

Blagdon Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109091
Local Authority	North Somerset
Inspection number	337213
Inspection dates	10–11 May 2010
Reporting inspector	Rob Crompton

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Murphy
Headteacher	Andrew Rhys-Jones
Date of previous school inspection	11 May 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Eight lessons taken by four teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work and assessment records. Forty-two parental questionnaires were analysed as well as 45 from pupils. Inspectors also had informal discussions with parents and carers.

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

- how well pupils in Key Stage 1, especially boys and more able pupils, are building on their prior attainment in writing
- the extent to which the school's judgement, that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making good progress, is evident in the quality of their learning and pace of development.

Information about the school

The school serves a rural community and is much smaller than average. Most pupils are of White British heritage with a few from minority ethnic groups. English is the first language of almost all pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils find learning difficult and a few have speech, language and communication difficulties. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in a class which includes Year 1 pupils. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2009.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This is a good school. Very good headway has been made since the last inspection in almost all aspects of the school's provision. Strong leadership and management, including an outstanding contribution by the governing body, have enabled the school, as one parent commented, 'to go from strength to strength'. The warm family atmosphere is much appreciated by parents and carers, the overwhelming majority of whom are pleased especially with their children's progress and personal development. Across the school, pupils enjoy learning and behave well. Children in Reception benefit from excellent relationships with the staff. They are keen to learn, have very positive attitudes and gain a good grounding in early literacy and numeracy. However, the lack of a well-equipped and stimulating outdoor area constrains children's physical and creative development, and their progress in developing an understanding of shape and space and the natural world.

Effective teaching that interests and challenges pupils means they achieve well through the school. By the end of Year 6, levels of attainment are consistently well above average. A recent dip in the attainment of boys and the more able pupils in writing in Year 2 has been tackled successfully. Current pupils are on course to reach above average standards.

Pupils' academic progress and personal development are underpinned by a wide range of enrichment activities and outstanding care, guidance and support. Every child is well known by staff, and pupils are secure in the knowledge that adults have their best interests at heart. A newly introduced system tracks pupils' progress meticulously and means any anomalies are quickly identified. Teachers use assessment information to plan work that builds well on the prior attainment of pupils in the mixed-age classes. Pupils develop good levels of independence, discuss ideas sensibly and cooperate maturely when working together. They receive good feedback from teachers during lessons and through marking. Pupils are often asked to comment on how easy or difficult they found the work but their understanding of what they need to do to improve is often rather vague.

All staff in this small school willingly take on additional responsibilities and make a strong contribution to the continuing drive for improvement. Excellent self-evaluation procedures, based on a close analysis of performance data and the views of parents, carers and pupils, lead to high quality development planning. The school's track record, together with current strengths in leadership and management, indicate a good capacity to sustain improvement.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outdoor provision for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing better resources, especially for physical, creative and knowledge and understanding of the world.
- Involve pupils more frequently in reviewing their own work against specific criteria so they gain a clear idea of the next steps in their learning by:
 - negotiating individual targets and reviewing them regularly with pupils
 - sharing the criteria on which work is to be marked so that pupils are clear about what constitutes 'good work'
 - building in time at the beginning of lessons for pupils to look at teachers' comments on previous work before starting a new task
 - providing opportunities for pupils to review their own and one another's work and to suggest how it might be improved.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The well above average performance of Year 6 pupils in national tests over recent years is reflected in their current work. Pupils, especially the more able, demonstrate very good skills in their extended pieces of writing, revealing insights into how to construct a narrative that engages the reader. They tackle mathematical problems confidently because they have a secure grasp of basic number facts, including multiplication tables and the relationship between fractions, decimals and percentages. Through investigative work, pupils make good progress in science. For example, pupils in the Year 5/6 class were able to identify links between a wide range of animal life, using terms such as predator, producer, consumer, carnivore and herbivore. The school's success in raising standards at Key Stage 1 and narrowing the gap between the progress and attainment of boys and girls is evident in the quality and range of work in pupils' books and the confident responses of boys during lessons. Year 2 pupils demonstrated their growing vocabulary as they used alliterative adjectives to describe animals, such as the 'curious crocodile' and 'peculiar penguin'. Across the school, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, benefiting from skilful support from teaching assistants.

' Pupils' positive attitudes and willingness to learn contribute much to their success. They value opportunities to contribute to their school, such as in the work of the school council and eco council. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe and were keen to talk about how much they had learned from a visit to a life skills centre. Playground 'buddies' help to resolve minor conflicts during break times. Pupils chatted confidently about healthy foods and showed a good understanding of the importance of exercise. Volunteering and taking responsibility for charity events helps pupils to develop skills in planning, researching and organising; a useful preparation for their subsequent education.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Pupils' experiences in lessons and in the wide range of enrichment activities combine to provide them with enjoyable and memorable experiences. There are excellent relationships between staff and pupils which underpin learning. Staff have good skills and a wide range of expertise. Excellent systems for tracking pupils' progress enable teachers to set work which offers a good level of challenge for all pupils, including those who are more able or particularly gifted and those who find learning difficult. For their part, pupils sustain their concentration and are keen to contribute ideas. For example, asked how their learning might be improved, Year 5/6 pupils offered insightful comments about the resources the teacher had prepared. Pupils are made aware of what they are intended to learn and this is effectively reviewed at the end of the lesson. Work is underway to refine pupils' understanding of what they need to do to improve, as this is not consistent across the school.

Teachers are confident enough to interpret the curriculum in imaginative ways, for example through drama and role play. Following the dip in pupils' attainment in writing, staff were quick to provide further experiences to stimulate writing. They introduced

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

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new topics and acquired books which successfully engaged boys. A review of the curriculum is in progress to identify further ways in which subjects can be linked. As part of this process, pupils are being canvassed for their own ideas. Pupils rate their lessons highly, but voiced some frustration about the lack of up-to-date computers. The parent teacher association has earmarked funds to acquire better equipment and staff are exploring the options.

Pupils' learning and development are well supported by a range of visits and visitors. Artists and performers enhance pupils' experiences and many pupils are learning an instrument. Participation rates in physical activities, such as fencing, handball and multiskills clubs, are high.

The school's first class care is exemplified in the quality of support for individual pupils. Staff go the extra mile to provide a welcoming and secure environment in which all pupils feel valued. One parent summed up the views of many with the comment, 'We are so fortunate that our children are taught by a dedicated, enthusiastic and motivating group of teachers who value the children for what they are and as well as what they might achieve academically.' Parents newly arrived from abroad paid tribute to the way their children had been welcomed and cared for by pupils and staff.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

The school community shares a strong sense of purpose in sustaining success and meeting ambitious targets. The strength of leaders and managers in embedding ambition, driving improvement and tackling discrimination is evident in the common determination to ensure all pupils do as well as they can. Through frequent informal class visits and a sequence of planned observations, the headteacher identifies good practice and shares this with colleagues. The involvement of subject leaders in monitoring lessons is at an early stage and is rightly identified as a priority in the school improvement plan.

Governors are extremely active in successfully reviewing performance, setting strategic direction and holding the school to account. They use a wide range of monitoring information and assessment data to gain a secure understanding of pupils' needs, identify priorities and allocate resources. Governors' wide-ranging expertise is put to good use, for example, in managing the tight budget and planning strategically. The school's unflinching commitment to equal opportunities and addressing any

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discrimination is clearly evident in its day-to-day life. Any discrepancy in the achievement of different groups is quickly spotted. Where individuals need specialist help, staff work in tandem with appropriate agencies and professionals.

Safeguarding procedures are good. Governors and staff are appropriately trained and well aware of their responsibilities. Community cohesion is promoted successfully and the school does much to encourage harmony among the locality and promote pupils' understanding of global issues. For example, Year 1 pupils regularly communicate and share work with children in a school in Kampala. Pupils know they should avoid prejudging and stereotyping, and staff are endeavouring to forge links with a school serving a more diverse community in this country to provide pupils with more direct experience.' '

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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	1
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enter the Reception classroom eagerly in the morning; they show responsibility by registering their choice of lunch by moving their names into the appropriate column and choose sensibly from a range of activities. The teacher and her assistant provide a warm welcome, encouraging children to discuss their home life and showing genuine interest in all they have to say. Parents and carers value greatly the open relationships they enjoy with the Reception staff and are successfully encouraged to play a part in their children's learning.

Using a good range of assessment strategies, including observations, photographs of significant events and verbatim accounts of their dialogue with children, staff build up a

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good record of children's development and plan new activities accordingly. There is a reasonable balance of adult-led work and activities which children initiate themselves but the range of opportunities for both these approaches is severely constrained by the lack of a stimulating outdoor environment. Children are taken outside occasionally but the sparse facilities mean that they are not always purposefully occupied when adults are not directing activities. The impact of this on children's development is evident in the way some find it difficult to work independently. Children's level of social, language and mathematical development is a little above that typical of the age group. Children attain well in terms of physical and creative development despite the restricting effects of limited outdoor provision. However, their understanding of shape and space and their knowledge and understanding of the world are underdeveloped. This underlines the impact of an imbalance in the current provision.

The Reception teacher and the headteacher share the teaching in the Reception class and are aware of the urgent need to improve the outdoor provision. Despite the fact that children are well cared for, enjoy themselves and make good progress in many areas from starting points broadly typical of the age group, the overall effectiveness of the provision is judged satisfactory.

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	2
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

The very large majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about the school, particularly with regard to the teaching and how the school helps their children to enjoy learning and stay safe. Within these positive views, a very small minority raised individual concerns, all of which were relatively minor and not borne out by the inspection.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blagdon Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 42 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection.

In total, there are 95 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	74	9	21	2	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	21	50	21	20	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	26	28	67	3	7	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	21	50	13	31	5	12	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	62	12	29	1	2	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	40	18	43	5	12	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	36	19	45	5	12	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	50	10	24	5	12	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	15	36	23	55	3	7	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	31	18	43	5	12	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	24	28	67	2	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	10	24	21	50	5	12	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	67	12	29	1	2	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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.



13 May 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blagdon Primary School, Bristol BS40 7RW

It was lovely to meet all of you when we inspected your school recently. We did enjoy talking to so many of you and we were very impressed with the way in which you care for each other and for your school.

Blagdon is a good school. All of the staff work well together to make sure that you have lots of exciting experiences and this helps you to enjoy your learning. Your school is a happy place. This is something that you told us and all of your parents agreed.

The people who work for you in school make sure that you are particularly well cared for and this means that you feel safe and confident. Your teachers know you very well and make sure that the work they give you matches what you need to learn and this means that you make good progress. Governors do an excellent job in supporting the school.

In order to help you make even better progress, we have suggested that the school concentrates on two improvements:

- Improve the quality of the outdoor area to give children in Reception more opportunities to play and learn out of doors.
- Involve you more in reviewing your own work against specific success criteria, so you gain a really clear idea of what you need to do to improve.

I am sure you will continue to work hard and enjoy all that Blagdon has to offer.

Yours sincerely

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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