

Blyth Horton Grange Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	122254
Local Authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	335380
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Reporting inspector	Christine Graham HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 which gives Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills (HMCI) the authority to cause any school to be inspected. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	355
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr David Hall
Headteacher	Mrs Jackie Cheveugeon
Date of previous school inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Kitty Brewster Blyth Northumberland NE24 4RE
Telephone number	01670 353503
Fax number	01670 354276
Email address	admin@blythhortongrangefirst.northumberland.sch.uk

Age group	3–9
Inspection dates	7–8 December 2009
Inspection number	335380

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It rates council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the documentation in any way.

Royal Exchange Buildings
St Ann's Square
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

Textphone: 0161 618 8524

E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2009

Introduction

This inspection was carried out at no notice by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 16 lessons, and held meetings with the interim executive board (IEB), the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, staff, pupils, and parents and carers. They observed the school's work, and looked at school improvement planning, the school's self-evaluation, pupils' work and external reports about the school's effectiveness.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment, their learning and progress
- the school's effectiveness and its capacity for further improvement
- the school's procedures to safeguard pupils.

Information about the school

When Blyth Horton Grange First School was inspected in November 2007 it was placed in special measures. At that time it was subject to reorganisation proposals and in September 2009 the school became Blyth Horton Grange Primary School. A great deal of building work has taken place on the site to ready the school for its new status. The school currently caters for pupils from ages three to ten and the current Year 5 pupils will be the first to complete the primary phase of their education at the school.

The school is larger than most primary schools. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. A higher than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than average, as is the proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. The school has been through a turbulent period. There has been a great deal of long-term staff absence and a number of teachers have left the school. The headteacher is the fourth to lead the school since November 2007. Eight teachers, the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and a member of the senior leadership team have been appointed since January 2009. The governing body was replaced by an IEB and the board was restructured in December 2008. The school was monitored by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors on four occasions.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

In accordance with section 13(4) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures.

The school did not make enough progress during its first year in special measures. It has made rapid progress in the last year. The headteacher is very effective. She identified and tackled long-standing, serious weaknesses and established a robust system of self-evaluation of the school. In this the headteacher has been very well supported by the IEB. The headteacher and board members have managed the substantial building project and have ensured that the work was completed on time and to a very high standard. Board members have an accurate view of the school and take difficult decisions in order to help it to improve. New senior leaders are making a very positive contribution to the school's improvement and for the first time leadership responsibilities are shared equally among a larger team. The school's procedures to safeguard pupils are satisfactory and improving.

The headteacher and leadership team have reviewed most of the school's policies and procedures and they have provided staff with very effective guidance and professional development. This has had a positive impact on the skills of well-established teachers. Some of these teachers have taken on new roles and responsibilities and this is helping them to use their expertise to best effect. The school's recruitment procedures are rigorous and many teachers who are new to the school, including some newly qualified teachers, are producing consistently good and occasionally outstanding lessons.

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. When children start school they can do less than others of their age. Pupils' attainment, as measured by national assessments and tests taken in the summer of 2009, is low. This is because the provision made for them in lessons in the past was not good enough to help them to tackle underachievement and eradicate weaknesses in their basic skills. Evidence from the inspection indicates that pupils are now making better progress although this is not consistently good across the school. Some teachers do not use information from day-to-day assessment well enough to ensure that tasks provided for pupils, especially for the most and least able, meet their current needs. This means that pupils do not progress as well as they might in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities progress as well as, and sometimes better, than other pupils. Marking is thorough and tells pupils what they have achieved. In many classes it also tells them how to improve but opportunities for pupils to act on the guidance provided in marking are not so well developed. The contribution made by teaching assistants is variable. Many need additional training if they are to have an impact on pupils' attainment.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

The school has increased teaching time in Key Stage 2 to ensure that pupils receive an appropriate curriculum. The care, guidance and support provided for pupils is satisfactory. The care provided for the most vulnerable pupils is good. Pupils have been given good moral and social guidance. As a result, their behaviour, which was an issue in 2007, is good. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and they enjoy their lessons. Attendance has improved and is now broadly average.

Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a newly established unit. This has been refurbished to a very high standard and the coordinator and her staff have worked hard to ensure that it provides an exciting environment for learning. There is a good range of activities which are appropriately linked to pupils' interests but these are not planned well enough to help pupils gain the maximum benefit from their learning. At this relatively early stage routines are not established well enough so children are not developing independent learning skills.

The school has good capacity to improve further. It has made increasingly good progress in the last 12 months and exceptionally good progress this term. It has thorough and rigorous procedures to evaluate its provision and pupils' outcomes, and improve its effectiveness further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment by:
 - ensuring that the work provided for the most and the least able pupils is accurately matched to their ability and provides sufficient challenge
 - ensuring that pupils are given well-targeted guidance which helps them to improve and are given opportunities to act on the advice provided
 - improving the skills of teaching assistants.
- Improve the provision made for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring that the activities provided for children help them to make progress
 - establishing routines which help children gain independent learning skills.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Pupils make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and generally good progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils' attainment is low but the school has implemented a number of successful strategies which are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. They are given frequent opportunities to discuss their ideas with a partner or a small group and in some lessons they are encouraged to share their ideas with the class. This is having a marked impact on their confidence, their learning and their speaking and listening skills. Many pupils

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

are willing to persevere when tasks are challenging because they have been provided with effective guidance which helps them to apply strategies to solve problems. The school has an accurate view of pupils' starting points and it is tracking their progress rigorously. Any dips in their progress are identified promptly and support is provided for pupils and staff. Senior leaders have identified that some boys are not progressing quickly enough. They have taken steps to improve matters. Pupils understand their targets and they can articulate where and how they are making progress towards achieving them.

Pupils say they feel safe. This is a big step forward. When the school was placed in special measures pupils' behaviour was an issue and pupils reported high levels of bullying. The school has provided pupils with effective social and moral guidance and it has managed pupils' behaviour very carefully. This has had a very positive impact. Pupils say that there is very little bullying and if it does occur they are confident that it is dealt with promptly. In recent months pupils have been given more independence and most are showing that they can make sensible choices and decisions. On rare occasions when one or two pupils are silly in lessons other pupils ignore their behaviour and do not allow it to distract them from their tasks. Pupils are making an increasingly positive contribution to the school. School councillors recently interviewed candidates for posts in the school and carried out this task very sensibly. Pupils understand how to live healthy lifestyles and they are increasingly well prepared for their future lives. They understand the diversity of society and they have an adequate understanding of their own and other faiths.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	3
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate	
Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	3

How effective is the provision?

The senior leadership team, staff and members of the IEB worked hard to ensure that the school was ready for the start of the school year. Classrooms are very well organised and corridors and other public areas are bright and clutter free. There is a consistency of approach which underlines the school's sense of purpose and its commitment to improving teaching and learning. Almost half of the teaching seen during the inspection was good and this matches the school's own evaluation and that of the School Improvement Partner. Teachers' planning is exemplary. Lessons are very well structured. The pace is brisk and in most lessons talk by the teacher is kept to a minimum. Teachers use a variety of teaching styles. Tasks are interesting and motivate pupils but in some lessons tasks are not sufficiently challenging. The curriculum is satisfactory. Senior leaders have ensured that teachers use curriculum guidance effectively and, as a result, teaching is generally thorough and well informed. The school has lengthened the school day in Key Stage 2 and this means that all subjects of the curriculum can be covered in sufficient depth. There is a wider range of extra-curricular activities than was previously the case. The school has effective procedures to ensure that pupils feel safe. All staff are suitably trained and take their responsibilities seriously. The school has established links with services in the local area and this provides helpful support for families.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	3

How effective are leadership and management?

The leadership of the headteacher and the IEB are outstanding. They are ambitious and determined and they have ensured that the school has tackled long-standing weaknesses and brought about improvement in all aspects of its work. The school's recruitment procedures are very effective and recently appointed senior leaders have made an exceptionally strong contribution to the school's progress. Middle leaders are

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

improving rapidly, in part because they have been given roles which are closely matched to their skills and expertise. Their inclusion in some senior leadership meetings means that they have a secure understanding of the improvement process and of their responsibilities. The headteacher has devolved many aspects of leadership and management to senior and middle leaders. They carry out these roles very effectively. The headteacher quality assures all activities and ensures that all members of the leadership team have consistently high expectations of staff and pupils.

School improvement planning is detailed and describes how planned improvements will be made. The school has established a robust and regular cycle of monitoring and evaluation and staff receive regular feedback about their work which helps them to improve. Newly qualified teachers are well supported and staff at all levels recognise that their skills have improved. The expertise of the senior team is having a positive impact on newly qualified teachers and on other staff. The school has established an effective partnership with a school in a neighbouring local authority and this has made a very strong contribution to its improvement. A link with a school in London has been established to help pupils gain greater insights into the diversity of society. The school is also working effectively with the wider Blyth partnership. Partnerships with parents and carers are much improved. The school sends out questionnaires and acts on the information received. There are regular 'coffee and chat' sessions for each year group. These are attended by senior leaders, class teachers and other professionals.

The IEB will remain in place until the end of the summer term. Board members are aware that there is still some way to go before the school realises all of its ambitions and, rightly, recognises that the small but highly focused IEB will help it to achieve its aims in as short a time as possible.

The school has received very good support from the local authority and from the School Improvement Partner. In recent months this support has been informed by the school's own evaluations. The school's improvement strategies are secure and it is very well placed to improve further.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	1
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	3
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	3

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms	
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

The leadership of Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory. In the past children did not progress well enough during their first years in school and were not well prepared for more formal teaching in Years 1 and 2. The new coordinator is aware of this and has started to tackle weaknesses in provision. The unit has been relocated in the heart of the building. It has been refurbished to a high standard and is exceptionally well resourced. There is a very well-equipped outdoor area. The coordinator and other staff have worked hard to ensure that classrooms and shared areas provide an attractive environment for learning. This has been very successful. Activities are interesting and linked to children's interests but they are not always planned in enough detail to ensure that children acquire new skills at a brisk enough pace. Not all staff or children have a good enough understanding of what might be gained from different activities and they are not provided with prompts which would help them to make the most of their time. Routines are not yet well enough established and this is having a negative impact on children's social and personal skills. Teachers assess children's progress carefully but are not using assessment information well enough when planning tasks for individual children. Children are well cared for and supported and they move around the unit confidently and safely. Although there is still much to do, the provision made for children is better than in previous years.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

No notice was given of this visit so the school did not have the opportunity to send out questionnaires to parents and carers. Evidence from questionnaires sent out by the school indicates that 96% of parents and carers are satisfied with the school's provision and that the majority are happy or very happy with all that it provides. The school has contacted the very small number who are not satisfied and attempted to resolve any

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

concerns. Parents and carers who attended a 'coffee and chat morning' are very happy. They feel the school consults them about planned changes and they have good opportunities to talk about any concerns. Parents and carers have, understandably, been very worried about the turbulence in the school so this positive response shows how far the school has come. One parent commented that during the first coffee mornings parents and carers had a long list of complaints but these were sorted out and there are no remaining concerns.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Parental questionnaires are not normally distributed for inspections conducted under section 8 of the Education Act 2005, unless inspectors have specific reasons to request that the school does so.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



09 December 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blyth Horton Grange First School

Thank you for being so welcoming when I visited you with Mr Scott and Mr Schubeler. I am sure that you will be delighted to learn that your school no longer requires special measures. The school has changed a lot in the last two years and although this was for the best it has not always been easy for you. There have been a lot of staff changes and you have had several headteachers. I have been very impressed by how positively you have responded to these events and by how well you have tried to help the school to improve. In the past, pupils' behaviour was not very good and there was quite a lot of bullying. Pupils' behaviour has improved a great deal during the last two years and everyone usually behaves well. We were very pleased to hear that you feel safe in school and that if any bullying did occur you are confident that it would be dealt with promptly. This is a big improvement so well done to all of you who have recognised that it is much better to be kind and considerate towards others.

Even though the school has received a lot of extra help and support this has not always had enough impact on your attainment and many of you have not progressed well enough. This has now changed. We were pleased to see that most of you make at least satisfactory and often good progress in lessons. We could see that you enjoy learning. The tasks you are given are interesting and you have opportunities to solve problems and discuss things with a partner. You persevere even when your tasks are challenging and you are willing to explain things to a group or to the whole class. You all know your targets but what is more important is that you know what they mean and how well you are progressing towards achieving them. The school is giving you a lot of extra help so your basic skills are improving rapidly. Some of your teachers recognise this and give tasks which are accurately matched to your needs. However, this is not the case in all lessons. This means that the work set is not challenging enough for some of you and is too hard for others. The school is aware of this and is going to do something about it. Teachers mark your work carefully and always tell you what you have achieved. Some teachers tell you how to improve but they do not always give you opportunities to act on this advice. We have asked the school to make sure that all marking is as good as the best. Teaching assistants look after you well and help you with your work but we think that they need a little more training to help them become more effective.

The Early Years Foundation Stage unit has improved a great deal. It now provides a very attractive place for the youngest children to learn. They are given very interesting activities but these do not always help them to learn effectively. Because daily routines are not well established, children are not developing independent learning skills. We have asked the school to improve this.

Mrs Chevaugon, the staff and the interim executive board have worked very hard to improve all aspects of the school and they have plans which will make it even better. You can play your part by ensuring that you continue to attend regularly and work hard.

I have enjoyed meeting you all during the past two years.

Have a lovely Christmas.

Yours sincerely

Mrs C E Graham

Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 08456 404045, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.