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Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number	120117
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327202
Inspection dates	24–25 June 2009
Reporting inspector	Usha Devi HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.
The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–8
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	85
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end	0

of the EYFS

Childcare provision for children
aged 0 to 3 years

0

Appropriate authority

The governing body

Chair

Roger Page / Vicky
Hanley

Headteacher

Susan Vernon

Date of previous school inspection

12 June 2006

**Date of previous funded early education
inspection**

Not previously inspected

Date of previous childcare inspection

Not previously inspected

School address

off Main Street
Blackfordby
Swadlincote DE11 8AB

Telephone number

01283 217702

Fax number

01283 217702

Age group

4–8

Inspection dates

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Inspection report Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, 24–25 June 2009

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors.

Description of the school

Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England Primary School is a small school, situated in a small village close to the Derbyshire border. Children enter the Foundation class the term after their fourth birthday. They have one or two terms part time, depending on where their birthday falls in the academic year. The younger Reception children remain in the Foundation class while the teaching of older Reception children takes place in a mixed-age Reception and Year 1 class in the mornings. All Reception children are taught in the Foundation class each afternoon. Pupils in Years 2 and 3 are taught in one mixed-age class. At the end of Year 3, pupils leave to go to their next school. Nearly all pupils are of White British origin. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school has been awarded the Activemark.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1 Outstanding

Grade 2 Good

Grade 3 Satisfactory

Grade 4 Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

- Blackfordby St Margaret's is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils' personal development and well-being. In this caring school pupils feel valued and develop positive attitudes to learning. 'My children are happy, well looked after and enjoy coming to school,' is one parent's view, shared by many who responded to the inspection questionnaire. Children enter the Nursery with performance levels that are similar to those normally expected for their age. They make good progress and begin Year 1 with levels of attainment that are generally above those expected. Pupils' work shows, that although some pupils make good progress, achievement in Years 1 to 3 is satisfactory overall. Standards are generally above national expectations by the end of Year 3. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is sometimes good, but varies between subjects and classes. Inspection evidence confirms that, in too many lessons, the progress made by pupils slows because teachers do not consistently provide activities which meet the needs of pupils with different abilities. Academic guidance is satisfactory. Teachers' marking is positive and acknowledges the effort made by pupils. However, it does not always encourage pupils to extend their learning or clearly explain what they need to do to improve their work. Pupils are set targets for reading, writing and mathematics but they are not sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with a sound capacity to improve further. The headteacher has established a good team spirit. She ensures that pupils' well-being is at the heart of the school's work. As a result, pupils receive a good level of care. Staff analyse the results of the Year 2 teacher assessments and Year 3 optional tests results to track the performance of pupils from one year to the next. This enables them to identify groups of pupils in these year groups who would benefit from further support, such as the more able pupils, and provide them with additional support. This analysis provides staff with useful information, but the school does not monitor or evaluate overall provision or pupils' progress regularly enough during the school year, or across all year groups, to ensure that all pupils are helped to achieve their very best. This is leading to uneven rates of progress in Years 1 to 3.

The satisfactory curriculum has a number of strengths. A good range of trips, including residential visits, effectively broaden children's learning. Pupils are particularly positive about the provision for physical education, which is good. Pupils have regular opportunities to participate in gymnastics, cross-country, football and multi-skills sessions.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage Grade: 2

Good induction arrangements, coupled with good levels of care and support, enable children to settle in quickly and feel safe. Children play together well and grow in confidence. The Early Years Foundation Stage is collectively led and managed well. Staff work effectively as a team to plan activities which provide a good balance between those led by adults and those children choose for themselves. Children make good progress in all areas of learning because teaching and learning are good. Effective use is made of assessment information to plan tasks which provide an appropriate level of challenge and support children's development. A further strength of teaching is the way staff promote learning through practical experiences.

During a discussion about vegetables, one child who was holding a pepper said, 'It feels smooth and is the same colour as the grass.' Although children have access to an outdoor area, it is not covered. This restricts its use. Sometimes, adults miss opportunities to enhance children's creativity in the outdoor area because the activities they plan do not always capture the children's imagination. Staff ensure that they maintain regular contact with parents and provide them with feedback about their child's progress and development. The use of a 'key person', someone who acts a point of contact for an individual child, is not yet fully embedded. Staff make effective use of a learning journal to provide parents with the opportunity to regularly comment on their child's development. The journal includes examples of work and comments from staff which state how well children are doing and identifies what they need to do to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure a consistently good rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics throughout the school by providing activities for pupils which better meet the needs of

different ability groups.

- Make sure that pupils are set challenging targets, know how well they are doing and understand what they need to do to improve further.
- Further improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by providing cover in the outdoor environment and by extending the opportunities for children to develop their creativity while outdoors.
- Improve leadership and management, including governance, by establishing more robust and rigorous arrangements for monitoring and evaluation in order to promote good progress throughout the school.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory, but which have areas of underperformance, will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

From their generally above average starting points at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils in Years 1 to 3 make satisfactory progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and the more able make the same progress as their peers. Pupils' work confirms that, although some pupils make good progress, there are variations in performance between classes and subjects. For instance, performance in writing is better in Year 3 than in Year 1. As a result of the uneven rates of progress, pupils make satisfactory overall progress by the time they leave the school. A teacher in the school has recently started providing a group of more able pupils from Years 2 and 3 with additional targeted support in literacy and mathematics. This is helping to accelerate their progress. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 3, standards are generally above average.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

'Blackfordby is a friendly and welcoming environment. Teachers and teaching assistants are very approachable,' commented one parent. The good personal development and well-being of pupils is a strength of the school. Consequently, pupils enjoy school, behave well, and are courteous and very welcoming. In lessons and around school, pupils behave responsibly and safely. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and enjoy taking part in the wide range of sporting activities during lessons. Attendance is good. Spiritual, social and moral development is good because pupils are considerate, show sensitivity to the needs of others, and understand different beliefs and cultures. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and the local community by taking part in fundraising activities and local community events. Opportunities for pupils to lead on developments and participate in the school's decision making process are currently limited. The satisfactory progress that pupils make in their key skills means they are adequately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Relationships between adults and pupils are good and this creates a positive learning environment. Pupils' work shows that progress accelerates when activities successfully build on prior knowledge. Pupils also make good progress when they have the opportunity to extend and develop their ideas in interesting contexts. However, this good practice is not consistent. Teachers' assessments of the performance levels that pupils are working at are not sufficiently accurate. Consequently, tasks do not always match well enough pupils' different learning needs. In lessons, the pace of learning slows when teachers spend too long talking to the whole class. This reduces the time pupils have to take responsibility for their own learning. Teaching assistants make an effective contribution when they work with individuals or groups of pupils. The use of interactive whiteboards to support learning is underdeveloped, although a teacher used one well to promote discussion among the pupils. They talked about the different images of chickens and asked each other questions prior to completing work related to the story of 'Chicken Licken.'

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Teachers are increasingly making links between different subjects and encouraging pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a range of lessons. Nevertheless, opportunities for pupils to extend and develop their ideas are limited in many lessons, and particularly in mathematics, by the overuse of worksheets which only require brief responses. Provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is underdeveloped. Pupils told the inspector that they would like to use ICT more often during lessons. Although there are relatively few after-school activities, a good range of visits enhance the curriculum and have a positive effect on pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils in Year 2 spoke enthusiastically about their recent visit to Tamworth Castle and how it was helping them with their work on castles and knights. The school provides a good range of sporting activities during lessons, which also enrich learning.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

Academic guidance is satisfactory. Systems for setting targets are developing but they are not yet sufficiently challenging, particularly for the more able. Pupils do not yet have a secure understanding of their targets or how to achieve them. Teachers' marking is variable. Marking does not always correct errors in pupils' work or provide pupils with the guidance they need to improve. The majority of parents who responded to the inspection questionnaire were positive about the work of the school. However, a small minority stated that the school does not always keep them well informed, or seek their views. Staff and

governors are looking at ways in which they can extend links between home and school. Pastoral care is strong. The school works well with parents to promote pupils' well-being. Pupils and parents told the inspector that they appreciate the good level of care provided by the school. Pupils say that they feel safe because staff deal promptly with any concerns they may have. At the time of the inspection, safeguarding procedures were in place and in line with government requirements. Effective links with outside agencies, such as those who provide support with speech and language, mean that the small numbers of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities receive the additional support they need.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The headteacher, with effective support from staff and governors, has created an environment where pupils are looked after well and become confident individuals. The school has strong partnerships with the local community and outside agencies which contribute to pupils' good personal development and well-being, but the overall promotion of community cohesion is satisfactory. Staff are developing strategies for making links with the wider community in the United Kingdom and globally. The school development plan outlines some suitable future priorities. However, it does not state how the monitoring of actions will take place or include measurable criteria against which the impact of actions will be evaluated. The school's evaluation of its own performance is sound but overgenerous. The main reason for this is that monitoring and evaluation are not rigorous enough. Governors are keen, enthusiastic and supportive. They have recently introduced more focused visits to the school and are reporting their findings to the governing body. Governors are developing the skills required to hold the school to account for the progress made by pupils.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaining about inspections', which is available from Ofsted's website: <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

<p>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.</p>	<p>School Overall</p>
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Overall effectiveness

<p>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</p>	<p>3</p>
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Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-	

being	3
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The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	3

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	3
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 June 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England Primary School, Swadlincote DE11 8AB

Thank you for the warm and friendly welcome you gave me when I visited your school. I was pleased to see how much you enjoy school and how well you behave. I liked talking to you about your work and your school, visiting your lessons and looking at your work. I would like to say a special thank you to the children in Year 2 who told me all about their visit to Tamworth Castle and showed me their work on castles and knights and the North Pole.

Your school provides you with a satisfactory education and it has some good features. Here is what I found.

- You are polite and kind to each other, and treat the adults you work with and each other with respect.
- The youngest children in Nursery and Reception make good progress and learn by taking part in lots of interesting activities.
- The headteacher and all the adults that work with you help you to feel safe and you really appreciate all the visits that they plan for you.
- You told me how important it is to keep healthy and why it is important to eat lots of fruit and vegetables.

I have asked the staff to help you make even faster progress in reading, writing and mathematics by giving you activities that will help you to do your best. I have also asked them to set you challenging targets and provide you with more information about how well you are doing in your work and what you need to do to improve. This is really important for the older children when staff mark your books because it will help you to be more involved in your learning. The children in Nursery and Reception do not always have the chance to take part in a range of activities outside. Also they cannot use the outdoor area when it rains. I have asked the headteacher and governors to improve the outdoor area. Finally, I have asked the staff and governors to get even better at checking how well the school is doing to make sure you achieve as well as you can. You can help by continuing to work hard in all your lessons.

Thank you once again to you and all the adults that work with you for making me feel so welcome. I wish you the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Usha Devi Her Majesty's Inspector

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