

Blackfordby St Margaret's Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Off Main Street, Blackfordby, Swadlincote, Derbyshire, DE11 8AB

Inspection dates

10–11 November 2015

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Requires improvement
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Requires improvement
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Requires improvement
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Senior leaders and governors did not anticipate the changing needs of the school as it expanded. The school was not prepared well enough for the admission of older pupils.
- Subject leadership requires improvement. Leaders' roles require further development as they do not yet have enough impact on school improvement.
- Governors lack a realistic view of the school. This is despite senior leaders evaluating the school's performance accurately.
- Senior leaders and governors have not held colleagues to account for their performance in the past.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent. Not all teachers use regular assessment of pupils' knowledge to inform the next steps in their learning.
- Teachers do not always match the work they set to pupils' abilities well enough. As a result, some pupils could achieve more.
- Outcomes are not good enough for the most-able pupils. They do not make as much progress or achieve as well as they should.
- Pupil achievement in Key Stage 1 and 2 has been inconsistent in recent years.

The school has the following strengths

- Senior leadership has recently been strengthened and this is having a rapid impact on school improvement.
- Children make a very good start to their education in the early years.
- Parents value and appreciate the school and the role it plays in their community.
- Pupils' attendance is good and they are eager learners who behave well.
- The school's values and teaching prepare pupils for life beyond the school gates. They understand fundamental British values and treat each other with respect, care and consideration.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise the impact of senior and subject leaders on school improvement, by:
 - addressing staff and pupil underperformance with greater urgency
 - delegating more responsibility to subject leaders for the outcomes of pupils in each subject
 - monitoring regularly and stringently the performance of subject leaders, teachers and teaching assistants to ensure that they are rigorously held to account for the outcomes of all pupils.
- Using the recommendations of the external review of governance currently underway, update the skills and knowledge of governors to ensure that:
 - they have a realistic view of the school's work
 - they are equipped to challenge school leaders effectively and to plan for the school's future.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment so that it is consistently good, by:
 - ensuring that all teachers have the highest expectations and aspirations for all pupils
 - making sure that teachers use ongoing assessment of what pupils can do in order to match work to pupils' specific abilities
 - improving the quality of adult questioning to deepen pupils' understanding
 - applying whole-school policies and practice on marking consistently
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to apply the skills they learn in lessons, particularly in reading and mathematics, across a wider range of subjects and extended activities.
- Raise the number of pupils who make better than expected progress for their age, particularly the most able, by holding teachers and teaching assistants to account more rigorously for the achievements of all pupils.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management requires improvement

- The headteacher and governors acknowledge that the school has been too slow to adapt to the expansion to a primary school. They believe that staffing issues and the construction of a new building have also contributed to pupil outcomes which have not been good enough. However, they accept responsibility for inconsistent pupil achievement over recent years and are now taking more effective steps to accelerate school improvement.
- Senior leaders have not been sufficiently demanding in holding teachers to account for pupil achievement. They have taken too much on trust because the monitoring of pupil progress has not taken place regularly. The actions of senior leaders to address teacher underperformance have not been timely or robust enough. As a result, poor teaching has gone on too long and has only recently been effectively tackled.
- The role of subject leaders is underdeveloped. Senior leaders have not held them to account for their actions in improving outcomes in the areas they lead. A number of subject leaders lack the necessary skills and understanding to discharge their responsibilities to full effect.
- The recent appointment of a new assistant headteacher shows the intent of the headteacher to improve the school. His arrival has had an immediate impact on the school and this has been well received by staff and parents. He has injected a sense of urgency and the school is improving rapidly as a result. He and the headteacher are addressing underperformance and raising the expectations of pupils and staff.
- Senior leaders have an accurate view of the school. They are aware of key areas for improvement and plans are in place to address these. Leaders have now built many of the foundations for improvement including the setting of much more challenging performance targets for staff. Pupil performance reviews are now timetabled throughout the year with aspirational targets in place for every child. This is beginning to ensure that teachers are held accountable for accelerating the progress of all pupils.
- The headteacher sets a strong moral example to others and staff do not tolerate injustice, inequality or disrespect in any form. Pupils' safety and welfare are paramount and there is a strong nurturing culture running through all aspects of the school. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils is well catered for and they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The school relies on commercial curriculum plans which have sometimes been followed too literally by teachers. Consequently, although the curriculum has been covered, this has not always been in sufficient depth to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders have now begun to identify the limitations of this practice and are gradually amending these plans to meet the needs of pupils more closely.
- The headteacher has made sure that additional funding received through the pupil premium has been used to improve the social, emotional and academic achievement of the most disadvantaged pupils. This has resulted in their achievement at least matching that of other pupils by the time they leave the school.
- The headteacher has used additional funding from the physical education and sports premium to increase participation rates and the school now fields a football team in competitive matches for the first time. This funding has also been used to improve the school's sporting facilities for the benefit of pupils during and after school.
- The school receives support from the Step Teaching Alliance, the local authority and an external consultant. This support is helping leaders to monitor and evaluate the performance of the school and plan future improvement.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance was not as strong in the past as it needed to be. Despite the accurate assessment of school leaders and the advice of external support professionals, a number of governors still have an over-generous view of the school and pupil outcomes.
 - Governance is not yet fully equipped to challenge school leaders or plan effectively for the future of the school. However, over the past year governors have acknowledged that their expertise is limited and have taken steps to address this by organising an external review of governance which is currently underway.

- Governance is ambitious for the pupils and is acutely aware of the significance of the school to the local community. Governors have supported the headteacher in taking some important steps towards school improvement such as addressing teacher underperformance and creating the assistant headteacher position.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The headteacher takes pupil safety very seriously and a recent safeguarding audit has identified minor improvements to enhance practice further. The headteacher completes an annual audit for the local authority and this is an accurate representation of the school's safeguarding procedures and areas for further training. Pupils and parents who spoke to the inspector feel that the school is a safe environment and believe that staff will deal appropriately and promptly with any concerns.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment **requires improvement**

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is inconsistent across the school. Not all teachers show sufficient subject knowledge to identify the next steps in pupils' learning correctly. As a result, some staff underestimate what pupils can achieve.
- A number of teachers do not use regular assessment well enough. Consequently, tasks are not always matched closely to pupils' needs, particularly the most able. Adults do not use challenging and thought-provoking questions consistently to extend and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Too often, teachers' marking and feedback does not help pupils to improve their skills. Teachers do not monitor work closely enough to ensure that misconceptions are eradicated over time.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to practise and extend their basic skills. The recent introduction of regular extended writing has begun to address this but this practice has not been extended to reading comprehension or mathematics.
- Where teaching is strongest, teachers know their subject and their pupils well. They place learning into a context which is relevant to the pupils. This helps pupils to understand what they are trying to achieve and why. Teachers respond quickly to pupils so unnecessary repetition of tasks is avoided. This was observed in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson on converting miles to kilometres. The teacher's accurate ongoing assessment of pupils meant that each was moved on to a challenging extension activity as soon as they had acquired the basic skills necessary. This enabled pupils to master their new skills and further extend their understanding through practical application.
- School leaders place a high priority on reading, particularly for younger pupils. Parents support this by hearing their children read regularly at home. Pupils heard by the inspector read fluently and were eager to progress through the school's reading scheme. Pupils' comprehension and phonic skills (the sounds that letters represent) are less well developed and this is reflected in their below average attainment in the Year 1 national phonics screening check and the attainment of the most-able pupils at the end of Key Stage 1.
- Teaching assistants generally offer good support to pupils in each class. They use a range of questions and strategies, guiding pupils towards expressing their own ideas and decisions. Particularly good practice was seen in a Year 1/2 phonics lesson where the teaching assistant extended pupils' existing skills through well-chosen and engaging activities. She responded quickly to the pupils' existing knowledge and adapted her teaching to deepen and extend this further.
- Leaders have introduced a new assessment system to monitor the progress of pupils. This has helped to identify gaps in learning and provided an improved basis on which to provide additional support for those pupils who need it. In addition, it has led to a focus on the development of calculation skills in all year groups.
- The vast majority of parents are satisfied with teaching in the school and the amount of homework set. They are particularly positive about the good start they feel their children get when they enter the school.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The vast majority of

pupils take pride in their school, their appearance and their work. By the time they reach Year 6, they are confident individuals who know how to act appropriately in a variety of situations.

- Teachers and teaching assistants treat all pupils with dignity and respect and are very effective role models for pupils.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in different situations. They are particularly aware of online safety and the risks of 'stranger danger'. School leaders are increasingly vigilant to other forms of risk to pupils such as extreme views. Pupils report no bullying in school and no experiences of derogatory or offensive name-calling. Senior leaders have introduced a new and increasingly effective behaviour system with the overwhelming majority of pupils responding well to this. Inspection evidence did not support the concerns about bullying and behaviour expressed by a minority of parents through the Parent View survey.
- Pupils benefit from opportunities to experience fundamental British values such as democracy through elections to the student council. There is a pupil suggestion box, which is opened weekly by members of the school council and ideas are discussed with school leaders. Pupils believe that their ideas are listened to and are often acted upon to improve the school. The school's values ensure that pupils also understand about fairness, equality and the importance of respecting the beliefs of others. Pupils respect each other's views and have a well-developed sense of collaboration when asked to work together.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Their attitudes to learning are good and rarely slip, even when teaching is not well matched to their abilities.
- Pupils' conduct towards each other and around the school is good. On the playground they are able to regulate their own games, although there is occasional boisterous behaviour among some older boys.
- Pupils are respectful to each other and to adults. Their behaviour was impeccable during the school's Remembrance celebrations. They say that the school is a safe place where bullying or name calling is very rare.
- Pupils attend school regularly. They are punctual and fully prepared for their lessons at the start of each day.

Outcomes for pupils

require improvement

- Pupils did not achieve well enough in 2015 when they reached the end of Key Stage 2, although this was an improvement on the previous year. The most-able pupils did not achieve as well as they should.
- In 2015, pupils did not achieve well enough by the end of Key Stage 1 and in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1. Not enough of the most-able pupils achieved well.
- Pupil achievement is strongest in reading. By the end of Key Stage 2 all pupils have achieved levels of progress which are expected for pupils of their age in this subject. In reading, writing and mathematics, not enough pupils make better than expected progress.
- In 2015, the majority of children left Reception with good levels of development, representing good progress from their starting points.
- The school promotes individual reading practice and this has masked inconsistencies in the teaching of phonics. As a result, the proportion of pupils reaching the national phonics standard at the end of Year 1 is below the national figure.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, few pupils reached above expected levels of attainment in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys' attainment was better than that of girls in writing and mathematics. Disadvantaged pupils, disabled pupils and those with special educational needs did not attain as well as all other pupils nationally.
- By the end of Key Stage 2 in 2015, pupil attainment was broadly average in reading but was below average in writing and mathematics. A much lower than average proportion of pupils attained at higher levels in all three subjects. Girls' attainment improved and the gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils, nationally, closed. Disabled pupils or those with special educational needs made good progress.
- Current pupil progress information and the scrutiny of work in books shows that pupils are making good progress in Reception and Years 5 and 6. In these classes, pupils are able to talk about what they have

learned and why. For example, Year 6 pupils are able to explain their work on aerodynamics in science and the role and influence of Elizabeth I during Tudor times. Pupil progress is inconsistent in other year groups and requires improvement.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years is well led and managed and children make a good start to their school careers. The classroom and outdoor provision is well organised and children benefit from good-quality resources. The high staff-to-child ratio ensures that children are safe and well cared for, and have access to good quality adult support at all times.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and children are happy and eager to learn. Relationships with staff are very positive and this enables children to settle quickly. Children are supported to develop independence, quickly learning self-help skills such as dressing themselves. Children behave well. They are caring and thoughtful towards each other and their surroundings. They have very positive attitudes to learning.
- Teaching is good because the teacher plans lessons that engage and captivate the children. She has high expectations of the language children use and the progress they can make in lessons. She addresses misconceptions quickly and sensitively. The teacher and her assistant refer regularly to children's prior learning and take every opportunity to extend understanding. This helps pupils to make good progress during lessons.
- Children are clear about the purpose of activities they undertake without direct adult supervision because these tasks are well planned and children see that they are relevant. During an observed lesson, the teacher shared a book on hedgehogs and children's understanding of the hedgehog's habitat was developed. Following this, the children were provided with learning activities which further enhanced their understanding. The outcome was a number of well thought-out and carefully produced nests, with children able to explain what they had done and the reasons for choosing their construction materials.
- The teacher has a good knowledge of each child as a result of regular observation and assessment. This assessment is accurate and further supported by information provided through the very positive links with parents. The teacher uses this assessment information to ensure that children are stretched and challenged in their learning.
- Children make good progress throughout the year and an increasing majority have reached a good level of development by the time they reach Year 1. This means that they are well equipped for the next stage of their education. However, although information is shared between teachers in preparation for this transition, not enough consideration is given to the learning needs of the children as they move into Key Stage 1. This makes it more difficult for them to build upon the good learning skills they have developed.

School details

Unique reference number	120117
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10005659

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	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	105
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Robin Vryenhoef
Headteacher	Susan Vernon
Telephone number	01283 217702
Website	www.blackfordbyschool.org
Email address	office@blackfordby.leics.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 December 2011

Information about this school

- Blackfordby St Margaret's CofE Primary School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The number of pupils has risen significantly since the school began to accept pupils up to Year 6 in 2012.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes. Children in the Reception class attend full time and are taught in their own classroom.
- Virtually all pupils are of White British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average. This funding provides extra support for pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average.
- In 2014 and 2015, the school met the government's national floor standards for Key Stage 2 achievement.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed learning in eight lessons. He observed the teaching of early reading skills and listened to pupils reading. He also talked to pupils about their school and looked at examples of pupils' work in all year groups to gain a view of the impact of teaching over time.
- Meetings were held with the school's senior leaders and representatives of the governing body. The inspector also spoke to the school's external educational consultant.
- The inspector spoke to parents informally at the start of the school day. He took account of the 36 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View).
- The inspector looked at a range of documents including: the school's own self-evaluation of the quality of teaching and learning; the school's most recent data on the achievement and progress of pupils; information provided to families; information relating to the safeguarding of pupils and the school's most recent data relating to the attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- The inspector considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

Inspection team

Stephen McMullan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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