

Blackwater Community Primary School

North Hill, Blackwater, Truro, TR4 8ES

Inspection dates 15–16 October 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- As a result of consistently good teaching pupils make good progress in all year groups.
- Pupils achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics and reach above average standards.
- Teachers and skilled teaching assistants work effectively together. They plan and teach in ways that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. Morale throughout the school is high.
- Pupils are very well known by the teachers and their personal needs are well catered for.
- All groups of pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve well and make good progress.
- Children in the Reception Year have an excellent start and make very good progress.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is well developed.
- The headteacher is providing determined and dynamic leadership. His vision for Blackwater is supported by staff and the governing body. This is resulting in ongoing improvement.
- Parents are very satisfied with all aspects of the school's performance.
- Pupils have highly positive attitudes to learning and are keen to give their best. They feel safe, behave very well and are proud of their school.
- All staff check information on pupils' progress to ensure they are all doing well enough.
- The knowledgeable governing body is committed to providing the best quality of learning for pupils. The governors challenge the school effectively.
- Pupils enjoy and benefit strongly from the rich and varied activities that the school provides.
- Attendance is above national expectations.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and some pupils do not make the progress they should.
- Pupils' work is not checked consistently to see whether they have acted on guidance in marking to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 10 lessons, five of which were joint observations with the headteacher. A music assembly was also observed.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around the school and in the playgrounds.
- Meetings were held with pupils, subject leaders, the Chair of the Governing Body and five governors. The inspector also had a telephone conversation with a representative from the local authority.
- Pupils from Years 1 and 2 were heard to read individually.
- The inspector met parents at the beginning and end of the school day and took account of the 33 responses to the online survey Parent View.
- The 16 staff questionnaires that were returned were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, Lead Inspector

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Blackwater is smaller than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in four mixed-age classes.
- The number of pupils on roll has increased significantly over the last three years.
- Almost all pupils are White British, with very few pupils from different minority ethnic backgrounds.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also above average.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is below average. This additional government funding is to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, or those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment at the end of Year 6.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of outstanding teaching by:
 - checking that pupils have responded to marking and feedback so that their work is improved
 - making sure that all activities engage and challenge all pupils.
- Ensure that all teachers have the same level of expectation and adhere consistently to whole-school approaches to marking.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leadership and management are good because the headteacher, with the support of governors, has improved the quality of teaching and raised standards.
- The headteacher has set clear school priorities for improving teaching further. This is in order to respond to the challenge of maintaining similar and sustained standards of attainment, despite the small size of some year groups.
- Teachers know that they are accountable for pupils' progress and their performance targets are linked directly to achievement. They also are aware that they will be supported and helped to improve their skills through systematic and effective training and development.
- The headteacher and class teachers understand and make good use of data. The school has good systems to monitor pupils' progress. These systems identify any actual or future underachievement and take appropriate action so that all pupils achieve well. The school makes sure that these checks are accurate by comparing information across year groups and with other local schools.
- Middle leaders, including subject leaders, are effective in their roles and provide appropriate support and guidance to colleagues.
- Relationships throughout the school are positive and based on mutual respect. The school ensures that there is equality of opportunity for each pupil. No discrimination of any kind is accepted. This is reflected by the standards and progress of pupils in receipt of additional government funding which are similar to those achieved by other pupils in the school.
- The curriculum provides a good range of activities with many memorable experiences such as trips to the 'London Eye'. These promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding well. For example, links with a school in Gambia open the pupils' eyes to the wider world. Consequently, pupils leave the school well prepared for the next stage of their education and life in modern Britain.
- All staff who returned questionnaires agreed that they are proud to work at Blackwater and feel well supported by the school's leadership team.
- Additional government funding is utilised effectively to provide additional support in reading, writing and mathematics. Skilled support staff put in place high quality teaching for small groups of eligible pupils.
- The school focuses well on improving pupils' healthy lifestyles and their physical well-being. The additional sports funding is allocated well to introduce pupils to new sports and to improve the skills of teachers.
- Blackwater also offers numerous after-school clubs which are well attended and thoroughly enjoyed.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet all statutory requirements.
- The local authority provides timely, constructive and challenging support. It has helped the school to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching.
- Parents are viewed as important partners in their children's education and the headteacher meets parents every day. The informative website, involvement in school activities and events and termly parent meetings all help parents to support and be involved in their children's learning.

The governance of the school:

- Governance is highly effective. Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to the make up of the governing body. Governors have worked hard to improve their knowledge and impact. They are now instrumental in challenging the school's performance and evaluating its effectiveness. Governors are well trained and provide high levels of challenge. They are knowledgeable about how well Blackwater is performing in comparison with local schools, as well as nationally. They are kept very well informed by the headteacher but also look at data themselves. This means that they have a clear picture of the school's strengths and areas that could be improved. Governors know where teaching is strong and how the school continues to improve it. The systems for rewarding good teaching through setting targets for teachers are thorough and well understood by teachers. Finances are managed rigorously and governors make certain that all spending is focused on improving provision for the pupils. The governors monitor the spending and impact of additional funding closely. They make sure that it is used extremely well to improve the attainment of eligible pupils. The funding allows them to access activities which would otherwise not be available to them.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils in classrooms and around the school is outstanding. Pupils are highly motivated and respond promptly to teachers' instructions. Little, if any, time is wasted in the classroom. Pupils respond very positively to the challenges which teachers give them.
- Pupils are very respectful of their teachers and of each other. In particular, they look forward to assemblies where their academic achievements, behaviour and other contributions to Blackwater are celebrated.
- All pupils have an equal opportunity to be happy and succeed. Pupils from different age groups get on extremely well together and the senior pupils look out for the younger ones.
- Teachers are strong role models and have high expectations of behaviour. Pupils are very polite, friendly and welcoming to visitors to Blackwater. The school's system for rewarding good behaviour and work is extremely successful. Pupils are very excited by the prospect of being awarded a prize from the headteacher's 'Treasure Chest'.
- Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities and be fully involved in school life. House captains and the school council take their roles very seriously.
- In recent years pupils' attendance has been above national expectations. One parent commented that her children do not look forward to weekends because they were not able to go to school.
- The school building and grounds are attractive and spacious, providing many different facilities that allow pupils to share their learning together. In particular, pupils were very keen to show the inspector the school's 'Wild Area'.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. The school has comprehensive systems for ensuring risks are properly checked.
- Staff consistently follow school policies to manage behaviour and ensure there is no discrimination. The school's records confirm that incidents of inappropriate behaviour are extremely rare and pupils report there are no instances of bullying. Pupils are clear that bullying can take many forms.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of the risks in life outside of school, including through the use of the internet.
- All pupils feel exceptionally safe at school. Parents consider that the school provides a very high standard of care. This is confirmed by all the parents who spoke to the inspector or responded to Parent View. The school's own questionnaires show a similar picture.

The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good throughout the school, and some is outstanding. This supports pupils' good rates of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. The school promotes resilience in its pupils who are encouraged to believe that they can succeed, however challenging a task is.
- The school is committed to promoting equality of opportunity, and teachers plan lessons that meet the needs of all groups of pupils. However, a small proportion of lessons do not fully engage and challenge some pupils.
- The quality of teaching and the rate of pupils' progress are monitored closely by the headteacher. Appropriate support is put in place quickly to help any pupil identified as being at risk of underachieving.
- There is a happy, purposeful and cooperative atmosphere in all classrooms. Teachers manage behaviour well.
- Teaching assistants are skilled and work effectively with teachers to support pupils' learning, particularly those who are at risk of underachieving. These pupils make similar progress to that of other pupils in the school.
- Most teachers check pupils' work regularly and accurately. They regularly review and adjust pupils' targets. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own performance and are challenged to improve the quality of their work and take responsibility for it. However, not all teachers consistently follow the school's marking policy. This results in slightly lower expectations on some occasions.
- Activities are prepared well and ensure that work is set at the correct level. Regular homework is completed consistently and parents are well informed about their children's learning in order to support them effectively.

- Pupils have regular opportunities to develop their reading and writing skills in all subjects. This focused approach results in most pupils developing strong communication skills, both verbally and on paper.
- Pupils' work is marked regularly and in some detail. However, teachers do not routinely check whether pupils' response to their marking has resulted in improvement. Teachers and pupils appreciate that it is right to sometimes take 'risks' and this often extends learning and adds enjoyment.
- All parents who responded to Parent View or who spoke to the inspector considered that their children are taught well at Blackwater.

The achievement of pupils

is good

- Pupils' achievement is good because they make good progress from their different starting points. Standards in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2014 were above average with every pupil achieving Level 4 in reading, writing and mathematics. Well over half of the year group reached the higher Level 5 in reading and writing. These results were significantly stronger than the weaker performance in 2013.
- Children join Blackwater with skills, knowledge and understanding that are broadly typical for their age. Those who attend the Nursery and Reception class make very good progress because of the consistently good, and often outstanding, teaching.
- Children benefit from the excellent individual support that they receive in a happy, nurturing atmosphere. Consequently, most children reach a good level of development by the time they enter Year 1.
- Standards in reading are consistently high in all year groups and reflect the strong focus that the school places on reading from the beginning of the pupils' education. Punctuation, grammar and spelling skills are taught consistently well so pupils' progress in these areas is strong.
- The most able pupils are consistently challenged to achieve well at Key Stage 2. As a result, the number of pupils working at Levels 5 and 6 has risen markedly.
- There are no gaps in attainment between different groups of pupils. Disadvantaged Year 6 pupils who are eligible for additional funding achieve standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are in line with their peers in school and above those for all pupils nationally. The proportion of these pupils who make at least expected rates of progress is also above the national average for all pupils. This is because pupils receive the help and support they need to achieve well.
- Pupils' knowledge of the sounds letters make and their ability to link them together to read and write is good.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make at least good progress. They often make rapid progress, especially in their personal development. This is because teachers know pupils well and so make sure they are able to reach their full potential.

The early years provision

is outstanding

- Children make consistently strong and rapid progress from a wide range of starting points. They thrive in their first year at school and are exceptionally well prepared for the move into Year 1. The class teacher and support staff frequently check on how much the children know. They do this sensitively while working with individuals and small groups in the well-resourced classroom and outdoors play area.
- Teaching is outstanding. The classroom and outdoor learning area are well equipped and stimulating. Resources are well matched to both children's needs and interests and inspire them to become completely engaged in absorbing activities. This focus was observed when three Reception children were enthusiastically acting out the story of the 'Little Red Hen'.
- Leadership of the early years provision is outstanding. The staff, through their planning, empathy and actions, demonstrate a total commitment to giving children the best possible start to school.
- Almost all children meet or exceed expectations in all the areas of learning.
- Relationships with parents are strong and the open-door policy ensures parents feel welcome and are encouraged to play an active role in their children's learning and development.
- Children behave extremely well. They quickly learn to get on with each other and show how much they enjoy each other's company in their shared play and games.

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	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	111866
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	443840
Type of school	Community
School category	Primary
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Margaret Davies
Headteacher	Chris Wilson
Date of previous school inspection	10–11 February 2010
Telephone number	01872 560570
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