

Blackhorse Primary School

Blackhorse Lane, Emersons Green, Bristol, BS16 6TR

Inspection dates

14–15 January 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- The inspirational headteacher has transformed the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and senior staff.
- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve at least national standards in most areas by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- Achievement and attainment gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers have closed.
- The quality of teaching is typically good, with some outstanding practice.
- Behaviour and safety are outstanding. The school provides a safe and harmonious environment in which pupils thrive.
- Attendance is above average as pupils have a positive attitude to school and a love of learning.
- The Resource Base provides outstanding provision. Pupils receive high-quality support in their learning and are well cared for by staff.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start. They are well taught and supported, and as a result make good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school and is rooted in the school's core values.
- The curriculum is outstanding and is enhanced by an extensive range of extra activities and enrichment opportunities for pupils.
- Governance is strong. Governors are supportive of the school and challenge the leadership rigorously.
- Relationships with the local community and partner schools are used effectively to strengthen school improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils need to make better progress, in some aspects of English, specifically writing.
- Not all teachers challenge pupils equally well to ensure they achieve the highest levels.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 18 lessons, six of which were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, inspectors made short visits to three lessons. An inspector observed an assembly.
- Inspectors scrutinised the quality of work in pupils' books, sometimes accompanied by the deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors talked with groups of pupils to seek their views about the school and listened to the views of many other pupils during lessons, playtimes and lunchtimes.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff, governors and two representatives from the local authority. Inspectors took into consideration the responses of 29 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documentation including: the school development plan; the school's view of its own performance; data relating to pupils' attainment and progress; records of the monitoring of teaching and learning; performance management records of staff ; the governing body minutes; information on attendance; records about behaviour and safeguarding; and school policies.
- Inspectors took account of the 113 responses to the online Parent View survey, one letter sent to the inspection team, and a telephone call received by the lead inspector from a parent. Inspectors also spoke with parents at the start and end of the school day.

Inspection team

Jen Southall, Lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Catherine Leahy	Her Majesty's Inspector
Lesley Voaden	Additional Inspector
James Waite	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Blackhorse Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above the national average.
- The school has a 22-place Resource Base for language and communication needs, predominantly autism, providing specialist provision for children with complex needs. All of these pupils have a statement of special educational needs and are placed in the Resource Base by the local authority. There are currently 19 pupils, taught in two additional classes.
- Nearly all pupils are from White British backgrounds. A small proportion of them speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible to receive free school meals and those in local authority care.
- Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one of two classes on a full-time basis.
- The school's published results include pupils from the Resource Base.
- The headteacher is a local leader in education and the school is part of NEXUS, a cluster of primary schools in the area who work together on school improvement through a programme of professional development, monitoring and evaluation.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve teaching in order to raise the proportion of pupils making outstanding progress so that they attain the highest levels in all subjects, particularly in writing.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are outstanding

- 'The distance the school has travelled is significant. I am proud to work here and with such dedicated staff and enthusiastic learners.' This is one of many comments from staff about the outstanding leadership which underpins the work of the school. The core values of 'respect, pride, bravery and success' are embedded across the school. When inspectors asked a group of pupils if they would change anything about the school, they were surprised at the question and unanimously said, 'No, nothing.'
- The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. He demonstrates an uncompromising approach to securing the very best for the pupils in the school. He is ably supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders who share his vision and determination for the school to become outstanding.
- Leaders have established a culture of high aspiration and ambition. These improvements include an increase in the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage, higher levels of attainment by Year 2 in reading and mathematics, and an improving picture in progress in reading and mathematics for pupils by the end of Year 6.
- Leadership in the Resource Base is outstanding. Leaders have highly successful methods which ensure these pupils make at least good progress and enjoy high levels of success when integrated into the mainstream school.
- School self-evaluation is accurate, honest and self-critical. School leaders, including governors, monitor, track and evaluate school performance rigorously. They act quickly to implement improvements where the need is identified. This has resulted in rapid improvement since the last inspection.
- Middle leaders are passionate about the subjects they lead and are knowledgeable about the strengths and weaknesses in the quality of teaching and learning in these subject areas. They accurately analyse how well pupils are doing in order to plan effectively for improvement. They regularly evaluate actions taken to make sure pupils are making good progress. Middle leaders are well led by the deputy headteacher and are firmly held to account by senior leaders for their performance.
- Senior leaders routinely check on the performance of staff and support their training and development. Since being in post, the headteacher has quickly eradicated any identified weaknesses in teaching to ensure pupils receive the very best.
- Leaders set aspirational targets for pupils which are reviewed regularly by leaders and through pupils' progress meetings. Pupil premium funding is used very effectively, resulting in this group making better progress than in the past.
- The curriculum is outstanding. It promotes a love of learning which is reflected in the increasingly high standards in reading, writing and mathematics achieved by pupils. It covers a wide range of subjects and provides opportunities for academic, technical and sporting excellence. Parents comment on how the school develops the whole child and nurtures their interests and talents beyond the classroom.
- The school has achieved a wide range of awards. Pupils, staff and parents are rightly proud and this demonstrates the school's commitment to providing outstanding experiences for pupils. Sports funding has enhanced already outstanding provision of PE and sport by engaging specialist coaches to provide further sporting opportunities.
- Learning opportunities support the active promotion of fundamental British values: pupils are able to talk knowledgeably about faiths and cultures other than their own. For example, one pupil was clearly able to explain to a younger pupil why not all families celebrate Christmas. The established link with a school in Kampala, Uganda has encouraged and developed in pupils a global awareness of different cultures and religions.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school and is threaded throughout the curriculum. Learning in the classroom is enhanced by an extensive range of trips, visits and cultural experiences. Pupils talk enthusiastically about 'Respect passports' and 'Pride passports'. These are provided for pupils to record evidence when they participate in activities to develop the school's core values of 'respect, pride, bravery and success'. These additional activities are well attended by pupils of all ages and enhance the school's broad curriculum.
- Information about what is taught in the curriculum is shared with parents. The school website is informative and provides parents with tips on how they can support their children's learning, including ideas and links to other useful sites.
- The school meets its statutory requirements for safeguarding pupils. Robust and rigorous systems are systematically maintained by the school business manager and monitored effectively by governors to ensure the safety of pupils and staff.
- The school embraces its involvement with NEXUS, a group of six primary schools that focus on inter-

school evaluation. This partnership challenges judgements the school has of its performance to ensure that they are accurate and evidence-based.

- External support provided by the local authority and school improvement adviser provide effective support. Although they take a 'light-touch' approach, they understand the school and provide appropriate support and challenge.

■ The governance of the school:

- The governing body is ambitious for the school. Governors have a very accurate knowledge of the strengths and areas for development of the school and robustly hold school leaders to account for improvement. They have a clear understanding of school performance data and offer insightful challenge to school leaders on pupils' attainment and achievement. The governing body actively contributes to the school's programme of monitoring and evaluation. Through regular visits to classes and meeting with school leaders, governors have a good awareness of the quality of teaching and its impact on learning. They have a very strong understanding of how the school uses performance management to tackle underperformance, accelerate improvement and reward good teaching. Governors have a good knowledge of how pupil premium funding is spent, and closely monitor its impact on the achievement of those pupils for whom it is intended. They ensure that the school meets all of its statutory duties, including those regarding safeguarding. Governors closely monitor the finances of the school to maintain financial stability and ensure resources coming into the school are managed effectively.

The behaviour and safety of pupils

are outstanding

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Parents, staff and pupils talk positively about the behaviour in the school. One pupil said, 'Everybody is taught to respect each other. We are taught to treat others as we want to be treated ourselves.' In lessons, pupils are polite, courteous and cooperate extremely well with adults and other pupils. These behaviours are reflected at playtimes and lunchtimes, lunchtime supervisors commenting favourably about behaviour and the levels of respect shown by pupils.
- The good and improving attendance reflects pupils' enjoyment of school. They speak enthusiastically about all aspects of school and value the opportunities that broaden their experiences and learning.
- Pupils show excellent attitudes to their learning. Incidences of low-level disruption in lessons are extremely rare.
- Pupils with specific behavioural needs are extremely well supported by adults to ensure they conform to the school's high expectations of behaviour. Pupils from the Resource Base integrate into mainstream classes with ease because they know and understand what is expected of them in lessons.
- Parents, staff and pupils are overwhelmingly positive about both behaviour and safety. The core values of respect, pride, bravery and success are strongly promoted and securely embedded. Pupils clearly understand the importance of these values when making choices about their behaviour.
- Pupils are fully aware of the different forms of bullying and told inspectors that there was no bullying in the school. Inspectors viewed a wide range of evidence to show that bullying is rare.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The policies and procedures for safeguarding are embedded in all aspects of the school's work.
- Pupils know how to stay safe. They receive outstanding guidance through lessons and assemblies in developing skills that will keep themselves safe in and out of school. The school communicates effectively with parents on safety, specifically internet safety, which is regularly an item of information in newsletters.

The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching is typically good with evidence of some outstanding practice. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and progress is improving in all subjects.
- Teachers' strong subject knowledge and enthusiasm leads to pupils enjoying their learning and making good and improving progress over time.
- Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are high and this is reflected in the consistently high quality of work viewed in books by inspectors across a wide range of subjects.
- In the best lessons, teachers plan lessons which inspire, motivate and enthuse pupils, deepening their knowledge and understanding. For example, a Year 6 class were studying a book called, *The London Eye*

Mystery. Pupils were looking specifically at how the author creates suspense in his writing. During the lesson, pupils were eager to complete the tasks set by the teacher, which were well planned, matched the needs of the pupils and resulted in outstanding progress. Work in pupils' books shows this to be typical.

- On occasions, teachers do not provide challenge for the most-able pupils. This means that pupils do not make the rapid progress of which they are capable. The school is working hard to tackle this and ensure that work set challenges this group of pupils and improves achievement still further.
- Questioning is a strength. Teachers routinely ask probing questions to check pupils' understanding and deepen their thinking. For example, inspectors heard teachers asking pupils to 'Tell me more' or 'Explain further'.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are strong. This results in pupils being confident learners who are willing to question and ask for guidance to increase their knowledge and understanding.
- Marking is regular and consistently applied through the school, which means that pupils are very clear in what steps they have to take in order to improve their work.
- Pupils have regular opportunities to assess their work and that of their peers, which makes them clear of the progress they are making and what they need to do to get better.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support in helping pupils learn through targeted questioning and well-planned small-group activities.
- As a result of good teaching and high-quality interventions, disadvantaged pupils and pupils identified as having special educational needs achieve well and make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Inspectors observed outstanding learning in the Resource Base as a result of teachers' high-quality planning and teaching which precisely meets the needs of the pupils. This enables pupils to make rapid progress in their learning.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Children arriving in the Early Years Foundation Stage quickly settle into school life because of the warm and caring support from staff. They make strong progress in their personal and social development and in number and reading.
- By the time they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage, the proportion of children achieving the early learning goals is above the national average.
- Pupils enjoy reading. Over time, the percentage of pupils who reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check (of how well they understand letters and the sounds they make) has improved and remained above national figures. This is because of the high-quality teaching of phonics that is well tailored to the individual needs of the pupils. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident readers.
- Year 2 pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They achieve significantly better than national averages in reading and mathematics. Writing is in line with the national average and leaders are taking action to ensure pupils achieve better rates of progress.
- Current Year 6 pupils are working above nationally expected levels. This good level of achievement at the end of Year 6 was not, however, reflected in the 2014 national tests. Results then were broadly in line with national averages in reading, writing and mathematics but significantly below in the spelling, grammar and punctuation test. Leaders quickly and accurately identified the reasons behind this and have taken swift action to focus on spelling and grammar so that these skills improve, with current standards showing that pupils are on track to achieve at least expected levels.
- The most-able pupils in Year 2 achieve significantly better results than national averages in reading and mathematics. The school is aware that the proportion of pupils going on to achieve the highest levels by the end of Year 6 needs to improve and have put in place targeted interventions and booster classes.
- The very small proportion of Year 2 pupils who are supported by the pupil premium achieve better in reading, writing and mathematics than their eligible peers nationally. When compared with all pupils nationally, this group achieve better in mathematics, match national averages in reading and perform just below in writing. The gap between those eligible and others within the school is closing.
- In Year 6, the few pupils that are eligible for pupil premium achieve better than their national peers in mathematics but not in reading and writing. The school is successfully closing the gap with other pupils internally, but in the 2014 national tests pupils remain eight months behind similar pupils nationally in reading and writing. When compared to all pupils nationally, they are four months behind in mathematics, eight months behind in reading and 12 months behind in writing. This data takes into account all pupils including those in the Resource Base.
- Disabled pupils and those pupils who have special educational needs make good progress relative to their

starting points and achieve better than their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2. At the end of Year 6, these pupils make good progress in mathematics and reading but not in writing.

- The very few pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress as they benefit from effective additional support.
- Achievement in the Resource Base is outstanding because pupils are making consistently good or better progress due to the outstanding quality of teaching.

The early years provision

is good

- The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led. Teachers make early checks on what children can and cannot do when they first start school. This clearly identifies strengths and weaknesses which they use effectively to plan appropriate activities for individual children. Teachers observe learning closely to assess the needs of the children and to plan for new learning opportunities. Assessment of children's learning is good and leaders have an accurate view of the quality of provision.
- Staff in both classes have strong relationships with the children. They create a calm atmosphere which helps children to settle quickly into school life, grow in confidence and make good progress in developing their personal and social skills. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about how quickly children settle when starting school. They told inspectors that arrangements for starting school are effective, one parent commenting, 'Induction was fantastic with lots of opportunity to ensure our children settled quickly.'
- Children make good progress from their starting points as a result of good teaching. This is particularly the case in reading, speaking, number, and moving and handling, which prepares them well to move into Year 1. However, occasionally, questioning does not always challenge the most-able pupils, stopping them from making even better progress.
- Learning journals are detailed with progress against all areas of learning well evidenced. Parents have regular opportunities to view journals and contribute to them, which enables good communication between home and school.
- Adults provide good support for disadvantaged children and those identified with special educational needs, and case studies viewed by inspectors show these children make good progress whatever their starting points.
- Leaders have accurately identified the need to improve the outdoor provision to ensure that it reflects the high quality of the classroom. Plans already in place have a clear focus in ensuring that all children make the best progress across all areas of learning.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors. A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.

School details

Unique reference number	109121
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	443987

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	410
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Sue Thomas
Headteacher	Simon Botton
Date of previous school inspection	23–24 March 2011
Telephone number	01454 866570
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