

The Blake Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123192
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	359386
Inspection dates	16–17 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Mike Capper

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	396
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	David Sarbutts
Headteacher	Marilyn Trigg
Date of previous school inspection	7 May 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 15 lessons, with 14 teachers being seen. Meetings were held with parents and carers, governors, staff and groups of pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and looked at school documentation including teachers' planning, assessment information, safeguarding policies and samples of pupils' work. Inspectors analysed 64 questionnaires from parents and carers, 20 from staff and 85 from pupils.

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

- the rate of progress from the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage to the end of Year 2, to ensure that all pupils make enough progress
- how well pupils take on responsibilities and their knowledge of how to improve their work
- the effectiveness of teaching at providing the right level of challenge for the most able
- the role of governors and subject leaders in monitoring and driving improvement.

Information about the school

This is a larger than average sized primary school that takes most of its pupils from the local community. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. Most, but not all, of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in two Reception classes.

The school has a number of awards, including Healthy School accreditation and an Activemark for its work in sport. The school provides a breakfast club which runs on two days each week.

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 good school supports pupils' academic and personal needs well. Pupils' achievement is good and they thoroughly enjoy school. Leaders have successfully improved teaching since the last inspection and the good start that children make in the Early Years Foundation Stage is now built on well in the rest of the school.

Consequently, pupils' attainment is rising and is above average by the end of Year 6.

There are several contributory factors to the good progress being made by most pupils. Teaching is good and pupils are well cared for. This ensures that pupils feel safe at school. The school works closely with parents and makes effective use of partnerships with others, such as local secondary schools, to promote good learning. Teachers meet pupils' differing needs well most of the time. However, there are still occasions when more able pupils could be challenged more, especially when they have to sit for too long at the start of lessons before starting their work.

Pupils are polite and courteous and are very proud of their school. As one commented, 'We have fun and learn a lot as well.' The school's very good efforts to promote positive values are reflected in the pupils' good understanding of the importance of staying healthy and their good contribution to the school and wider community. Pupils take a very active role in community events such as 'Witney in Bloom' and keenly take on responsibility. A conscientious school council, for example, gives pupils a good voice in decision making. The school has good systems for promoting attendance, although it has been broadly average for the last two years due to some families taking term time holidays.

The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion. Pupils raise funds for schools in Nigeria and Thailand and show good respect for others. However, they have only a limited knowledge of the cultural diversity of the United Kingdom and beyond.

The calm and purposeful leadership of the headteacher sets a clear direction for school improvement. She is well supported by other members of staff and the governing body. They share the headteacher's ambitions and aspirations for the school. Self-evaluation is rigorous and this means that developments are well planned and effective. Data are used sharply to track progress and where this has shown weaknesses, for example in Years 1 and 2 in the past, effective steps have been taken to move things forward more quickly. Successful actions, such as recent work on raising attainment in writing, are ensuring continued improvements in pupils' progress. All of these elements confirm the school's good capacity for further improvement.

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

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching by ensuring that the pace of learning is always brisk enough at the start of lessons so that more able pupils are fully challenged all of the time.
- Strengthen the school's contribution to community cohesion by giving pupils more opportunities to learn about cultures other than their own and about life beyond Witney.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils' achievement and enjoyment is good. Although there is some variation from year to year, most children are working at the levels expected for their age when they start school in the Reception Year. Pupils' attainment is rising across the school as the impact of improved teaching in Years 1 and 2 begins to filter through to other year groups. Pupils' good behaviour and their enthusiasm for learning contribute significantly to the good and sometimes outstanding progress that is seen in many lessons. In a numeracy lesson, pupils learnt quickly about how to order numbers, because they were fully engaged and they were given work that provide the right level of challenge. In a literacy lesson, pupils worked hard and cooperated sensibly. The exciting use of video clips made learning purposeful and this was reflected in the high quality descriptive writing produced by the end of the lesson. Where progress in lessons is slower, pupils sit for too long and the more able, in particular, do not get on to their work quickly enough, for example when learning about tens and units.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well, ensuring that they learn quickly. They take an active part in activities and are keen to improve, working especially hard when being taught by an adult outside lessons.

Pupils become good young citizens and are well prepared for the next stage of their education. Close links with the parish church support spiritual development well. Pupils show good concern for the needs of others by raising funds for charity, but they have limited knowledge or experience of multicultural diversity within this country or beyond. Pupils lead healthy lifestyles and this is reflected in the school's Activemark and Healthy School accreditation.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Adults place pupils' well-being at the centre of their work and they make school a happy place to be. A very well attended breakfast club is helping to improve punctuality on the days that it operates. Provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is good. There is a good partnership with outside agencies to get additional support when it is needed and skilled teaching assistants also make a good contribution to the learning of these pupils.

Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to promote learning, for example when helping pupils to imagine they are actually at the Battle of Marathon. Teachers assess learning carefully and are becoming increasingly adept at using this information to plan what to teach next. Teachers often plan challenging work for more able pupils, but sometimes keep them on the carpet for too long at the start of lessons as they talk to the rest of the class. Improvements in marking and target setting since the last inspection mean that pupils are now clear about the next steps in their learning, especially in English where marking is particularly good.

The curriculum takes good account of pupils' interests and aptitudes and supports their personal development well. Clubs and visits contribute extremely well to learning, as do 'special weeks'. For example, pupils speak very positively about the 'Circus Week' when they learnt many new skills. However, the curriculum includes too few opportunities for pupils to learn about cultures other than their own.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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	
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The quality of teaching Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
	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?

Senior leaders have ensured that the school has moved forward quickly since the last inspection. Their good ambitions and drive for improvement are firmly embedded across the school because teamwork is very strong and there is a shared vision for improvement. Subject leaders are fully involved in monitoring provision. Leaders have a good understanding of remaining priorities, although written development planning does not set clearly measurable targets to help with checking progress. The governing body is knowledgeable and provide good challenge and support to the school. The school works successfully to promote equality and to tackle discrimination. Performance data is used sharply to check that all groups do equally well.

The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory. Leaders respond well to local needs and work closely with parents to promote learning. However, action planning to improve community cohesion further has only just been completed. This rightly focuses on strengthening pupils' knowledge of life beyond the local community.

The school has satisfactory safeguarding procedures. Recent site developments have improved security. Minor discrepancies in paperwork had been put right by the end of the inspection.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
	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	3
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	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 with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2
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Early Years Foundation Stage

Good teaching means that children achieve well in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Consequently, their attainment is above average by the end of the Reception Year, reflecting good progress from their different starting points. Children are very well cared for, with teachers and teaching assistants giving sensitive help to support learning. For example, adults thoughtfully support children as they make their first attempts at writing, encouraging them to try out new skills as they look at life in an aquarium. Adults take good account of children's different starting points to ensure that there are good levels of challenge in lessons. This means that there is a good pace to learning, with children supporting each other happily and sensibly choosing where they are going to work. There is a large outdoor area, although this is not yet used fully to support learning in all of the areas of learning. This has already been identified by leaders as an area for future development so that boys' literacy skills, in particular, can be extended further through activities both indoors and outdoors.

Provision is well led and managed. Leaders monitor children's progress closely and are making increasingly sharp use of assessment information to look for trends in attainment over time so that any comparative areas of weakness can be tackled even more quickly.

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 relatively low return of questionnaires. Most parents and carers are pleased with the work of the school. Positive comments included, 'Pastoral care is excellent' and 'Staff are approachable and work very hard.' Some parents and carers are concerned about how the school tackles unacceptable behaviour. The inspection team saw none and found that the school has good systems for tackling it on those occasions when it does occur.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at The Blake CE (Aided) 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 inspector received 64 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 396 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	61	22	34	3	5	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	42	66	21	32	0	0	1	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	26	41	33	52	3	5	1	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	50	25	39	6	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	33	52	28	44	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	31	48	27	42	5	8	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	32	50	25	39	5	8	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)	32	50	25	39	3	5	2	3
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	48	29	45	2	3	2	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	33	32	50	6	9	3	5
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	42	30	47	3	5	1	2
The school is led and managed effectively	35	55	21	33	4	6	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	41	63	17	27	5	8	1	2

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.



17 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of The Blake CE (Aided) Primary School, Witney OX28 3FR

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for talking to us about your work. You were very polite and friendly. We agree with you that your school is good and that you learn new things quickly.

Some of the things we found out about your school.

- Children in the Reception classes have settled very quickly and are making good progress.
- You are taught well in Years 1 to 6 and this helps you to make good progress.
- You are happy at school and try your best. There are lots of fun things to do outside lessons.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and healthy and you make a good contribution to the community.
- All of the adults in the school look after you well. They give you good help when you are struggling with your work.
- The school is well led and managed, and all of the adults are working very hard to make the school even better.

We have now asked your school to:

- make sure that there is always enough challenge for those of you who are able to learn new things particularly quickly
- give you more opportunities to learn about cultures other than your own.

We wish you all well for the future. You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard all of the time.

Yours sincerely

Mike Capper

Lead inspector

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