

Inspection of Blackrod Primary School

Manchester Road, Blackrod, Manchester Road, Blackrod, Bolton, Lancashire BL6 5SY

Inspection dates: 26 and 27 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since December 2011.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils consider themselves lucky to attend this school. They flourish and are happy. They enjoy learning and enthusiastically embrace the wider opportunities that the school provides, such as learning photography or British Sign Language. Pupils blossom into confident and knowledgeable individuals who are prepared exceptionally well to take their place in modern society.

The school values pupils' opinions. Staff and governors frequently consult them about many aspects of school life. Pupils learn that they have the potential to bring about the changes that they want to see. For example, pupils on the eco-council are involved in an initiative to reduce litter. They relish the wealth of opportunities to work together with the wider school community for the benefit of all.

Pupils embody 'The Blackrod Way' and behave in accordance with the school's exceedingly high expectations. Starting in the early years, children learn that their behaviour affects others. They quickly become familiar with, and follow, extremely effective routines that promote positive learning behaviour. These routines stand them in good stead throughout the school.

Pupils benefit from the school's aspirational approach. They strive to do their best. Pupils also benefit from an exceptional curriculum that enables them to achieve extremely well.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Collectively, governors, leaders at all levels and staff are determined to provide the highest quality of education for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are successful, yet they are not complacent. Governors deploy their wide-ranging expertise to strong effect to offer high levels of challenge and support to the school. They have highly effective processes in place to ensure that they have an accurate and comprehensive view of the quality of the education that the school provides.

The school prioritises staff's professional development. Engagement with up-to-date educational research ensures that staff are experts in designing and delivering the curriculum. They appreciate the time that the school gives them to develop their practice and to collaborate with each other. They are overwhelmingly happy and proud to work at the school.

Starting in the early years, the attention to detail across the curriculum is meticulous. Staff know precisely what pupils should learn. This is also the case in those classes that include pupils of different ages. Staff take every opportunity to enhance learning and to ignite pupils' curiosity. For example, carefully selected cultural trips and visits enrich topics while links to different careers help to broaden pupils' horizons.

Staff skilfully design activities to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what they already know. Staff are alert to signs that pupils might need additional help, for example those with SEND. The process for identifying those needs is extremely strong. Staff are adept at adapting their delivery of the curriculum for these pupils.

Staff swiftly and accurately pinpoint gaps in pupils' knowledge and they ensure that learning does not move on before pupils are ready. As a result, pupils, including those with SEND, build a rich and comprehensive body of knowledge over time.

The school cultivates opportunities to enthuse pupils about reading. For instance, pupils spoke with great excitement about the challenge of identifying the 'masked reader'. They consider it a treat to take a book to enjoy in the 'reading den'.

From the start of the early years, children benefit from a phonics programme that expertly trained staff deliver to a consistently high standard. The school takes a forensic approach to identifying any children in the Reception class and pupils in key stage 1 who struggle to keep up with the phonics programme. These pupils receive effective support to help them to catch up. Pupils learn to read accurately and with confidence.

The school's approach to supporting pupils' personal development is exceptional. Pupils are actively engaged within the local community through ventures such as the multi-generational 'cooking up connections' project. Pupils joyfully described participating in the many and varied outdoor learning activities, for example in the school's forest area. They prize these opportunities to learn new skills.

The school prioritises building positive relationships between staff and pupils. These shine through their interactions. Pupils feel extremely well cared for. They know what to do if they have any worries, for example they can talk to someone at the 'pastoral pop in'. Most pupils are rarely absent from school. Where this is not the case, the school has sought to understand the circumstances of each individual pupil in order to overcome barriers. This careful attention to pupils' well-being helps to ensure that, when they step into the classroom, pupils are ready and eager to learn. Lessons are calm and purposeful because pupils are engrossed in their learning.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	105191
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10294214
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	310
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Headteacher	Katherine Mead
Website	www.blackrodprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	15 and 16 December 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school offers a breakfast and after-school club for pupils.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision for pupils.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, other leaders and staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, English, mathematics, science and history. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with teachers, spoke with some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils'

work. Inspectors also looked at curriculum documentation relating to other subjects.

- An inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar member of staff. Inspectors spoke with some pupils about reading.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes. An inspector also visited the breakfast club.
- An inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- An inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and an educational consultant who works with the school.
- Inspectors met with pupils to ask about their experiences of school. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with several groups of staff. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's survey for staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation, including records relating to pupils' attendance, the school's self-evaluation documents and minutes of governing-body meetings.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector reviewed the single central record, took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

Inspection team

Sally Rix, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Rebecca Gough	Ofsted Inspector
Rachael Alarcon	Ofsted Inspector

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