

# Blackshaw Moor CofE (VC) First School

Buxton Road, Blackshaw Moor, Leek, ST13 8TW

**Inspection dates** 9–10 October 2014

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
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 headteacher's high expectations and success in motivating staff have improved teaching and raised standards across the school.
- The school's leaders, including governors, have taken effective steps to improve the education provided, notably in the Early Years, where provision and outcomes are now good after a dip in 2013.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and writing; their progress in mathematics is outstanding.
- Standards are high in reading and mathematics by the end of Year 4, and well above average in writing.
- Teachers assess pupils' work accurately and use the results well to build on what pupils already know, understand and can do.
- The most-able pupils are given particularly demanding tasks and reach very high standards.
- Pupils are polite, well behaved and respectful of others.
- The curriculum prepares pupils well for life outside school. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding.
- Leaders at all levels have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They build on the former and tackle the latter very effectively.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Pupils' progress in writing is not as good as that in reading and mathematics. The extra lessons provided for some vulnerable pupils through the use of the pupil premium are too short to help them improve their skills in writing.
- Leaders do not change the support given to pupils quickly enough when it is clear that a particular approach is not improving their progress.
- Governors have not ensured that the results of checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are recorded properly.

### Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed seven lessons, including two seen jointly with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector listened to pupils reading and analysed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with staff, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- There were too few responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, to allow analysis. The inspector spoke to parents informally during the inspection to gather their views. He also considered the views that parents expressed in the school's own questionnaire.
- The inspector observed the school's work, including arrangements for keeping pupils safe. He looked at a number of documents including: the school's own information on pupils' progress; the school's evaluation of its performance; records relating to attendance; and documents relating to safeguarding.

### Inspection team

David Driscoll, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- All pupils are White British.
- Very few pupils have a statement of special educational needs and none have an education, health or care plan. Most pupils with special educational needs are in the Early Years or Year 1.
- An average proportion of pupils is supported through the pupil premium (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and looked-after children).

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the progress in writing made by pupils with special educational needs or who are eligible for support through the pupil premium by ensuring that the extra lessons that they attend are long enough for them to develop their skills.
- Adapt the support given to pupils with special educational needs or who are eligible for support through the pupil premium as soon as it is clear that the approach is not proving effective in raising their standards.
- Ensure that all checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are recorded accurately.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. She has an unswerving focus on tackling weaknesses in provision in order that pupils get the best possible education. Governors and staff share her commitment to improve. Pupils, especially the most able, make better progress than they did at the previous inspection.
- Leaders at all levels play a good part in driving the school forward. Those responsible for subjects and aspects, such as the Early Years, observe lessons and check the work in pupils' books to gain an accurate view of teaching and how it can be improved.
- Teachers receive consistently good-quality guidance and are given the opportunity to visit schools to learn from the best practice elsewhere. Their performance is managed effectively, so that only those whose pupils make good progress receive pay increases.
- The small class sizes are used to pupils' advantage. Teachers know that there is always room in other classes, so are quick to move the most-able pupils up a class; for example, when they are capable of tackling work at a much higher level, or down when the less able need to revise the basics.
- The extra funds for sport have been used well. Pupils are now taught physical education by specialist coaches, and teachers have learnt from their methods. Levels of performance have improved; the school teams and individuals have won tournaments in several different sports.
- The local authority rightly views the overall effectiveness of the school as good. It has supported the school by arranging links with others where outstanding practice can be observed. This approach has been highly effective in improving provision in the Early Years. Leaders are working with other schools to develop a coordinated approach to assessing the new National Curriculum.
- The curriculum provides a broad and balanced education for pupils. It prepares them very well for the next stage of their education and for life outside of school. Spiritual development is outstanding. The school uses the services of the National Park Rangers to explore the beauty of the environment, for example. It provides pupils with a gazebo where they can sit and reflect quietly whenever they want to.
- The development of moral understanding and social skills is equally strong. Pupils elect their school councillors, for example, who manage their own meeting, raise their own funds, account for their expenditure and income and decide how monies are to be allocated. All pupils in Years 2 and 3 are trained to provide first aid. Pupils gain a good insight into other cultures through a wide range of trips and visitors into school.
- The headteacher analyses data on pupils' progress thoroughly and accurately. The results are used well to identify any pupil who is falling behind so that extra help is provided as quickly as possible.
- Leaders have used the pupil premium funding well to help eligible pupils to catch up with others in reading and mathematics. Short, highly focused, extra lessons are provided where such pupils receive individual support. However, this approach is not as effective in helping to boost pupils' progress in writing. The pupils are often relatively slow writers, so the lesson is over before they can think about how to improve and make any changes to their work. Nevertheless, all pupils reach at least the expected levels for their age.
- The school has comprehensive checks in place to ensure that adults are suitable to work with children. However, the results of these checks have not always been recorded accurately.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have a clear and accurate overview of the school's performance. They visit the school to see at first hand the effectiveness of teaching, the accuracy of assessments, how well pupils behave

towards others and how well they respond in lessons. Governors supplement these visits with analyses of information on pupils' achievement, so they are able to ask pertinent questions of the headteacher in order to establish that the school is always looking to improve. Governors provide strong support for the headteacher when required. Financial control is strong, but governors do not always ensure that best value is gained from the spending of pupil premium funds in promoting writing.

- Governors engage with parents and pupils exceptionally well. Parents and pupils are asked to complete an annual questionnaire, which includes a section for pupils to evaluate the teaching they receive. The information provided for parents on the curriculum through the school website is detailed and extensive, while reports on their children's progress are comprehensive.
- Governors carry out almost all of their statutory duties to the letter. They keep a close eye on the way that teachers' performance is managed to ensure that only the most effective are given pay increases. However, governors do not check for themselves that checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are recorded accurately.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils have good manners and show a great deal of respect to adults and those who are visiting the school. They take very good care of the school environment, ensuring that it remains an attractive and welcoming place for all.
- Behaviour around school is good. Pupils move sensibly around the corridors and play happily together at breaks, ensuring that none are left out. Behaviour at lunch is exemplary, as pupils vie to be on the 'star table', where the best behaved eat off special plates, drink juice from special glasses and have tablecloths and napkins.
- There is a marked improvement over time in the behaviour of children in the Early Years. Several children are not used to interacting with others on starting Nursery, but they soon learn to behave well. By the start of the Reception Year, they are working and playing happily with one another.
- There have been no exclusions for many years, and incidents of poor behaviour are very rare.
- Attendance has improved and is now above average. Punctuality to school is excellent.
- A few pupils have special educational needs relating to their behaviour. The school is successful in helping them to manage their feelings so that their behaviour improves over time.
- Pupils behave well in lessons which helps them to make good progress. They are usually attentive to their teachers and work hard.

### **Safety**

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Bullying and any form of derogatory or discriminatory language are very rare. Pupils understand well what constitutes bullying and the effect it can have on others, so are quick to report any concerns that they may have.
- Pupils are taught to understand what risks exist outside of school. They know what to do if something 'odd' appears on the internet because they have been given tests to check on their responses to false webpages. Pupils walk around cities as part of their trips to learn about safety on busy roads. They are very clear about saying 'no' to strangers.
- While checks on the suitability of adults to work with children are secure, some clerical errors lead to gaps in the way that the results of checks are recorded. These were rectified by the end of the inspection.

**The quality of teaching** is good

- Pupils benefit from consistently good teaching across the school. As a result, they make good progress in their subjects and achieve well.
- Teachers are particularly good at teaching phonics (the sounds that letters make), so children quickly learn the basics of reading in the Early Years and are able to work out more difficult words, such as 'frightening', in Years 1 and 2. Pupils are given lots of opportunities to apply their mathematical skills, such as 'going shopping' when learning about money.
- Teachers encourage pupils to try hard by using praise and rewards. This is most effective in reading, where pupils carefully record the number of times they have read so that they can claim their prize for every multiple of 20.
- Teachers mark pupils' work accurately and frequently. Every piece is praised for the improvements that have been made, while the next steps are carefully identified so that pupils know what they need to do to improve. Pupils always respond to their teacher's comments by completing work or practising spellings, for example.
- Teachers use the results of assessments very well to plan what pupils need to move on to, and to group them according to how well they have done. Pupils are often moved between groups in a class or between classes so that the tasks they are given are most appropriate to their abilities.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The most-able pupils are given very demanding work, especially in mathematics, so they are able to reach their potential. Pupils of all abilities rise to the challenges they are set, keen to solve problems and produce their best quality work.
- The least able are usually supported well by teaching assistants but this is not always the case. Some teaching assistants do not take the initiative in identifying those pupils that need extra help and so do not move quickly enough to support them.

**The achievement of pupils** is good

- Pupils make good progress at each key stage. They join Nursery with skills and knowledge that are below the level expected for their age. Standards improve to average by the start of Year 1. Good progress continues, so that standards have been consistently above average at the end of Year 2 for several years. Standards in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 were above average in 2013 and very high in 2014.
- Pupils leave school with standards that are high for their age in reading and mathematics, and well above average in writing. By the time they leave Year 4, all pupils have reached the standards expected for their age, most are a year ahead and many are two years ahead in reading and mathematics. Pupils are very well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- The most-able pupils fulfil their potential by making progress that is at least good, and outstanding in mathematics. In mathematics, for example, they confidently use negative numbers in Year 4 to calculate temperatures when they fall below freezing. Pupils write at length and read extensively; many complete more than 100 books in a year. All of the most-able pupils in Year 4 in 2014 exceeded the level expected of a Year 6 pupil in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Most pupils with special educational needs are in the Early Years and Year 1. Many arrive with speech and language difficulties, which are quickly identified. The school works closely with outside support services so that children receive the specialist help they need to succeed and make good progress.
- The very few pupils with a statement of special educational needs receive high-quality, focused support that allows them to make appreciable gains in their learning.

- Pupils are keen to do well and to please their teachers. They are quick to help one another when the need arises. Pupils learn from their mistakes. They always read the comments that teachers have made on their work and are given time to think about and act upon them.
- Pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium and those with special educational needs in Years 2 to 4 make equally as good progress as others in reading and mathematics. In writing, their progress is slower, although all reach the standard expected of them by the time they leave the school.

### The early years provision

is good

- Children achieve well in the Early Years. Their knowledge and skills are below the level expected for their age on joining Nursery because few have had experience of playing with other children at pre-school groups and several have speech and language difficulties.
- Teachers promptly assess children and provide them with the support they need to catch up. Those with special educational needs are quickly referred to specialists. All children are taught the importance of following rules and thinking of others so that they can learn more effectively.
- The most-able children are given tasks that make them think hard. For example, adding and subtracting numbers to and from 10. There is a daily focus on phonics, where children are quickly moved from learning a new letter sound, reading it in words and writing it for themselves. By the time they leave Reception, all children have made good progress, reach standards that are average for their age and are well prepared to start Year 1.
- Good leadership has ensured that provision has improved significantly over the last two years, and standards have improved to the national average by the start of Year 1. Staff have visited outstanding settings to learn from the best practice and are applying these methods in school. Assessments are more accurate and used well to build on what children already know, understand and can do.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124287
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	448566

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

<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	58
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John Povey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jill Tillmanns
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	29 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01538 300337
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