

Blakesley Hall Primary School

Yardley Green Road, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 8TH

Inspection dates

4–5 July 2018

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	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Most pupils currently in the school are making good progress from their starting points to the end of Year 6 in reading, writing and mathematics, because of the good and improving quality of teaching.
- Leaders and governors have successfully tackled weaknesses seen in pupils' achievement in 2016. Consequently, pupils' attainment and progress are improving. Results in 2018 are stronger than the last two years.
- Senior leaders have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in the school. They have secure plans in place to address remaining issues.
- Senior leaders do not support middle leaders well enough to ensure that they have a positive impact on pupils' achievement in their respective subject areas.
- Senior leaders' monitoring lacks precision and sufficient regularity to eliminate the remaining inconsistencies in teaching.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a breadth of knowledge and skills. Sometimes teachers do not extend or deepen pupils' knowledge and skills well enough in different subjects.
- Although the overall quality of teaching is good, a small number of inconsistencies remain. Some teachers accept untidy work or low-level disruption in lessons.
- Some tasks are not matched to pupils' abilities well enough and writing and mathematical skills are not developed in other subjects.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They generally behave well in lessons, which helps learning to proceed smoothly.
- This year, a greater proportion of Year 2 pupils than previously attained the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The latest school performance information and work in pupils' books show progress in key stage 2 is improving in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The early years is led effectively. Children are making strong progress in their learning, so most are well prepared to join Year 1. The outdoor area does not support children's learning sufficiently.
- Governors are relentless in their approach to improving the school. They hold leaders to account for any pupil underperformance.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the impact leaders and managers are having on pupils' achievement in reading, writing and mathematics by:
 - supporting middle leaders to improve pupils' achievement in the subjects for which they have responsibility
 - ensuring monitoring activities are more precise, frequent and rigorous
 - further strengthening curriculum provision so it more effectively deepens pupils' knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects.
- Strengthen the consistency of teaching so all groups of pupils are making strong progress, by making sure that teachers:
 - match learning tasks more precisely to pupils' learning needs, especially those who are most able
 - provide more opportunities for pupils to use and apply their writing and mathematical skills across the wider curriculum
 - have sufficiently high expectations of all pupils, both in terms of the presentation of their work in all subjects and their behaviour
 - strengthen the use of questioning to probe and challenge pupils' understanding.
- Improve the early years outdoor area by making it a rich and exciting learning environment, offering many opportunities for children to explore and extend their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have successfully maintained the good quality of education since the previous inspection. After identifying weaknesses in pupils' achievement in 2016 due to changes to the curriculum and testing, they acted decisively to improve teaching and respond to the changes. Consequently, pupils' progress and attainment are increasing.
- The senior leadership team was strengthened by the appointment of two deputy headteachers in January 2017. They are making a significant contribution to helping the school to improve, by keeping a close eye on the progress of groups of pupils, so it continues to accelerate.
- Senior leaders value all staff and expect them to play their part in the journey of improvement the school is on. School leaders support newly qualified teachers well, providing effective training and advice to help them become better teachers. Many training courses and visits to other schools to learn from highly effective teachers are helping teachers and teaching assistants to improve pupils' achievement.
- Leaders use additional funding successfully to improve the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Their progress is checked regularly by a member of the senior leadership team to ensure that momentum is maintained.
- Leaders manage the provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities effectively. Additional funding for this group of pupils is tightly focused on improving their attainment. This spending is successfully raising attainment and improving their progress.
- The school uses the physical education (PE) and sports premium effectively to improve pupils' life skills. A great deal of work is being done successfully in the school to promote healthy living.
- The curriculum offers a wealth of opportunity for pupils to learn about exciting topics, other cultures and a wide range of subjects. Topics covered in books scrutinised ranged from the Windrush generation to homophobia. The curriculum generally deepens pupils' knowledge and skills in English and mathematics, but does so less successfully in other subjects.
- Leaders, teachers and support staff are benefiting from the training and support brokered by the local authority. They are also benefiting from working with a range of external consultants whose services leaders have purchased.
- The breakfast and after-school clubs are run effectively. Many pupils benefit educationally from attending, as they participate in learning activities. Parents and carers report this provision is valuable for them and their children.
- Senior leaders have not fully ensured that middle leaders are totally equipped to bring about even faster improvements in the subjects for which they have responsibility.
- Checks carried out on the quality of teaching and learning by senior and middle leaders occasionally lack precision. On these occasions, they are insufficiently rigorous and a little too infrequent to bring about a faster rate of improvement.

Governance of the school

- Governors provide strategic direction effectively for the school. They carefully scrutinise the work of the school, using their findings to ask highly challenging questions of school leaders to bring about improvement. Governors check school performance information regularly and make plans with leaders to address any shortcomings. When groups of pupils are identified as falling slightly behind in their learning, governors demand instant action from school leaders. This approach is helping pupils' achievement to improve.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. All staff undertake comprehensive safeguarding training. Those with senior responsibility for safeguarding in the school provide regular updates for staff. If needed, additional training is also provided. Staff know who they should approach if they have a safeguarding concern.
- Governors keep a close eye on safeguarding, ensuring their legal requirements are met.
- Older pupils are taught effectively in lessons about specific safeguarding issues which they need to be aware of, such as child sexual exploitation. Leaders work successfully with a wide range of external partners to make sure pupils are safe. A secure culture of safeguarding exists in this school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Improvements in the quality of teaching are enabling pupils to attain higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Learning in classrooms is calm, orderly and purposeful. Good relationships are supporting effective learning.
- Teachers take regular opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary, so they can read more challenging texts. Teachers use information and communication technology effectively in lessons to stimulate and ignite young minds and imaginations.
- Teaching assistants are making a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They support vulnerable pupils effectively, helping them to become successful learners.
- Many teachers check carefully on pupils' understanding of what they are learning. However, on occasion, some staff do not probe pupils' thinking or question pupils well enough to deepen their understanding in different subjects.
- Some teachers have high expectations of pupils, but this is not totally consistent throughout the school. For example, some teachers accept work which is not well presented.
- Teachers occasionally do not match learning tasks well enough to pupils' learning needs. This is particularly the case for most-able pupils and slows down how well they progress in their learning. On occasion, teachers do not give pupils sufficient opportunity to develop their writing and mathematical skills in a wide range of subjects.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Staff encourage pupils to live healthily through several initiatives promoted effectively within the school. One of these is supported by a local engineering and manufacturing company.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of what constitutes bullying. They report that, when it occasionally does occur, they speak with adults in the school. It is then resolved quickly and to their satisfaction.
- Staying safe online is well taught in the school. Pupils have a clear understanding of how they should report their concerns online and what they must do to stay safe when using the internet.
- Most pupils take pride in their work, but this is not consistently the case. Topic books scrutinised by inspectors showed pupils taking less care with their work when compared to English and mathematics books.

Behaviour

- Pupils' behaviour is good. Around the school, pupils are polite and well mannered. They are respectful towards each other and adults.
- The school has worked closely with parents so that the proportion of pupils regularly absent from school is reducing.
- Attendance statistics are improving. The school has worked exceptionally hard to reduce absence, through daily checks on who is in school and who is missing. All absences are followed up with urgency. Religious observance and unauthorised extended family holidays have a negative impact on attendance figures.
- Occasionally there is a very small amount of low-level disruption in lessons. From time to time, pupils were observed running in corridors.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' attainment and progress are improving because of more effective teaching.
- Pupils who attend Blakesley Primary School from Reception to Year 6 are now reaching standards in reading, writing and mathematics which are in line with those seen nationally, from their low starting points.
- Phonics is taught effectively. The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 has risen over a three-year period. Standards are in line with those seen nationally.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in reading and mathematics has increased at the end of Year 2 over a three-year period. Attainment in 2018 is in line with the latest national figures published.

- Disadvantaged pupils are making similar or, on occasion, more progress than other pupils in some classes because of the effective support they receive.
- Pupils' progress from their individual starting points is improving because of more effective teaching.
- Teachers sometimes do not challenge the most-able pupils to achieve as well as they should.
- Pupils' books show slight variation in rates of pupils' progress because of some remaining inconsistencies in the quality of teaching.

Early years provision

Good

- From starting school with knowledge and skills which are below those typical for their age, particularly in communication and language. Children in the early years progress well in their learning and development.
- The proportion of children well prepared for Year 1 has been rising steadily since 2015 and continues to do so, because of effective team work by staff in the early years.
- Many children entering Reception with little or no English are supported well in acquiring language skills. Teachers develop children's vocabulary effectively through skilled teaching and intervention. During the inspection, inspectors observed a group of children using words such as 'enormous' and 'huge' to describe the ears of bats because of the careful use of language by the teacher.
- The leadership of the early years provision is effective. Staff check children's progress in their learning carefully to ensure that any gaps in their learning are identified and filled.
- Parents play a key role in supporting their children in the Reception class. Inspectors saw many fathers reading with their children and promoting a love of reading. This is helping to improve early reading skills effectively.
- Children enjoy the company of each other. They take turns and enthusiastically participate in a range of learning opportunities, because this is modelled effectively by adults in the school.
- Children are kept safe, because adults diligently observe safeguarding requirements.
- The classroom is language rich and supports children well in their learning. Leaders are aware that the outdoor area is less inviting. It supports learning less effectively, despite their attempts to improve it further.

School details

Unique reference number	103300
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10042885

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	611
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Josh Cronin
Headteacher	Heather Phillips
Telephone number	0121 783 2148
Website	www.blakesley.bham.sch.uk
Email address	enquiry@blakesley.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5–6 February 2015

Information about this school

- Blakesley Hall Primary School is a much-larger-than-average-sized primary school.
- Most pupils are of Pakistani heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- Many pupils join the schools at times other than in the Reception Year.
- The proportion of pupils who are disadvantaged and receive support from the pupil premium is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is slightly above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have statements of special educational needs or education, health and care plans is slightly below average.

- In 2017, the school met the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets the Department for Education's definition of a coasting school, based on key stage 2 academic performance results in 2015, 2016 and 2017.
- The school runs a breakfast and an after-school club which are managed by the governing body.
- Two deputy headteachers took up their posts in September 2017.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons and parts of lessons. Some of these were observed jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- Meetings were held with senior and middle leaders, school staff and seven members of the governing body. The lead inspector also spoke with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke informally to pupils in lessons, during breaks and at lunchtimes. They also spoke with several parents at the end of the school day.
- Inspectors scrutinised the pupils' work during lessons and work produced over time in a range of their books. They also listened to a few pupils from Year 1, Year 2 and Year 5 reading.
- Inspectors observed the work of the school and looked at the latest school performance information showing the progress of pupils currently in the school.
- Inspectors also scrutinised plans for school improvement, safeguarding information, behaviour logs, attendance records and the minutes of governing body meetings.
- There were not enough responses to the online Parent View questionnaire for inspectors to take account of these views. Inspectors considered five free-text responses from parents and 28 responses to the staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Declan McCauley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Andrew Orgill	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Appleby	Ofsted Inspector
Lynda Townsend	Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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