

Blakeley Heath Primary School

Sytch Lane, Wombourne, Staffordshire WV5 0JR

Inspection dates	10–11 May 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has built upon improvements made by the acting headteacher to create a positive and ambitious culture in the school.
- Teaching is good and there are examples of high-quality practice in the school.
- Pupils make good progress in a range of subjects in every key stage.
- The curriculum is strong. It promotes interest, enjoyment and good learning.
- Children settle quickly into the Reception class and make good progress within the early years provision.
- Pupils are well behaved, polite, considerate and respectful. Their spiritual, moral, cultural and social awareness is well developed.
- Pupils feel extremely safe. This is the result of robust measures to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school. They recognise and appreciate the improvements that have taken place and the positive impact that they have had on their children.
- Governance has improved. Governors now have the skills and information to hold school leaders to close account.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Teaching is not consistently of the highest standard. Consequently, some pupils do not make rapid progress.
- Systems in place for recording pupils' learning do not clearly show the progress that they are making. This means that this information cannot be used fully to inform action.
- Self-evaluation and school improvement plans, targets and checks are not precisely linked together to maximise their impact.
- Leaders are not fully aware of the impact of individual actions to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in every year group. Consequently, an attainment gap remains between these pupils and others.
- Many subject leaders are new to their role so they are not yet having a full impact.
- Pupils are taught about other cultures in the world but their understanding of multicultural Britain is less secure.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Take action to ensure that teaching is consistently of the highest standard so that it secures outstanding outcomes for pupils across the school.
- Improve the quality of leadership and management by:
 - refining the system for recording and analysing information about pupils' achievement so that it gives a clear picture of the progress that pupils are making to inform further action
 - linking together self-evaluation, school improvement planning, targets and checks so that actions can be quickly evaluated and modified to maximise their impact on the quality of education in the school
 - assessing the impact of individual actions to improve the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils in all year groups in order to close the attainment gap
 - developing subject leadership to increase its impact on raising standards further
 - promoting pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, supported by school leaders, staff and governors, has quickly established a positive and ambitious culture within the school. She has built on improvements made by the acting headteacher and secured rapid progress in every key stage. Effective action has now been taken to address all the areas for improvement identified at the time of the last full inspection.
- Leaders have high expectations of pupils and staff and they lead by example. Productive relationships between leaders, staff, pupils and parents support the good progress made by all pupils. The school community are proud of their school.
- The vast majority of pupils currently in the school are making at least good progress. Outcomes for disadvantaged pupils improved last year and effective action has been taken to ensure that all groups of pupils learn well.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. This helps them plan, monitor and refine actions to make improvements. As measurable targets are now in place, leaders now know whether their actions have been successful and use this information to help them to prioritise what to do next. However, self-evaluation, plans, milestones and checks are not all linked closely together so they are not yet leading to outstanding outcomes.
- Staff with responsibilities for particular areas of the school's work, for example the special educational needs coordinator and the leader of the early years provision, are securing improvements in their areas of responsibility. However, the impact of subject leadership is inconsistent as a number of staff are new to their responsibilities. They are not all monitoring their areas closely in order to secure outstanding teaching and outcomes throughout the school.
- Staff are now held to closer account and the management of teachers' performance is used well to reward high-quality teaching and secure improvement. Teachers are set targets linked to the impact that teaching has upon outcomes, the teachers' standards, their responsibilities in the school and their professional development. Staff value the training and support that they receive in the school and beyond. As a result, teaching is highly effective in most classes and action is being taken to secure improvements where required.
- Leaders have ensured that teachers are giving feedback to pupils that leads to good progress, but the school system for recording achievement is not fully developed. It does not clearly show the progress groups of pupils are making so it cannot fully inform action.
- The curriculum, which was introduced in September, is broad and balanced and interests staff and pupils. It covers all the programmes of study and is leading to good progress across a range of subjects. Pupils are enthused by the topic-based approach and enjoy the homework tasks which allow them to apply their learning.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is actively encouraged. Each class has their own SMSC book in which they reflect on a number of issues which make them think deeply. This also promotes fundamental British values as tolerance, respect, the rule of law, individual liberty and democracy are entwined within this work. Each of these areas is also an assembly theme and British values are reflected in the culture of the school.
- Equality of opportunity is promoted well and prejudiced behaviour is not tolerated. Pupils learn about a number of different cultures around the world and they are taught about all the major religions. However, although they are tolerant and respectful, their understanding of multicultural Britain is not fully developed. School leaders are aware that action needs to be taken to address this to ensure that pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The primary school physical education and sport premium is used well to promote active lifestyles. Equipment has been purchased for use at lunchtime and exercise machines are also available for all pupils to use. Pupils benefit from regular lessons delivered by a sports coach and the range of activities has increased. Staff have also taken professional development opportunities so more of them are now leading sporting activities. Pupils from all groups are involved in clubs such as football, dance, tag-rugby, lacrosse, hockey, cricket, American football, table tennis and athletics. Most of these are well attended after school and some pupils attend sports clubs in the holidays. Links have also been made with local sports clubs and competitions, such as cross-country, take place with pupils from other schools.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to narrow the attainment gap between disadvantaged

pupils and other pupils in the school. Additional support has been put in place to raise the achievement of pupils of all abilities in every year group. However, the impact of individual actions, particularly for disadvantaged pupils not at the end of a key stage, have not been fully evaluated. School leaders are determined to close the gap, and have used it as a target within the performance management process, but they are aware that further analysis of which strategies are most effective needs to take place.

- Parents are extremely supportive of the work of the school. The vast majority would recommend it to another parent and they believe that it is well led and managed. Many who made their views known to inspectors were full of praise for the impact of the headteacher and they appreciate the improvements that have been made since the last inspection. They believe that their children are well taught, that they make good progress and that they receive useful information from the school.
- The local authority has provided effective support to the school. For example, reviews of the use of pupil premium funding and governance led to improvements in both of these areas.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governance has improved since the last inspection. Governors responded positively to the recommendations contained within the external review and now have the skills and information to hold school leaders to close account. They have attended relevant training, for example on interpreting school achievement data, so they are able to scrutinise in depth the better-quality information that they now receive.
 - Governors support and challenge leaders more effectively. Their meetings cover all the relevant areas and they have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They ask informed questions and follow them up. They have ensured that their statutory duties are met.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Up-to-date policies and procedures are in place and staff have received appropriate training and information. Consequently, they know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's well-being and prompt action is taken to keep children safe. Records are well kept and stored securely and leaders work well with outside agencies when required. The school has a culture for keeping children safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- There is some high-quality teaching, learning and assessment in the school. This is particularly evident in the Reception class and in Years 5 and 6.
- Teaching is usually effectively planned and deepens pupils' knowledge and understanding. It is supported by very effective questioning and high-quality marking and feedback. This, along with secure subject knowledge, leads to appropriate pace and challenge so pupils make at least good progress.
- Time in lessons is used productively as pupils enjoy learning. They work extremely well with staff and their classmates and it is clear that pupils want to do well and that they are keen to learn. Staff also take opportunities to promote equality of opportunity in their lessons.
- Teaching assistants support learning effectively. They work well with teachers to speed up the progress of individuals and groups. They are deployed well to work with different pupils at appropriate times.
- A range of subjects are taught well throughout the school. The recently introduced curriculum has contributed to this and pupils are now making at least good progress in a range of subjects including English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education, the arts and physical education.
- Staff develop pupils' reading, writing and communication skills effectively. Staff model the use of good English and pupils are encouraged to respond to tasks using appropriate language orally and in their written work. Pupils are given opportunities to write at length in English and other subjects.
- Pupils read a range of texts to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills. Many read for pleasure and weaker readers are able to use the sounds that letters make (phonics) to work out words.
- Mathematical skills are also developed well across a range of subjects. Although this is not systematically recorded, staff take opportunities to develop numeracy in other subjects including science and geography.
- Teachers set appropriate homework which pupils enjoy. It is designed to deepen their understanding by giving them opportunities to apply their learning in different situations.
- Teachers are clear about what individuals know and can do and what they need to learn. This information is shared with parents and gives them an indication of how their children are doing in relation to the standards expected of them.
- The school's marking policy is used consistently to promote learning, and pupils' books show clear evidence of good progress over time. However, the system that school leaders are currently using to record achievement does not give a clear picture of the progress pupils are making.

- Teaching is not yet consistently of the highest standard. Where it is less effective, all pupils complete the same task regardless of their starting point, planning does not provide sufficient challenge for the most able, opportunities to deepen understanding are missed and feedback does not lead to rapid progress. However, as a result of targeted support and intervention to improve the quality of teaching, weaker teaching is rare.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Pupils are confident learners and their physical and emotional well-being is promoted effectively. They are well cared for and staff have a good understanding of the needs of each pupil.
- Pupils have a high regard for their schoolwork. Books are well looked after and pupils take great care with their presentation. They are keen to improve the quality of what they produce.
- The self-confidence and self-awareness of pupils is evident in the way that they constructively self-assess and peer-assess their work. They do this in a sensitive but productive way.
- Pupils have a good understanding of different types of bullying and know about the impact that it can have on people. However, bullying is extremely rare and pupils will challenge any unkindness if it occurs. They are also confident that staff would help to resolve any problems if they arise.
- School leaders give safety in school a high priority. The site is secure and robust arrangements to check the identity of visitors are in place. Pupils who attend the before- and after-school clubs are safe and well looked after.
- Pupils are taught to stay safe through a range of age-appropriate activities. They know how to stay safe when using the internet and they have a secure understanding of road safety and 'stranger danger'.
- All parents, staff and pupils who made their views known to inspectors said that pupils were safe in the school.
- Personal development is not nurtured fully as in some lessons pupils are not given opportunities to work things out for themselves or learn from their mistakes. In addition to this, school leaders have not yet taken action to fully develop pupils' understanding of multicultural Britain.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are kind, considerate, respectful and polite.
- Pupils' behaviour inside and outside of the classroom is of a high standard. The start of the day is calm and orderly; pupils are punctual and well prepared for learning. During social time, pupils play sensibly together and behaviour observed by inspectors at break and lunchtime was sensible and positive.
- In lessons, pupils listen carefully to staff and to each other and display self-discipline when working independently, in pairs, groups or as a whole class. There was no disruption to learning in any of the classes visited during the inspection.
- Staff have had appropriate training in behaviour management techniques but need to use them infrequently. Pupils understand the behaviour system, which is used consistently, and value the fact that good behaviour is rewarded.
- Exclusions are extremely rare. Incidents of poor behaviour are infrequent but recorded accurately. Leaders use these records to inform actions which lead to improved behaviour.
- Most pupils have excellent attendance and school staff work well with pupils, families and outside agencies to improve the attendance of individuals. As a result of these successful strategies, pupils with higher absence rates have improved their attendance but a few pupils still do not attend regularly.

Outcomes for pupils are good

- Outcomes have improved since the last inspection. Most pupils currently in the school are making at least good progress in a range of subjects in every key stage. Pupils are developing secure knowledge, understanding and skills from their starting points.
- Progress is particularly rapid in Year 5 and in the Reception class. Year 6 pupils have also made good progress from their starting points. Pupils make strong progress in reading throughout the school and effective action has been taken to address areas that were not good in the past.
- Outcomes improved in key stage 2 in 2015. From their different starting points, pupils made progress in reading, writing and mathematics close to or above the national averages.
- All disadvantaged pupils in key stage 2 in 2015 made the progress expected of them in reading and writing

and almost all did so in mathematics. A greater proportion of disadvantaged pupils made more than expected progress in reading than other pupils nationally but smaller proportions made more than expected progress in writing and mathematics. As a result, the attainment gap narrowed but did not close.

- Leaders in the school are aware that this gap has remained and have taken effective action to narrow it further. For example, the most able disadvantaged pupils have received additional support to improve their progress in writing. These actions have been effective as disadvantaged pupils currently in key stage 1 and 2 are making good progress from their starting points. However, an overall attainment gap remains.
- Outcomes in key stage 1 have been broadly in line with national averages since the last inspection and the attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils in 2015 narrowed in reading and writing. Action taken this year has improved progress in mathematics for pupils supported by the pupil premium.
- Since the last inspection outcomes in the phonics screening check have been broadly in line with national averages. However, as a result of effective teaching and intervention a very large majority of pupils have reached the expected standard by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils who have special educational needs or disability also make good progress from their starting points in the school. This is clear in their books, but the school's system for tracking progress does not easily show their progress.
- As a result of a focus on developing their writing skills and promoting a deeper understanding of mathematics, the most able pupils currently in the school are making improved progress.
- Progress is not yet rapid for all groups of pupils in every year group but pupils are becoming increasingly better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Early years provision

is good

- The early years leader has an accurate understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the provision. This has allowed her to take action to improve the quality of teaching and increase the rates of progress this year.
- Effective transition arrangements ensure that school staff have accurate information about the children when they start school. This means that they are able to plan learning which matches their needs and allows them to make progress quickly.
- Assessment is accurate and takes place regularly. As a result, staff know what children can do and what they need to do to develop further. The early years leader has information related to all the developmental bands but records about communication and language, literacy and mathematics are more detailed than other areas.
- Most children currently in the Reception class entered with skills broadly typical for their age. They have been well taught and they have made good progress. Consequently, they are well prepared for accessing the Year 1 curriculum.
- Individuals and groups of children make good progress in Reception. Disadvantaged children, those who have special educational needs or disability and the most able children make similar progress from their starting points.
- The most able children are challenged to make rapid progress in their work with adults but they are not always supported in embedding and extending their learning in their own play activities.
- Disadvantaged children are supported effectively and their learning is well planned. Consequently, they make rapid progress and the attainment gap between these children and others is closing.
- In 2014, many children entered Reception with skills that were below those typical for their age. However, as they began to develop the skills that they require to be successful learners in the early years setting and as gaps in learning have been addressed in Year 1, most are now reading and writing at the expected level.
- Teaching is strong and the curriculum provides a range of interesting experiences that help children make progress. Staff know their children well and learning is often based on children's own interests. This means that children find adult-directed and child-led learning stimulating and engaging.
- Children behave extremely well in the early years provision; they listen carefully and respond quickly to instructions. They are respectful of staff, property and other children and they work well together.
- Communication with parents is of a high quality. The school has delivered information sessions for parents to support learning at home. They are involved in the assessment process and children are encouraged to practise skills at home.
- Safeguarding in the early years is effective and statutory requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	124192
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10012405

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	252
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Steve Cox
Headteacher	Emma Lote
Telephone number	01902 893 400
Website	www.blakeleyheath.staffs.sch.uk
Email address	office@blakeleyheath.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	4–5 June 2014

Information about this school

- The school is an average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds. There are very few pupils who speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is below average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability is above average. The proportion of pupils supported with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is average.
- Children in the early years are taught in one Reception class. There are currently two classes in Years 1, 4 and 6, and one class in each of the other year groups.
- The headteacher joined the school in September 2015. The previous headteacher left the school in April 2015 and the deputy headteacher was acting headteacher for a term.
- The school meets requirements for the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- A before- and after-school club, 'Blakeley Bears', operates on the school site. This provision is managed by the governing body and was observed as part of this inspection.
- A privately managed Nursery, 'Little Learners', operates on the school site. This provision is inspected separately.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 33 parts of lessons. Twenty of these were short visits with the headteacher.
- Members of the inspection team met with pupils and heard a small number of pupils read. They looked at examples of pupils' work in their books and spoke to some pupils informally.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, other leaders and members of staff.
- The lead inspector met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body, and spoke by telephone to a representative of the local authority.
- The opinions of parents were considered through 79 responses on Parent View, 34 free-text responses, a letter to the lead inspector and conversations with parents during the course of the inspection.
- Inspectors visited the before- and after-school club.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation, development plans, information about managing teachers' performance and staff training records. Minutes of meetings of the governing body and information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety were also analysed.

Inspection team

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