

# Blakenall Heath Junior School

Field Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3JF

## Inspection dates

25–26 January 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Good</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The headteacher leads the school with vision and determination. Leadership is strong. Leaders, staff and governors share high expectations for all pupils.
- Teaching has significantly improved since the last inspection. Pupils benefit from good teaching throughout the school. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and accurately assess pupils. As a result, pupils are making good progress.
- Checks on the progress of pupils, including the most able and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, are thorough and accurate. Leaders maintain a sharp focus on the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Pupils' personal development is outstanding. The nurturing, caring ethos is striking in all aspects of school life. The care for pupils is exemplary.
- Pupils are friendly, polite and well mannered. They behave well in lessons and around school. Pupils show respect for one another. They take great pride in their school.
- Staff foster a 'can do' attitude in their work with all pupils. Pupils develop confidence and try hard. Current pupils are achieving well.
- Pupils' progress in reading in 2016 was well below the national average by the end of Year 6. Leaders have taken decisive action to address this. However, there are occasions when teachers do not explain clearly enough to pupils what they need to do next to improve as a reader. This has an impact on the progress of some middle-ability pupils in reading.
- Pupils achieve well in writing. The teaching of writing is a strength. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to write in different areas of the curriculum.
- Attendance is above average. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Pupils feel very safe in school and parents agree.
- Governors know the school well. The governing body makes a strong, effective contribution in moving the school forward.
- Safeguarding is highly effective. Staff know the pupils well, systems are robust. Leaders ensure that the safeguarding of pupils has the highest priority.

## Full report

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

- Improve rates of progress in reading, particularly for middle-ability pupils, by:
  - ensuring that all pupils receive clear guidance on what they need to do next to improve their reading skills
  - developing pupils' comprehension skills so they read with better understanding
  - improving the teaching of phonics so that pupils are able to use their phonics skills to read unfamiliar words.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

**Good**

- The headteacher leads the school with determination and drive to ensure that all staff provide high-quality care and teaching for every child in school. She has developed a nurturing and supportive culture in the school where pupils thrive, both academically and socially.
- Leaders at all level are ambitious for the pupils. They support the headteacher in the school's four keys to success: confidence, organisation, persistence and getting along. Teamwork is strong among school leaders. Senior leaders nurture aspiring leaders. Staff are proud to be members of the school community.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the strengths and areas for improvement in the school. They are honest in their evaluation of the school. Leaders and governors regularly review and amend the comprehensive action plans. For example, in English leaders have focused on increasing the daily teaching of reading, improved resources to engage the interests of boys and girls as readers and encouraged greater use of the school library.
- Leaders, including middle leaders, make regular checks on the quality of teaching. They use a range of approaches, including observing teaching, scrutiny of pupils' books, monitoring planning and detailed analysis of assessment information. Leaders provide clear guidance and support to staff on how they can improve their work. Leaders promote the sharing of good practice with colleagues. Monitoring of teaching is robust and linked to professional development and performance management.
- Leaders have a clear focus on accelerating pupils' progress across the school. Systems for tracking attainment and progress are rigorous. Assessment information is checked for accuracy and used by leaders at all levels to monitor pupil progress. Consequently, teachers' assessment of pupils' work in school is accurate. Teachers and leaders use assessment information to address gaps in pupils' learning promptly and ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve well.
- The curriculum is planned carefully to provide pupils with a wide range of interesting and memorable experiences. Educational visits contribute effectively to pupils' personal development, including the eagerly anticipated residential visit to Shugborough in Year 6. Leaders have revised the curriculum. For example, in the teaching of mathematics the promotion of questioning, reasoning and problem-solving now receive greater attention in all year groups. The school offers a good range of enrichment activities for pupils after school. These impact positively on pupils' personal, social and physical development.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively to provide interventions, catch-up programmes and social and emotional support for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, pupils currently in school are making good progress. In this academic year, leaders have extended the number of classes in Year 3. There are now three smaller classes in this year group to ensure that disadvantaged pupils make rapid progress when they join the school. The pupil premium is used effectively to address any barriers to learning that disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, may be experiencing.
- Leaders make good use of the additional sports funding. The school has employed a

sports coach to increase the range of sports offered in school and encourage wider participation in sports activities at breaktimes, lunchtimes and after school.

- Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They have a good understanding of other cultures and religions. Pupils show tolerance and respect for each other and those who hold different beliefs, because this is taught well in assemblies and through lessons. Pupils are articulate. Pupils show a good understanding when talking about democracy and the rule of law. Pupils are proud to take on leadership roles as school councillors and peer mediators. The school promotes British values very well.
- Pupils benefit from well-organised classrooms and learning spaces. All areas of school are maintained to a high standard. Leaders and staff at all levels ensure that care and attention is given to the experiences pupils have at school. The recently refurbished dining room, which is used for breakfast club and lunchtimes, provides an attractive welcoming space for mealtimes. Pupils learn about healthy eating through the curriculum and when making choices at mealtimes.
- Parental confidence in the work of the school is high, with the majority of parents having positive views of the school. Parents value the work of staff in keeping their child safe and happy at school.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors know their school and the needs of the local community very well. Governors have an accurate understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They use their skills and expertise to support the school well with an improved level of challenge.
- Governors have commissioned an external review of governance. They have used this review well to improve governance by actively recruiting governors with skills to enhance the governing body. They ensure that their skills and knowledge are kept up to date through regular training.
- The governing body ensures that pupil premium and sports premium funding make a difference for pupils. Detailed information is received on pupils' progress. Governors ensure that the performance of staff and decisions about salary increases take sufficient account of pupils' achievement.
- Governors are active and effective in their roles. All governors are linked to a senior manager in school. They are conscientious in their regular visits to school and in reporting back at governing body meetings. Governance has improved significantly since the last inspection.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. The strong culture of safeguarding is evident in all aspects of school life, from daily monitoring of vulnerable pupils, to the improved safety of the school site. Robust systems ensure that early identification of any child at risk of harm is a priority. The school takes great care to make sure that procedures meet the latest requirements. Staff training is up to date through regular updates from the local authority. All staff know what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Leaders work effectively in partnership with the local authority and other external agencies to ensure that pupils are safe and secure. Multi-agency meetings are well

attended, with detailed records and actions followed up promptly by the school. The school actively supports families through Early Help programmes. Leaders also work well with mental health charities and counsellors to develop the emotional resilience of the pupils through personalised programmes of support.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

**Good**

- The quality of teaching is now good because of the improvements to teaching and learning across the school. Good teaching is leading to pupils making good progress.
- Teachers set high expectations for learning and behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations. Pupils are keen to learn. They show positive attitudes to learning in lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Lessons are imaginative.
- Teachers use resources well to engage the pupils' interests. Teachers set work appropriate to the needs of individuals and groups.
- The teaching of reading is improving. Pupils are actively encouraged to read at home. This is rewarded each day in school through the weekly prize draw in assembly. Pupils enjoy reading. Pupils are gaining in confidence in reading. They share opinions on their favourite genres of books or authors. However, while a love of reading is being fostered, some pupils are not always reading for meaning. This is particularly so for some middle-ability pupils who are developing as readers. They do not always know what they need to do next to improve their reading and comprehension skills. Not all pupils are confident in using their knowledge of how sounds blend together when they attempt to read unfamiliar words.
- Assessment information about pupils' learning is accurate. The information sets out clearly what pupils have learned in relation to the requirements of the national curriculum. Teachers use this information effectively to plan for learning.
- Additional adults are used effectively to support learning. They work closely with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, providing a good balance of support while allowing pupils opportunities to develop their skills of independence. Good use is made of learning resources to help pupils learn. For example, the recording devices known in school as 'talking tins' help pupils remember their sentences when writing.
- A scrutiny of books shows that pupils have good opportunities to develop their writing skills and the teaching of writing is effective. The majority of pupils take care in the presentation of their work. As pupils move through school, their books show that they are developing greater consistency in the form and structure of their writing. This is because teachers plan effectively to teach specific writing skills in addition to providing a wide range of opportunities for writing across the curriculum. For example, in Year 3, the pupils had preserved their own fossil. They were excited to see their fossils and keen to write instructions on how to cast a fossil. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 have a good range of opportunities to edit and redraft writing. Pupils' books show clear progress in these skills.
- Teaching of mathematics is effective. Pupils' books show that they have regular opportunities to practise basic skills. They are gaining confidence in applying these skills through regular problem-solving and reasoning. This provides pupils with

opportunities to deepen their knowledge and understanding in new mathematical concepts. Pupils enjoy learning their times tables. Incentives to promote these skills motivate pupils. Achievements in these skills are celebrated in a weekly assembly. Science books show that there are good opportunities for pupils to use their mathematical skills. For example, in Year 3, pupils have used their skills of measuring and graphs in their work on the human body.

- Pupils enjoy homework activities linked to their projects. Homework extends pupils' learning through the regular reading, spelling and mathematics work. Most parents who responded to the Ofsted online 'Parent View' questionnaire think that their child receives appropriate homework for their age.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare**

**Good**

### **Personal development and welfare**

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- As soon as pupils join the school in Year 3, staff promote their personal, social and emotional well-being. This is an important and whole-school focus. Staff take every opportunity to develop each pupil's personal development skills starting in breakfast club, then in lessons and at all social times of the day. The individual needs of pupils are managed through thoughtful personalised programmes of support. Consequently, pupils develop confidence as learners.
- Pupils start their school day at the breakfast club, where all pupils can come together in the dining room for a free hot breakfast. The club is extremely popular. Pupils sit together talking, playing board games and sharing breakfast together. It provides a welcoming, positive start to each school day.
- In this nurturing school community, the school motto of 'You can do it' is seen in all aspects of school life. This is a school where the care of pupils is sensitively managed by all staff, encouraging those who are more vulnerable to express their thoughts, feelings and to believe in themselves.
- Pupils feel safe in school and say that bullying is rare. Pupils understand what bullying is. Adults support them well and they know whom to go to if they are worried about anything. Pupils show an excellent understanding of how to keep themselves safe because they are taught effectively about topics such as road safety, water safety, fire safety and keeping safe online.

- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Relationships with adults are positive and warm.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils listen to their teachers and follow instructions sensibly. Attitudes to learning are positive.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. Pupils move around school in a sensible, orderly way. Staff set high expectations of behaviour at all times. Relationships with adults are positive. Pupils say staff are approachable and listen to them.
- Pupils who find managing their behaviour more difficult are supported well by adults.

Leaders have robust systems to support individual pupils. Good use is made of external agencies to support pupils with behavioural needs.

- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Rates of attendance are above the national average. Very few pupils are persistently absent. School systems to support regular attendance are exemplary. Leaders know the pupils well and do all they can to ensure that the pupils attend school regularly.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Good

- Since the last inspection, improved teaching has enabled current pupils to make strong progress. Information on pupils' current attainment, provided by the school, shows that in all year groups the majority of pupils are working within age-related expectations in English, mathematics and other subjects, including science, history and geography.
- Since the last inspection attainment and progress in writing has improved. In 2016, attainment and progress in writing was well above the national average for all pupils, including the most able, and above national average for disadvantaged pupils. This is due to a sharper focus on the teaching of writing skills and improved teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar skills in English lessons. Pupils have good opportunities to write in subjects other than English. Teachers have raised their expectations of the quality of pupils' writing in science, history and geography. As a result, pupils are confident writers, they write for different purposes and have a strong grasp of style.
- The attainment of most-able pupils at the end of key stage 2 improved in 2015 compared with the previous year, with a greater proportion of pupils reaching higher levels in reading and mathematics. For current most-able pupils in school, teachers set work that is appropriately challenging. This extends and deepens pupils' skills and knowledge.
- While some current pupils started school in Year 3 with attainment below that typical for their age, work in books shows that these pupils have made a rapid start and are making good progress.
- The progress of disadvantaged pupils has risen over time since the last inspection up to 2015. For pupils currently in school, leaders are addressing any differences in reading and mathematics with greater focus on effective small-group work and one-to-one support for pupils. This is improving rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils.
- In 2016, Year 6 pupils took the new tests to assess their skills in English and mathematics. Progress in reading in 2016 was well below the national average for middle-ability pupils, including middle-ability disadvantaged pupils. Progress of the most able pupils in reading was in line with the national average. Leaders have been proactive in addressing the needs of middle-ability pupils. There are clear signs that the measures that staff have put in place are having an impact on current pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support in class. This enables their individual needs to be met. As a result, most pupils are making good progress.
- As a result of good teaching and improvements in outcomes, pupils leave Blakenall

Heath Junior School with the skills and knowledge to move to secondary school. Pupils are keen to learn and are well prepared for the next stage of their education.



## School details

Unique reference number	104144
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10025166

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	234
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephanie Heath
Headteacher	Kim Baker
Telephone number	01922 710145
Website	<a href="http://www.blakenallheathjunior.co.uk">www.blakenallheathjunior.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:postbox@blakenall.walsall.sch.uk">postbox@blakenall.walsall.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	8–9 January 2015

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged is over three quarters of the school population. This is much higher than that found nationally.
- The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The headteacher has led the school since January 2014. The deputy headteacher joined the school in May 2014.
- The school has undergone some staff turnover, with a quarter of the current staff

joining the school since the last inspection.

- The school runs a free breakfast club; this is open to all pupils in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils in Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all year groups. Inspectors observed 10 lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Pupil views were collected by talking to pupils during the school day, at breaktimes and at lunchtimes and through the 100 responses submitted through the pupils' online questionnaires.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read, talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, three members of the governing body and a representative from the local authority.
- The views of 15 parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, were taken into account. Staff views were considered through the 20 responses to the online survey.
- Inspectors reviewed school assessment information, leaders' evaluations of teaching and learning in addition to a range of school documents including records of behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Pamela Matty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Martina Abbott	Ofsted Inspector

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