

# Blackshaw Moor CofE (VC) First School

## Inspection report

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Unique Reference Number	124287
Local Authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	340534
Inspection dates	28–29 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Christopher Parker

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

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Type of school	First
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	45
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Pamela Hill]
Headteacher	Jill Tillmanns
Date of previous school inspection	5 July 2007
School address	Buxton Road Blackshaw Moor Leek ST13 8TW
Telephone number	01538 300337
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. The inspector visited 10 lessons, and held meetings with the pupils, staff, headteacher and chair of the governing body. He observed the school's work, and looked at records of pupils' progress, plans, policies, minutes and self-evaluation documents. He received 18 completed questionnaires from parents.

The inspector reviewed many aspects of the school's work. He looked in detail at:

- the school's success in bringing improvement in areas identified through its own evaluation
- the effectiveness of marking and target setting
- the use of information and communication technology to enhance the pupils' learning and progress
- how the equal opportunities policies and arrangements for community cohesion are implemented and evaluated.

## Information about the school

This is a very small school. Almost all of the pupils are from White British backgrounds. Slightly fewer pupils than usual take free school meals. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is much smaller than in most schools.

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

The school provides a good education for its pupils.

'This school is very good at focusing on every child's individual needs...' This comment, made by a parent, identifies a key element of the school's success and improvement over the last two years. The guidance and support given to each pupil are made possible by the headteacher's detailed and thorough analysis of their progress, combined with the teachers' helpful marking and accurate assessment of their work.

Thorough analysis has provided a very clear indication of where improvements are needed, for example in the reading of scales in mathematics and in composition and effect in writing. Actions to tackle these areas of weakness have resulted in good improvements in pupils' attainment. Their achievement is good, notably in mathematics, where more pupils are now reaching higher levels. In English the pupils do very well in speaking and listening, and in reading, but some weaknesses remain in writing, particularly in spelling. Consequently, too few pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 2 and Year 4.

The headteacher's monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance, particularly of the quality of teaching and learning, is very thorough. This has helped to improve the quality of teaching from satisfactory to good, and in turn, to raise attainment. The comprehensive systems for self-evaluation place the school in a strong position to improve further.

The 'delightful community spirit' within the school, highlighted at the last inspection, has been maintained and developed. The very positive ethos has allowed the pupils to improve their academic achievement as well as maintaining good levels of personal development. The pupils enjoy school and feel safe. As one pupil wrote, 'I like this school because everyone is kind to each other.'

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the rate of pupils' progress in writing by improving spelling, so that at least a quarter of pupils are reaching higher levels by the end of Year 2 and at least a third by the end of Year 4.

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## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The number of pupils in each class is relatively small, and the teachers capitalise on this to give good support to small groups and individuals. As a result, the pupils make good progress in lessons. The pupils' contribution in lessons and the work recorded in their books show they are doing well and making secure gains in writing, and particularly strong progress in reading and mathematics. The school is working to accelerate pupils' progress in writing, but many of them are not secure in spelling a good range of words.

The good progress evident in pupils' work is verified by the results of tests and assessments. Since the last inspection, results of national tests at the end of Year 2 have improved. In the 2009 tests, all pupils reached the expected level in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics, and almost all did so in writing. More pupils reached the higher level in speaking and listening, reading and mathematics than in writing. The school's own assessments show the pupils to be making good progress through Years 3 and 4 so that, here again, all reach the expected level, and over half are working at a higher level, except in writing, where too few are working at the higher level.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities do well and close the gap between their attainment and that of their peers, because of the effective support they receive.

Behaviour is almost always good. This allows pupils to concentrate on their work. The pupils contribute confidently and thoughtfully to discussions. They say that they enjoy school, and this is reflected in the way they approach all that the school offers them and in their positive relationships with adults. They feel safe and say that if they 'fall out' they quickly 'make up' again. The school has a Healthy School Award and an Activemark, reflecting the pupils' strong appreciation of the importance of staying fit and healthy.

### *These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	2
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2

<sup>1</sup> 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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The quality of pupils' learning and their progress 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 <sup>1</sup>	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

### How effective is the provision?

In lessons, interesting tasks are carefully matched to the ages and abilities of the pupils so that they are engaged and challenged. The teachers probe and question very effectively to check how well pupils are progressing. In a science lesson in Years 3 and 4, where pupils were investigating shadows made by transparent, translucent and opaque materials, the teacher's constant alertness to how each group was progressing allowed her to identify one pupil's misunderstanding. This was quickly remedied with an additional explanation and exemplification. As a result, the pupil was able to make good progress along with his peers. Very occasionally, questioning continues for a little too long, reducing the time available for pupils to be practically involved in the activities planned for them.

In all classes, information and communication technology is used very well to enhance learning. In Years 1 and 2 pupils made good progress in their understanding of place value by using software that motivated them and held their attention. The teacher developed their learning by setting them further challenging tasks that extended their understanding.

The pupils' work is marked very thoroughly. They are given very clear guidance on how to improve aspects of their work. This has enhanced, for example, the composition of their writing. Marking is very closely linked to the targets set for the pupils, and teachers link the targets very carefully to tasks. This was evident in a history lesson for Years 3 and 4, where the teacher's incisive questions and repeated references to pupils' targets led to pupils being engaged in writing tasks which were very well matched to their needs. As a result, they made rapid progress in the composition of their writing as well as developing their knowledge of history. However, weaknesses in spelling were evident in the work of some of the more able pupils.

This lesson illustrates well very the good quality of the curriculum and the productive

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links made in lessons that combine key elements of more than one subject. The curriculum is enhanced by a good range of trips and visits that broaden the pupils' horizons. For example, the pupils recently attended an Islamic Day at Staffordshire University. After-school clubs – such as art, drama and sport – contribute to the pupils' well-being, personal development and considerable enjoyment of school. The pupils are given useful guidance and support. Classroom displays and prompt cards provide very valuable reminders of how, for example, 'powerful verbs' can enhance their writing although the strategies used to improve spelling are yet to have an impact. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are given very well-considered support. The school seeks expert external advice from a range of agencies when it is necessary. The pupils are very well managed, and relationships are very strong throughout the school. This is illustrated very well by the firm but friendly supervision at lunchtimes that results in a very social and enjoyable mealtime.

*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	2

### How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher provides very clear and thoughtful leadership that is very well focused on continuing improvement. High expectations of pupils' academic and personal achievements are evident in all aspects of school life. Tracking of the pupils' progress is thorough and analysis is accurate. This provides a clear insight into what the school needs to do to improve its provision and further raise pupils' attainment. The headteacher uses her detailed analyses very effectively, not only to keep staff and governors very well informed but also to set demanding targets for the whole school community.

The monitoring and evaluation of the quality of teaching is well organised and comprehensively recorded. It focuses strongly on the impact of teaching on the pupils' learning and is well linked to areas of school improvement. For example, a recent focus on improving the teaching of the pupils' abilities to read scales in mathematics was evaluated in detail through lesson observations. Thorough scrutiny of the pupils' work and detailed analysis of each pupil's progress add to the school's extensive self-evaluation. Careful checking of how pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are doing in comparison to their peers illustrates well the high expectations that are also placed on these pupils.

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The governors evaluate the impact of their equal opportunities policies on the school's performance. They have taken very effective steps to ensure that all elements of the safeguarding requirements are in place, and have acted to modify access to the school site for cars and buses bringing the pupils to school. The changes they have made afford the pupils greater safety in the light of the 50 miles per hour speed limit on the road immediately outside the school. The school is working with a number of agencies to bring about a reduction in the speed limit. Governors have also been at the forefront of measures to improve the building.

Good links with parents and other partners make a good contribution to the school. Some after-school activities are led by members of the community and former parents. Strong links with commercial organisations provide additional funding and also employees who provide support to the pupils. Their frequent visits to the school are eagerly anticipated.

The size and location of the school present challenges in developing the pupils' understanding of communities beyond their own. The pupils' contribution to their local community is strong, and the curriculum provides opportunities for them to gain an international dimension. While multicultural weeks draw in people from minority ethnic groups to share aspects of their culture, the national dimension of community cohesion is under-represented in the curriculum. The school is well aware of this and is constantly seeking ways to extend these opportunities.

*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	2
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	2
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

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The good provision for the youngest children has been maintained since the last inspection because the Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. An analysis of the performance of the children in the Reception class last year shows that they made good progress and reached a good level of development. The children who have just entered school and joined the Nursery are making a confident start. This is because links between home and school are strong. Parents work with the children for the first few minutes of the school day to aid a smooth transition.

The children in the Nursery are already demonstrating an understanding of the daily routines. Most of them play and work well together and are happy to pursue their own interests through the activities planned for them. Some resources are rather worn and do not always promote the most effective learning. The adults monitor the children’s choices carefully, and are constantly developing conversation and encouraging and helping them to develop their skills, such as cutting out with scissors.

The planning incorporates all elements of the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum. There are good opportunities for the children in the Reception Year to explore the world around them, to develop their language, number, and information and communication technology skills, and to extend their personal development. There is a strong emphasis on phonics and the development of calculation skills. This was evident at the start of the school day, when the children identified the sounds in ‘Wednesday’ and counted the number of children present.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	2
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

### Views of parents and carers

All of the parents who responded to the questionnaire were very pleased with the work of the school. A number of parents made very positive additional comments such as: ‘an excellently run small school’; and, ‘I am very impressed’. There were no concerns or negative comments.



## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted’s questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blackshaw Moor First 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 45 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	17	94%	1	6%	0	0%	0	0%
The school keeps my child safe	18	100%	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
The school informs me about my child’s progress	15	83%	3	17%	0	0%	0	0%
My child is making enough progress at this school	14	78%	4	22%	0	0%	0	0%
The teaching is good at this school	15	83%	3	17%	0	0%	0	0%
The school helps me to support my child’s learning	14	78%	4	22%	0	0%	0	0%
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	13	72%	5	28%	0	0%	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)	15	83%	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%
The school meets my child’s particular needs	14	78%	4	22%	0	0%	0	0%
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	15	83%	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	15	83%	2	11%	0	0%	0	0%
The school is led and managed effectively	14	78%	3	17%	0	0%	0	0%
Overall, I am happy with my child’s experience at this school	16	89%	2	11%	0	0%	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 all 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

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"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
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.



1 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blackshaw Moor CofE (VC) First School, Leek, ST13 8TW

This letter is to tell you about the findings of the recent inspection and to thank you for taking the time to talk to me about your work and your school. I am also grateful to those of you in Years 3 and 4 who completed the questionnaire. You all said that you like school, and one of you wrote that 'school is really good; the teachers help us a lot'. You attend a good school which is very caring. The governors have taken steps to keep you as safe as possible. You all said you feel safe at school.

The school provides lots of interesting opportunities. Many of you told me about the after-school clubs which you really appreciate and enjoy.

The headteacher, teachers and teaching assistants are helping you to make good progress. They set you targets and mark your work, so that you know what you have to do to improve. This is helping you to get better and better in reading and mathematics, but in writing you need more help with spelling so that you can reach the higher levels. That's why I have asked the headteacher and teachers to look very closely at how they can help you to spell with greater accuracy, so that more of you reach higher levels in writing.

The school is led very well, and the headteacher is constantly checking at how well it is doing so that improvements can be made to the opportunities that the school provides. She has been particularly successful in making improvements over the last two years. The school is well placed to improve further.

I hope that in the future your school is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours faithfully

Christopher Parker  
Lead Inspector

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