

Blockley Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	115613
Local Authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	357786
Inspection dates	14–15 September 2010
Reporting inspector	John Eadie

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	146
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Janet Watts
Headteacher	Linda Jeffcutt
Date of previous school inspection	28 March 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Ten lessons were visited and the six teachers present during the inspection were observed. Inspectors held meetings with leaders and managers, the Chair of the Governing Body, staff, pupils, parents and carers at the beginning and end of the school day. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including reports from the School Improvement Partner, the school development plan, and policies and procedures, particularly those regarding safeguarding. Questionnaires completed by pupils in Years 3 to 6, staff and 88 parents and carers were analysed.

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

- Whether the difference in performance between boys and girls at the end of Key Stage 1 in the 2009 national assessments has been tackled effectively.
- The effectiveness of strategies to improve pupils' attainment and progress in mathematics through the school.
- Whether pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are making as much progress as other pupils.

Information about the school

Blockley is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British and none speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities has been increasing in recent years and is now above average. Most of these have cognition or learning, or behavioural, emotional and social difficulties. The school has recently been awarded a Gold Level Artsmark. There are two staff currently on maternity leave and there was a long-term staff absence due to ill health last year.

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

Blockley is a good school. It has several outstanding features, including the exceptional care, guidance and support provided for pupils. Many parents and carers on their questionnaires commented on the excellent care, and there are a number of examples of how the school goes way beyond the call of duty to ensure that all pupils are enabled to enjoy everything that is on offer. An integral part of this care is the outstanding safeguarding procedures that are in place. The school has thorough and robust procedures, which are constantly under review and reflect best practice.

This excellent care results in a number of aspects of pupils' personal development being outstanding. All pupils on their questionnaires and those spoken to regard themselves as being extremely safe. Pupils have a thorough knowledge of how to lead a healthy lifestyle and there is a high take-up for the many and varied after-school and lunchtime activities. Their behaviour is exemplary and they show considerable consideration and care for the needs of others. Pupils have a keen awareness of their place in society and their responsibilities towards it, and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

The school has thorough procedures to evaluate its strengths and areas for development. All are involved in these processes and teamwork was a common theme mentioned on many staff questionnaires. One result of this self-evaluation is that the difference between the performance of boys and girls in the Year 2 assessments in 2009 was tackled very effectively as the difference has been ironed out this year.

Attainment overall is on a rising path, but it is still average. Much work has been done to raise attainment and improve pupils' progress in mathematics. This has been successful as, in the 2010 national assessments in Year 6, provisional results show that attainment in mathematics has caught up with that in English. Attainment in writing does not reach the same high levels attained in reading throughout the school. The school has recognised this and writing is a current focus for development. Pupils are making good progress throughout the school in all subjects.

Learning in lessons is consistently good and teaching in all lessons observed was good and some outstanding practice was seen. Lively activities and concern to ensure the right amount of challenge for pupils of all ability levels mean that pupils are engaged and involved. Teachers use assessment very well to identify potential underachievement and effective strategies are put in place to help these pupils catch up. Assessment is also used well to set clear next steps in learning for pupils, particularly in mathematics. A good start has been made in writing, but these are not sufficiently precise. Senior leaders have good information on the progress that individual pupils make in English

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and mathematics each year. However, this information is not organised to assess the overall progress that each year group makes or the overall progress that children make in the different areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

The partnership with parents and carers is outstanding and they are involved well in the education of their children. A good example of this is the excellent booklet provided for parents and carers to explain how mathematics is taught and how they can help their children learn. Other partnerships are also outstanding and provide many experiences that pupils could not otherwise enjoy. For instance, the school works closely with a local pottery and a potter comes into school regularly.

It says much for the teamwork evident in the school and the support of governors that progress has been maintained despite staffing difficulties. This, along with the effective procedures for self-evaluation, means that the school is well placed to continue its upward momentum and its capacity for further improvement is good.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise pupils' attainment and improve the rate of their progress in writing to bring these closer to those in reading by:
 - ensuring that targets set for pupils' next steps in learning are closely matched to individual needs
 - putting in place a programme to improve the structure of pupils' writing
 - provide more opportunities for younger pupils to record in a range of subjects
 - improve pupils' vocabulary by providing opportunities for them to write more frequently from their own experiences.
- Extend the current systems of tracking pupils' progress so that:
 - leaders and managers have a more accurate overview of the overall progress that is being made by each year group in reading, writing and mathematics
 - there are accurate records of the overall progress that children make in the different areas of learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that leaders can more readily analyse potentially weaker areas of learning

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

1

Children join the school with levels of skills and knowledge below those expected for their age. They make good progress through the school. Pupils' learning in lessons is typified by enthusiasm and enjoyment. They are provided with a wide range of first-hand experiences, though these are not always capitalised on by getting pupils to write about them. Active learning is an integral part of lessons, such as when coloured beanbags were thrown to pupils in a game as part of a lesson where the French words for colours were being reinforced. The extensive and attractive outside area is used well for learning, as when a class of younger pupils wore numbered bibs and ran around on the playground and then on the command had to see how quickly they could arrange

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themselves in order. These engaging activities are one of the key reasons why pupils are achieving well. As a parent put it, 'Our children love going to school.'

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified early and provided with carefully chosen plans to aid their learning. They, particularly those with cognition or learning difficulties, are supported well and so make the same progress as their classmates. Some vulnerable pupils, especially those with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties, make exceptional progress because of this support and the care provided.

Many areas of pupils' personal development are outstanding. A large majority take the school lunches which are highly praised by pupils, parents and carers for both the quality and healthiness. Pupils are very impressed that the cook puts grated carrot into the bases of the pizzas they make so that pupils eat vegetables. Pupils are developing extremely well into responsible and responsive young people. They make a considerable contribution to the smooth running of the school and appreciate that their voice is listened to. However, this does not extend to their full involvement in making decisions relating to their learning and well-being.

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	3
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	1
Pupils' behaviour	1
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	1
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	1

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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How effective is the provision?

Teachers engage and interest the pupils by providing a good range of curriculum experiences. These are supported by a variety of trips out of school and visitors that add further relevance. However, opportunities are occasionally missed to use these experiences to develop pupils' writing and particularly their vocabulary. Especially good use is made of information and communication technology to support learning in other subjects. The use of writing across the curriculum is not as strong and the school is extending this, particularly for younger pupils. Teaching assistants play a valuable role in class and their support is valued and used well. The extensive and attractive grounds have recently been enhanced by 'Sandie's House', a play house that has been built in the playground where pupils enjoy creating their own games.

The school uses external support extremely well to further extend the outstanding care and guidance it provides for pupils. The circumstances of all pupils and families are very well known to all adults and this enables them to match support exceptionally well to individual needs. Some notable successes have enabled vulnerable pupils to make outstanding gains in both their personal and academic development.

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 headteacher has a very clear vision for the way forward for the school. In this, she is very ably supported by a relatively new senior management team, all staff and the governing body. There is an almost tangible air of shared responsibility and drive for further improvement. The governing body is extremely supportive and challenges well. Governors' visits to support subject leaders are much appreciated and valuable in raising their awareness of what is going on in the school. They recognise that their involvement in seeking the views of stakeholders is an aspect of they wish to develop further.

Equality of opportunity has a high profile and all are equally valued. A pupil commented, 'Everybody is treated equally here.' However, there are limited opportunities for pupils to appreciate possible discrimination and learn to eliminate it. Safeguarding procedures were extremely thorough at the time of the inspection and extremely close links exist with outside agencies to support the work of leaders and managers in this. Excellent links also exist with a number of secondary schools, whose expertise is used to enhance pupils' learning. There is an excellent awareness of the context of the local community

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and a broad range of international links, which enhance community cohesion. However, the pupils' knowledge of the diversity of the United Kingdom community is less well-developed.

Leaders and managers have coped extremely well with the difficulties of the last couple of years. Although the pace of improvement slowed during that time, it has now picked up and there is a clear determination to drive ever onward and upward and the efforts of the staff are having a positive impact on pupils' outcomes.

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their Reception Year. There are good links with the village nursery and carefully planned visits ensure that children settle quickly on starting. A good range of activities is provided, including a good balance between those led by an adult and those children choose for themselves. The attractive outdoor area is used well to enhance progress in many aspects of learning.

Learning opportunities are planned well and teachers make good use of children's own experiences. For example, while children were looking at a model skeleton with the teacher during a session building their awareness of themselves, a child said that a relative had broken a rib. The teacher took the opportunity of getting the child to come and show the class where the ribs were on the skeleton and then talked about the function of the ribs in protecting the internal organs. This extended learning well.

There is good teamwork between all adults in the class and the setting is led well. Adults keep good records of children's gains in knowledge and understanding and often use

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these to set next steps for their learning. However, the data gathered are not always analysed in sufficient detail to identify any potential areas of weaker progress or to measure the progress of the group as a whole.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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

There was a high rate of response to the questionnaire for parents and carers. The response was extremely positive with a number of questions being answered totally positively. Parents and carers are particularly pleased with the care provided for their children and are very complimentary about how the headteacher and staff have coped with the recent difficulties. There were no significant concerns, though a very small minority of parents or carers regard the school as not dealing effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors judged behaviour seen as exemplary and pupils said that there are clear systems for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and that these are applied consistently.

Parents made many positive comments, such as 'My children are all flourishing ... making good friendships, achieving excellent academic progress while developing a true love of learning.'

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blockley Church of England 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 146 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	63	72	23	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	70	80	16	18	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	49	56	30	34	4	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	51	58	30	36	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	65	74	18	20	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	55	63	29	33	0	0	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	68	77	16	18	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)	52	59	27	31	3	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	52	59	30	34	4	5	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	44	50	33	38	6	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	51	34	39	4	5	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	69	78	15	17	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	65	74	19	22	2	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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.



16 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blockley Church of England Primary School, Nr Moreton-in-Marsh, GL56 9BY

On behalf of the inspection team, thank you so much for welcoming us so warmly when we visited you recently. We really enjoyed meeting you and listening to you tell us how much you enjoy school. You gave us lots of useful information about how well you learn and develop. We are not surprised that you are so proud of your school as it is a good school.

These are some of the best things we found about your school

- You told us that you feel exceptionally safe and this is because the school has excellent procedures to keep you safe.
- You are leading very healthy lifestyles and you said that you really enjoy the school lunches and that they are very healthy.
- You are developing extremely well into polite and responsible young people who behave exceptionally well.
- You are making good progress in lessons because you are being taught well and the work planned for you is interesting and often exciting.
- The school has built very good relationships with your parents and carers and with other organisations that provide help with your learning.
- The headteacher, staff and governors have very good plans to continue to improve your school.

This is what we think needs improving most

- The standard of your writing is not as good as your reading so we have asked your teachers to encourage you to use more interesting words when you write. Also, for your teachers to give you more precise targets to improve your work and more opportunities to practise your writing in other subjects.
- We have asked your headteacher and others who manage the school to use information from your classwork, to give them a clearer picture of the overall progress that each year group makes.

I am sure you will help by continuing to work hard and trying your best. Thank you once again and very best wishes for the future.

Yours sincerely

John Eadie Lead inspector

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