, mathematics and science. Particular strengths are in the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills, which have a high priority given the significant proportion of pupils who speak little or no English on admission to school. Science is the weaker subject overall. The school has recently focused on providing more practical activities in science and improving lesson planning in the subject, but the impact of this has yet to be seen in raised standards.

The well focused support provided for pupils' welfare and well-being greatly encourages pupils' good personal development. Pupils understand that central to their future success is hard work and sustained effort. They have a very good understanding of the importance of tolerance in contributing positively to a multicultural society. Pupils' first-rate understanding of how to stay safe and healthy reflects external awards attained by the school. The school provides good guidance to pupils' academic development through much improved marking and the use of targets in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good. Many positive aspects result in very effective learning. Pupils' needs in science are at times insufficiently matched to their precise attainment which slows their progress. Teachers have yet to build on pupils' good personal development to enable them to be more independent and self-sufficient in their learning.

The curriculum provides well for the basic skills and pupils particularly enjoy themed weeks when they study aspects in more detail, such as Black history. This approach is not yet used regularly day in and day out to further enhance pupils' enjoyment and to provide extra opportunities to apply reading, writing and mathematics to other subjects.

The school is well led and managed at all levels, including governance. Leaders accurately assess the school's strengths and areas to develop. This assessment is based on clear evaluation and careful monitoring that leads to appropriate action being taken to raise pupils' academic and personal success. A strong team spirit abounds. Staff and governors undertake training to better equip themselves to play their part in raising standards. Good partnerships with external agencies flourish and are drawn on very well to provide extra support for pupils. For example, a full time seconded teacher of English as an additional language has a huge impact on pupils' developing language skills, not only for new arrivals to the country, but also for advanced speakers of English. The school deploys its staff and other learning resources well and provides good value for money.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most children start school with skills and knowledge well below those typical for their age. Although children achieve well they still do not usually attain the goals expected nationally for their age by the end of the Reception Year. Good progress has been made since the last inspection because good leadership and management ensure that the quality of teaching and learning is very effective. Assessments are increasingly accurate and used well to match tasks to children's needs. All welfare requirements are fully met. Good care begins right from the early stages when the families contribute to induction. This is highly valued and begins a very positive journey of partnership with parents throughout the school. The curriculum focuses on developing children's speaking and listening through many activities such as role-play and discussion. Much attention is given to writing and pupils increasingly use their knowledge of letter sounds to write independently. The curriculum is good in that it provides a wide range of opportunities and makes good use of learning in the fresh air. It has yet to fully take on board children's particular interests.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in science so that they at least match the higher standards in English and mathematics.
- Promote pupils' independence in learning so that they become less reliant on adults.
- Improve the relevance and excitement in the curriculum and the opportunities to apply basic skills in a broader range of situations.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good and standards are rising overall. Some year groups are small and so data needs to be treated with caution. When compared nationally, standards at Year 2 in 2008 were average in reading, writing and mathematics. School data shows that this year standards are lower because the group has had many pupils join and leave in a short time, mostly joining with little or no English. For example, in the present Year 2 of 17 pupils there are over seven different languages spoken. Even so, the school's records show good progress from the individual's starting points. In Year 6, standards in 2008 were significantly lower than standards nationally. In 2009, pupils' work in books shows that standards have risen considerably in English and mathematics to below average. For this group it represents good progress from when they joined the school. Of the Year 6 class of 14 only two have spent all their primary education in this school. Most groups of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, achieve equally well. However, those of Chinese heritage, who generally receive much support from home achieve especially well. In science, standards by Year 6 have further to go to match levels in other nationally tested subjects. Fewer pupils than average attain high levels in all subjects.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy, confident and courteous. They thoroughly enjoy school, commenting 'you learn but you have fun at the same time', get on well together and respect each other. Pupils are adamant that, 'There is no bullying and no racism.' They are confident that any problems

are sorted out immediately. This is because they have a strong voice in their school. The school council has great responsibility, working out how to spend their allocated money on what pupils need rather than on what they want. However, according to the pupils it does not meet often enough. Pupils have an excellent understanding of why it is important to lead healthy lives and they are staunch advocates of the healthy fruit tuckshop as well as successful campaigners for a greater take-up of healthy school meals. Playtimes are energetic, lively and sociable occasions, with lots of different games and Year 6 coaching others in the new dance steps for the next daily 'wake up and shake up' routine. Pupils' awareness of safety is excellent. They make a good contribution to the local and school community through fundraising, music and sports events. Attendance is satisfactory. Pupils are satisfactorily prepared for their future lives because of their confident speech and increasing basic skills.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is consistently good across the school. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. Teaching assistants are deployed well to enable all groups of pupils to make good progress through a strong focus on spoken language. Lessons are very well organised so no time is wasted. Warm, trusting relationships give pupils confidence to share their feelings and to ask when they need help. This has led to much improved writing, for instance, when Year 6 pupils recorded their views of a buttercup field and wrote lines such as 'it softened my soul' observing 'different greens surging up to the sky'. Discussion enables all pupils to contribute orally in lessons and have time to reflect. Boys and girls contribute equally well and with no embarrassment. Teachers are accomplished at reinforcing language and giving pupils time to explain their reasoning. Skilled management of pupils' behaviour helps lessons to maintain their focus and move at a good pace. The downside is that sometimes lessons are over-managed and so pupils become too reliant on adult intervention rather than working productively and independently with minimal adult support.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum has a strong focus on developing pupils' skills in language, literacy and numeracy. Science is less well planned to enable pupils to build on what they know and understand through regular investigations. Good features across the school are the many opportunities pupils have to talk and listen to each other as well as times to take part in role-play. These have a significant impact on the progress made by new learners of English. The school has made a start on promoting pupils' literacy skills in other subjects. The curriculum as a whole, though, is unadventurous, with opportunities missed to make learning exciting and relevant through making links between subjects. The exception is music where learning to play the sitar and playing in a steel band celebrate the diversity of pupils' cultural heritages. On the other hand, Year 1 pupils miss out on learning outdoors, despite good resources being available. The introduction of 'themed weeks' is a step towards giving pupils more first-hand experiences, drawing on the multi-ethnic cultures in school. A good range of extra-curricular clubs and educational visits contributes well to pupils' enjoyment of school. Currently, the opportunity to learn a modern foreign language is restricted to an after-school club.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Good systems to safeguard all pupils meet current government requirements. The outstanding way in which the school successfully includes newcomers with many different languages and heritages at any point in the school year enables them to quickly settle in and start learning. The school gives good support to vulnerable pupils and to those from refugee or asylum seeking families, making sure they do not miss out on activities. Pupils are well cared for and protected. The parent support adviser builds good relationships with parents and this work impacts well on pupils' attendance and punctuality. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities or those who need a bit of extra help are given good support in class and individually. Individual education or behaviour plans are used well to help pupils make the next steps in their learning. Pupils' behaviour is tracked very closely to ensure there is no racism or bullying; its success is confirmed in the attainment of the Stephen Lawrence award. Pupils' academic progress is also tracked very closely. The information is used well to set individual and group targets. These measures have made significant inroads into raising achievement, although the benefit has yet to be fully realised. Marking is now good. Pupils demonstrate their good understanding of what to do to improve their work and this accelerates their progress.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The very effective leadership and management help pupils to achieve well. The headteacher has a relentless focus on raising standards and improving provision and is the driving force underpinning positive change. Other senior staff, governors and subject leaders, work well together to help raise standards and to improve pupils' personal development in good preparation for their future lives. The leadership of science is temporary and has not yet been a key focus for development. Respect and tolerance for the religions and cultures of other people pervades the school community. Pupils come from an international background and gain a very good understanding of the importance of working together to create a good world to live in. Pupils enjoy finding out about the lives and countries of origin of others. They often keep in touch once friends leave through email and letters. Staff and governors are very effective role models and are representative of the pupils' backgrounds. Test results are analysed and the information acted upon. Pupils' progress is tracked very carefully and the quality of teaching closely monitored.

Teachers are regularly held to account for the progress their pupils make. Equal opportunities are paramount and carefully monitored. The school has made good use of support from Education Leeds, for example, through training and through the appointment of two additional governors. Parents are very supportive of the school and explain that the school helps their children 'develop confidence' that 'staff are patient and help the pupils make good progress' and are 'wholly supportive of the pupils' needs'. Challenging targets to raise standards are increasingly met.

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?	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?	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?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
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	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
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	2
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?	2
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?	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	1
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**

Inspection of Blenheim Primary School, Leeds, LS2 9EX

Thank you for your help when your school was inspected. You were very friendly and took time to talk to the inspectors about your school of which you are very proud.

Blenheim Primary School gives you a good education and your parents are very pleased with this and you will be pleased to know that your school no longer requires a notice to improve.

It all starts 'at the top' with good leadership and the outcomes of this are that staff look after you all well and take good care of you. Because of this you are very courteous and kind and get on exceedingly well together in your international community, as we saw in your lessons, at playtime and in the celebration assembly. You behave well and contribute a great deal to your school community. You have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe and healthy. The teaching is good so you learn at a good rate and do the best you can. All of you have equal access to what the school provides.

Because everyone wants to do even better I have asked the headteacher and governors to help to improve standards in science so that they at least match the higher standards you attain in English and mathematics. You can help by trying really hard with all the scientific experiments you are given. Inspectors have also asked the school to help you become more independent in your learning so you are less reliant on adults. You can help by really thinking for yourselves. The school has also been asked to make your tasks even more enjoyable and exciting. You can help by continuing to behave well, so that you get the most out of your learning.

Well done everyone – you are all 'stars of the school'!