

Blue Bell Hill Primary and Nursery School

Gordon Road, Nottingham, NG3 2LE

Inspection dates 2–3 June 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected
	This inspection:	Good 2
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	Outstanding	1

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Pupils achieve well. They make good progress from low starting points so that, by the end of Year 6, they reach average standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors, senior leaders and managers are highly ambitious for the school. Recent actions have ensured that achievement and teaching are good and are improving.
- Children make an excellent start in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they thrive and rapidly develop new skills and knowledge.
- Pupils continue to achieve well in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Their progress in reading and mathematics is particularly good.
- The school has worked remarkably well with parents to improve pupils' attendance; attendance is now above the national average and rising.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well. There is a strong sense of community throughout the school, which pupils, parents and staff are proud of and happy to share.
- The curriculum is rich and diverse, and makes a significant contribution towards developing pupil's skills, knowledge and understanding.
- Pupils' behaviour is good. Adult's expectations of pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour are high and this results in strong levels of trust and respect between the pupils themselves and towards adults.
- Pupils feel very safe in this inclusive and harmonious school. They are usually eager to learn, are very proud of their school. Parents value the friendly environment in which their children learn well.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The work set is not always challenging enough to hold pupils' interest.
- Pupils in some classes are not always clear about what they could achieve because a few teachers do not set clear enough targets.
- Marking is not always sufficiently detailed to guide pupils towards better standards. Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to their teacher's comments and learn how to improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils’ learning in 25 lessons, two of which were seen jointly with the two senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with staff, a group of pupils and two members of the governing body.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read and talked to them formally and informally at break and lunchtime.
- Inspectors took account of the 83 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View), and the school’s own parental survey. They had conversations with parents and carers as they dropped off their children at the start of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 48 responses to the staff questionnaire.
- School documentation was examined, including data on pupils’ current progress and records of governors’ meetings, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Inspectors carefully reviewed the system used to check teachers’ performance. Documentation relating to the care of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs was also reviewed.

Inspection team

Andrew Stafford, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Cheryl Lodge	Additional Inspector
Robert Bourdon-Pierre	Additional Inspector
John Croghan	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- Blue Bell Hill Primary and Nursery converted to become an academy school in October 2013. When its predecessor school, also called Blue Bell Hill Primary and Nursery, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding.
- Blue Bell Hill Primary and Nursery is larger than the average-sized primary school. There are two classes in Nursery, one each for the morning and afternoon, which the children attend part-time. There are two classes in Reception and all Reception children attend full-time. There are two classes in Years 1 to 4 and one class in Years 5 and 6.
- More pupils than is the case nationally join the school at other than the usual times.
- Three quarters of pupils are from a minority ethnic heritage, the remainder being of White British heritage. More pupils than average speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium (the additional funding allocated by the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals or children who are looked after) is above average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The headteacher leads the school for three days each week and the acting headteacher leads the school for the other two days, in readiness for assuming full responsibility in September 2015. Since the school converted to become an academy four newly qualified teachers were appointed in September 2014, and in March 2015 another new teacher was appointed.
- The school is working closely with the Transform Teaching School Alliance to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- There is a breakfast club which is managed by the governing body, and this formed part of the inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that standards of attainment and the rates of progress pupils make in their learning are consistently outstanding by:
 - providing more challenging work to engage pupils' interest and raise their achievement
 - making sure that marking is always detailed and helps pupils understand how to improve their work, and pupils are given regular opportunities to respond to the teachers' marking comments
 - ensuring there is consistent use of targets in English and mathematics in all classes so that all pupils are clear about what they can achieve.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- The headteacher and acting headteacher both provide inspirational, determined and focused leadership that is increasingly involving all staff in school improvement work. They are supported by an effective team, including the governors, who are ambitious to raise standards further. This has resulted in an ethos in which good behaviour is the norm and pupils make good progress.
- Senior leaders know the school well and maintain a rigorous focus on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Recent improvements are ensuring that more pupils make better than expected progress and reach higher levels of attainment, including in the early years.
- Leaders manage teachers' performance well. A highly effective system is in place that enables leaders to identify teachers' training needs and provide relevant training. The professional development of staff is given a high priority and is linked explicitly to pupils' progress. Newly qualified teachers and those in the early stages of their career are well supported. This is bringing about significant improvements in the quality of teaching and reflects the school's high expectations.
- Middle leaders are well organised and check standards in their subjects systematically. They offer class teachers well-judged advice and practical support to improve their teaching. However, leaders have not checked to see if pupils in all classes are given targets to aim for at the end of each year. As a result, school practice with regard to the setting of targets to improve pupils' learning in English and mathematics is inconsistent and this slows the progress of some pupils.
- Most teaching succeeds in engaging pupils' interest and improving their skills and knowledge, although work set is sometimes insufficiently interesting or challenging. Pupils say how much they enjoy doing topics such as 'The Victorians', 'Storms and Shipwrecks' and 'Magic and Mystery'. Pupils enjoy the good range of after-school clubs and visits, including the residential ones.
- The school has a broad and diverse new curriculum that meets most pupils' needs and prepares all pupils very well for life in modern Britain. Learning is enriched by a wide-ranging and interesting variety of approaches. The school's system of 'Superheroes' to promote the four 'R's': Resourcefulness, Resilience, Reciprocity and Reflection, is contributing positively to pupils' academic and personal development. The school provides a range of exciting learning opportunities for pupils. For example, many children learn to play a musical instrument, and others work in the school's allotment which also enriches their experiences in school. There are opportunities for pupils to take part in day trips relating to their lessons and topics; for example, during the inspection the school organised a skating lesson at the Nottingham ice rink for early years children, and Year 6 experienced 'Into University', to motivate them to be aspirational learners. Pupils also recounted how much they had enjoyed their residential visit to Castleton.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptional. Assemblies are highly positive experiences that allow pupils the opportunity to reflect on the school's values, and to consider wider issues like democracy and justice. Pupils are genuinely pleased for each other when academic or sporting achievement is celebrated. A carefully thought-out programme ensures that pupils develop a strong understanding of different beliefs and lifestyles from around the world from the moment they enter the school. Themed topics are used effectively to complement this. For example, a themed week on scientific enquiry covered many aspects, involved parents and homework packs, and findings were reported through electronic mailings.
- The school supports disadvantaged pupils very well through its careful use of the pupil premium and is very successful in giving every child the chance to succeed and benefit from all aspects of school life. Variations in the rates of progress between different groups of pupils are being reduced quickly. Pupils state that there is no discrimination in the school and promotes equality of opportunity very well. Parents also confirm that the school operates in a very friendly, caring and supportive environment.
- The primary sports funding is used well and provides extensive opportunities for pupils to engage in sport

and to promote their physical development. Sports coaches work with teachers to develop pupils' skills, health and well-being, and pupils frequently participate in a range of activities, including swimming, tennis and lacrosse.

- The school's child protection and safeguarding systems are very thorough and fully meet statutory requirements.
- The Transform Teaching School Alliance has been very supportive of the school during its conversion to academy status and has also been instrumental in helping it to improve teaching and raise standards.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The newly-constituted governing body is well informed and governors know the school well. The governing body actively contributes to the school's monitoring and evaluation programme. Governors make use of available data on pupils' achievement and their robust questioning of senior leaders gives them valuable information about teaching quality and all aspects of the school's performance. Governors provide both support and challenge for senior leaders and ensure that they are held to account for pupils' progress. For example, they ensure that there is a clear link between the way in which teachers move along the pay scales and their impact of pupils' progress. Governors carefully check the use of the pupil premium funding and are aware of the highly positive impact it has had upon learning for this group of eligible pupils. Governors are similarly diligent in ensuring that the additional sports funding is used well. Together with school leaders, governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met, including those for safeguarding.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Staff set high standards to which pupils readily respond. Pupils show respect and friendliness to adults, visitors and their classmates. Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour policy and state that they avoid 'getting red'. Pupils were observed helping others to resolve difficulties. This ensures a happy, welcoming and harmonious school, which has a very positive effect on the rate at which pupils learn.
- The school uses its wide range of rewards to promote its vision of 'Aim High - Respect and Care for Each Other - Celebrate Success'. Pupils' good attendance, behaviour, work and reading are regularly celebrated and pupils are encouraged to take pleasure in the success of others.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good across the school. However, very occasionally a few pupils lose concentration, when they are given a task they find too easy.
- Attendance has improved because the school has worked hard with pupils and their families to help them understand how important it is to come to school regularly. Widening attendance of the breakfast club has made a significant contribution towards achieving above average attendance and improving punctuality.
- Pupils with particular behavioural needs are helped to learn to manage their behaviour through a robust system of rewards and sanctions. There have been very few pupils excluded since the academy opened, and none in the current academic year.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Procedures for identifying and reporting any safeguarding issues are very thorough. The school liaises well with other agencies in order to provide the best possible support for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, as well as for their families.
- Staff are trained very well to ensure pupils' safety. Pupils understand the roles of the emergency services and know, for instance, that the police, ambulance and fire services are there to help.

- Pupils know about keeping themselves safe. They are very clear about what constitutes bullying and the various forms in which it can take place. They assert that this occurs very rarely in school and explain that this is because lessons and assemblies teach them to be kind and respectful of different lifestyles, faiths and ethnic groups.
- The school provides excellent opportunities for pupils to develop their social, sporting and other skills in a safe and stimulating environment, both at the beginning and end of the school day and in the breakfast club and after-school activities and clubs.
- The views of all pupils are valued and nurtured, so all feel special. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and the work of the School Council, in requesting outdoor play equipment, has improved behaviour and safety. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated and all pupils have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- All parents and carers who completed Parent View responses stated that the school makes sure that pupils are well behaved and that it deals effectively with rare instances of bullying. All parents and carers who responded also believe their children are happy, safe and well looked after at school.

The quality of teaching is good

- The quality of teaching is consistently good and has been over time. There are examples of outstanding teaching. Discussions with pupils and a scrutiny of the work in their books confirm that teaching is good.
- Teachers use a wide range of strategies to improve pupils' progress. For example, the teaching of reading and writing is based on giving pupils a sound, basic grasp of phonics (the links between letters and the sounds they represent). The school is especially effective in supporting pupils who are learning English as an additional language. These pupils make particularly good progress.
- Teachers encourage pupils to use the correct mathematical vocabulary and this has meant that the great majority of pupils make consistently good progress during lessons. Year 6 pupils were able to quickly multiply complicated fractions because they were given a clear explanation of the strategies required.
- Teachers and teaching assistants work very well together to ensure that pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, have the support and challenge that they need to make good progress. This is particularly true for recently arrived pupils who speak little or no English. From the early years onwards small groups are taught skills in, for example, phonics sessions. Pupils appreciate this support and report that they enjoy learning and that teachers make lessons fun. Parents say that their children are taught very well.
- Improvements in the teaching, particularly in reading, writing and mathematics, have helped to raise attainment and progress, especially in boys' writing, but also across a wide range of other subjects. Reading at home stimulates a love of reading and progress is recorded in reading records. Pupils told inspectors that reading challenges can lead to rewards that they appreciate.
- Staff report they get good opportunities to develop their expertise in areas in which they were once less confident. There are productive links with the Transform Teaching School Alliance and partnerships have been established with local primary schools, which provide good opportunities for joint staff training. This is having a markedly beneficial impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Inspectors' observations of teaching and the work in pupils' books show that most of the work undertaken by pupils successfully matches their ability and moves their learning forward. Occasionally teachers do not move pupils on to more challenging activities quickly enough. For example, inspectors saw lessons when the need to provide harder work to move pupils' learning forward was not recognised soon enough. At such times, pupils sometimes do not always concentrate as hard as they could and the rate of learning

slows.

- Teachers' marking shows pupils where they have been successful but does not consistently show them what they need to do next to improve their work. Sometimes pupils are not always given time to act on the guidance they are given and so do not make as much progress as they could.

The achievement of pupils is good

- By the end of Year 6 in 2014, pupils reached at least expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. This represents good progress from their low starting points. Current standards are rising across the school.
- The school's results in the Year 1 phonics screening check were lower than the national average in 2014. Standards in the use of phonics, and children's early reading skills, are improving following effective training for staff in the teaching of phonics. The school is especially effective in the way in which it teaches the youngest pupils to read and as a result standards in reading and writing are improving.
- Attainment in mathematics is not as high as it is in reading and writing but it is rising. The school has given greater emphasis to the teaching of basic number and calculation skills so that these are reinforced, both within mathematics lessons and in other subjects. For example, pupils in Year 4 were challenged to solve 'real-life' money problems ordering dishes from a menu, and this helped them to gain a more secure understanding of number. Pupils' work shows that actions taken to improve standards in mathematics are being successful.
- Disadvantaged pupils are targeted with additional support to close the gaps between their progress and attainment and that of their classmates. In 2014, the Key Stage 2 test results showed that disadvantaged pupils were behind their classmates by more than three terms in mathematics, over two terms in reading and nearly half a term in writing. In comparison with all pupils nationally, disadvantaged pupils were nearly two terms behind in reading and mathematics, and behind by one term in writing. Teachers have made good use of resources to help these pupils catch up quickly with, and in several cases overtake, their classmates. Across the school, eligible pupils are making at least good progress from their starting points and in relation to other pupils nationally, reflecting the school's effective use of the pupil premium.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils is good. In 2014, an above average proportion of the most able pupils in Year 6 achieved the higher levels in reading, writing, mathematics and English grammar and spelling.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics as a result of the effectively targeted support they receive. These pupils make at least expected progress, and many exceed expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Early identification of their needs, and increasingly effective support and guidance from teachers and teaching assistants, meets their needs and makes sure that they achieve well.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make equally good progress as their classmates because the school focuses strongly on developing their vocabulary and on their correct use of grammar. Recent arrivals in the school are integrated quickly and teachers plan carefully to meet the needs of these pupils and any who are at the early stages of learning English.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups achieve equally well because the school is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and is highly successful at tackling discrimination.

The early years provision is outstanding

- From starting points which are below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication, all children make good and sometimes outstanding progress. In 2014 children's

attainment was close to others nationally by the time they left the Reception Year. Current moderated assessments show that attainment has improved and more children are attaining a good level of development. Most will enter Year 1 at levels above those from 2014.

- Teaching in the early years has a clear focus on improving children’s speaking and listening skills and developing their physical, personal and social development. Staff make considerable efforts to develop excellent relationships with children and this means that they rapidly feel secure, gain in confidence and become self-assured learners.
- Staff use questions very successfully to encourage children to think and to respond. There is a constant dialogue between staff and children to help the latter learn new vocabulary and use it appropriately.
- From the start, children learn to be independent and make choices about what to learn. They regularly decide what they want to do and choose their resources accordingly. For example, one little girl settled with scissors and paper, in her chosen work space to make a story board. She concentrated very well for some time on cutting, shaping and sticking before showing her work to an adult. She was delighted to retell the story in her own words.
- Children are encouraged to play and learn safely. Learning to keep safe and use simple hygiene practice, such as the washing of hands at certain points of the day, is well-established and children are reminded regularly about why there is a need to do this.
- Teachers are very well supported by assistants who help to focus support where it is best needed. This further encourages and supports the learning of the children.
- At the regular planning meetings for all staff, adults consider carefully what has been achieved and where learning needs to move to. This ensures that progress is at least good for all children.
- The early years leader has excellent knowledge and skills and is making a significant impact upon the setting. She has a very clear idea of what is needed and she ensures actions to bring about improvement are successful. Her staff are supported extremely well through the system of target-setting and the opportunities available for further training; consequently, this highly inclusive team are extremely effective in their work together.
- Partnerships with parents are very successful. They are welcomed into classrooms to see their children settle. The school’s ‘Bug Club’ initiative is employed very effectively to give parents the chance to learn how to use computers to support their children’s reading. The setting makes very good use of staff and pupils of different nationalities throughout the school to support non-English speaking parents and their children. This means children and parents settle quickly into the early years and both become joint partners in the children’s 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	<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	140231
Local authority	Nottingham
Inspection number	461548

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	404
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Jose Coles
Headteacher	Jo Bradley and Rebecca Edge
Date of previous school inspection	23 April 2008
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