

Blakedown CofE Primary School

Birmingham Road, Blakedown, Kidderminster, Worcestershire DY10 3JN

Inspection dates

6–7 November 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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher has worked effectively with senior leaders and governors to raise standards since the last inspection.
- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics for pupils across the school have risen. They are consistently above national averages at the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2.
- The quality of governance is very good. Governors know the school well, visit regularly and now hold leaders to account by asking challenging questions.
- Middle leaders have developed strong leadership skills. They are instrumental in driving the improvements seen in English and mathematics.
- The quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Effective teaching sequences are used to develop pupils' knowledge over time.
- Teachers know their pupils well. Where teaching is good, pupils work hard and make strong progress. However, there are occasions when expectations are not consistently high enough and basic errors go unchecked.
- The teaching of phonics and early reading skills is a strength of the school.
- Outcomes in reading at the end of key stage 2 have improved. On occasions, however, adults miss opportunities to check pupils' understanding of new vocabulary.
- Pupils with special education needs and/ or disabilities (SEND) are effectively supported. However, they are not always encouraged to work independently. This limits the progress they make.
- The curriculum provides an abundance of rich learning opportunities. Leaders constantly review and refine it to ensure that all pupils are interested and engaged.
- Early years provision is good. Children settle well and make good progress. They are well prepared for Year 1.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Attendance is good and consistently above national averages.
- Pupils are very well behaved and polite. Leaders have ensured that pupils are well cared for and make very good provision for their personal development.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to develop the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that all staff:
 - provide more opportunities for all pupils, including those with SEND, to work independently and take ownership of their learning
 - have higher expectations of what pupils can do so that basic skills are secured quickly, and pupils reach the high standards of which they are capable
 - use every opportunity to develop pupils' vocabulary and understanding to enable pupils to apply their skills and knowledge across all subjects.
- Continue to review and develop the curriculum to ensure that it interests and engages all pupils in their learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has worked with drive and determination to ensure that a good education is in place for each and every child. She has set out clear improvement plans and closely monitored the impact of each action taken. The headteacher is highly focused on the job in hand and challenges and supports staff and pupils in equal measure. As a result, improvements can be seen in all areas of provision and outcomes for pupils have improved and are consistently good.
- The headteacher and assistant headteacher work effectively together to raise expectations and develop an aspirational culture across the school. They have an accurate understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. They ensure that a clear purpose and rationale are evident in their development plans. As a result, the vision for continued improvement is understood and shared by all staff and governors.
- Leaders have successfully ensured that there is a strong capacity for further improvement in the school. Opportunities for leadership are successfully and widely distributed, despite the size of the school. Senior and more experienced leaders provide effective mentoring and coaching for those newer to the role. They empower middle leaders and support them in developing teaching and learning in their areas of responsibility. Leadership at all levels is now strong and a key strength of the school.
- Middle leaders have grown in confidence and demonstrate expertise and knowledge in their subjects. They provide high-quality professional development for staff. They spend time monitoring their areas of responsibility and develop action plans focused on improvement. Middle leaders are skilled in checking pupils' progress to assess the impact of their actions. They are supported and challenged well by senior leaders and governors.
- All leaders are skilled in tracking and analysing the progress of pupils. A careful, forensic approach is taken now. Specific groups are monitored closely to ensure that pupils make the progress of which they are capable. For example, leaders track pupils whose attendance is lower than that of the majority. When talking to parents and carers, they explain how lower attendance limits the progress their child makes at school. Leaders work closely with families to ensure better outcomes for their children.
- The leadership of pupils with SEND is effective. The coordinator for special educational needs (SENCo) has a secure understanding of pupils' specific needs. She monitors their progress closely and ensures that appropriate support is quickly provided for those not making strong progress. She works with staff to ensure that pupils' needs are addressed while they are expected to be as independent as possible. She recognises that this does not yet happen consistently across the school. The SENCo has a clear vision for the further development of provision so that the school becomes even more inclusive.
- Opportunities for staff development are used well to drive improvements in the quality of teaching and ensure consistency across the school. Leaders are open to sharing good practice and work effectively with local schools and external advisers. The

external support provided to the school on behalf of the local authority has been useful, timely and effective.

- Although there are only a small number of disadvantaged pupils in the school, they are supported effectively through additional funding. The use of the pupil premium funding is carefully planned by leaders and the impact checked by governors. The opportunity to access a bursary enables individual pupils to enhance skills and talents. Specific intervention work supports those pupils who need to catch up. The additional funding is having a positive impact on these pupils' academic learning and personal development.
- The additional physical education (PE) and sport premium funding is effectively managed by the headteacher. She is supported well by the sports leader. Together, they ensure that a wide range of opportunities enable pupils to develop skills and knowledge in a variety of sports. Participation rates have increased. Leaders invite the more reluctant pupils to be involved and provide very good encouragement. Consequently, PE and sport are high on pupils' list of activities that they enjoy at school.
- The school offers a broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders ensure that pupils develop skills in a wide range of curriculum areas, including science, geography, history and modern foreign languages. The arts are given a high priority and pupils talk enthusiastically about music, drama and art. Leaders continually review and refine the curriculum to ensure that it engages all pupils. They are aware that as the school continues to expand, they need to look carefully at how the curriculum is planned and delivered in order to maintain interest and improve outcomes for pupils of all ages.
- Leaders provide excellent opportunities for pupils to learn through first-hand experiences. Outdoor learning in the school grounds plus visits locally, such as to the library in Hagley and further afield, including an arts residential in Staffordshire, enhance the curriculum. Visitors to school further complement the curriculum, for example by bringing in animals or a mobile planetarium. The learning environment is testament to the high-quality work developed through these rich experiences.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exceptionally well promoted at the school. There is a strong spiritual focus underpinned by the schools' Christian values and evidence of a clear moral code. Pupils develop an intense respect for people of other faiths and cultures, acquiring knowledge through visits to synagogues and mosques. They reflect on national events, such as Remembrance Sunday. They have a good understanding of the principles behind fundamental British values and are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- Pupils value the many extra-curricular opportunities provided, especially sporting and musical activities. They enjoy the challenge of sporting competitions in tag rugby, gymnastics and athletics, as well as the simpler pleasures of sitting sewing or knitting with friends. All these activities contribute to the exceptionally well-developed relationships between pupils of all ages and abilities.
- Relationships with parents are very positive. Parents value the opportunities they have to be involved in their child's learning, for example making moon buggies and finding out about a new handwriting scheme. Parents value the academic progress their children make while recognising that this is not at the expense of their well-being and personal development, which are given priority.

Governance of the school

- Arrangements for governance are strong and effective. Governors are ambitious for the school and ensure that they have a strong focus on school improvement. They visit the school regularly and have set up good systems to hold leaders to account. Monthly strategy meetings enable governors to have a deep understanding of the schools' strengths and areas for development.
- Governors check the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They question the progress of groups of pupils and keep a close eye on the impact of additional funding, such as the school's use of special needs funding and the pupil premium. Consequently, progress rates for disadvantaged pupils and those pupils with SEND are good, given their different starting points.
- Governors play an important role in ensuring that safeguarding is effective. They visit school regularly to audit arrangements, such as those for the safe recruitment of staff. They ensure that all procedures are being followed and appropriate support is in place to make sure that pupils are safe.
- Governors are keen to develop their own skills through training and the regular review of their own work. They use annual skills audits to highlight gaps in their knowledge and expertise and use this information effectively to recruit new governors. Information from two external reviews of governance is effectively used to refine their work further. As a result, governance has been considerably strengthened since the last inspection.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that a strong culture of keeping children safe threads through all their work. 'I am here for the children' is the mantra heard from designated safeguarding leads. Positive relationships with children and families enable leaders to have difficult conversations with parents when they are concerned about a child's well-being.
- The school has effective systems in place to safeguard pupils. Records are carefully maintained and enable a timely response and appropriate follow-up to any concern. Leaders work closely with a link worker to secure early help for those children and families that need support.
- Staff access regular training, including e-safety and preventing radicalisation and extremism. The designated safeguarding leaders have a comprehensive knowledge of local issues. All staff understand their roles and responsibilities for keeping children safe. They are vigilant and know what to do if they have a concern about a child.
- Procedures for the recruitment and vetting of staff are effective. The single central record is well managed and regularly checked by senior leaders, including governors. A comprehensive induction is in place for all staff and volunteers new to the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- A rigorous cycle of monitoring, support and challenge has strengthened teaching since the last inspection. The quality of teaching over time is now consistently good and continues to improve.
- Teachers have a secure understanding of the different needs and aptitudes of their pupils. They make good use of assessment information to match work to pupils' abilities. They plan a range of activities and tasks for pupils to select from. They use questions to check what pupils know and can do.
- Opportunities for professional development enable teachers to develop a secure subject knowledge, particularly in teaching English and mathematics. They use this knowledge effectively to plan coherent sequences of work. This ensures that pupils securely build up knowledge and skills and deepen their understanding over time.
- Teachers are skilled in showing pupils what they need to do to be successful in their learning. They model and explain precisely what to do. Sometimes, however, they give too much support and do not expect pupils to work things out for themselves. This can slow progress and limit what pupils achieve for themselves.
- The teaching of phonics continues to be a strength of the school. A systematic and consistent approach is in place across Reception and key stage 1. Adults are well trained and model language accurately for pupils. As a result, young children quickly become confident using sounds to blend and read unfamiliar words.
- Pupils read with increasing fluency as they move through key stage 1 and into key stage 2. This is a result of a new approach to the teaching of reading and the impact of new resources providing greater challenge. Teachers develop pupils' confidence to talk about characters and themes in their books. Pupils develop a love of reading and talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors.
- On occasions, opportunities are missed to develop and expand pupils' vocabulary. Adults introduce pupils to new, interesting and challenging words but do not always make time to ensure that pupils understand what they mean. This limits pupils' ability to use these words in their independent work.
- The teaching of English grammar, punctuation and spelling has been further developed since the last inspection. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and confidence in teaching this part of the curriculum. Pupils confidently use appropriate terminology and can share examples from their own work. Despite this, low expectations of what pupils can do independently limits their progress. Some basic errors go unchecked and pupils continue to make the same mistakes.
- The teaching of mathematics has gone from strength to strength. Pupils quickly acquire fluency in their number work and a deeper understanding of key concepts. They are given opportunities to use and apply their knowledge to solve problems. They are encouraged to explain what they know and prove it. Teachers make lessons interesting and provide good challenge for most pupils. However, not all pupils take ownership of their work and push themselves on to the more challenging work.
- Highly effective relationships are evident in classrooms between adults and pupils and between pupils. Talking partners are used well to develop working partnerships and

positive relationships. Pupils happily work in pairs and small groups, learning from each other.

- Pupils with SEND are supported well. They benefit from working in small groups and with an adult when necessary. There are occasions when pupils do not work as independently as they are able, and this limits their progress. The positive relationships between adults and pupils help develop pupils' confidence and self-belief. As a result, they are happy to come to school and join in successfully with others.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. Parents comment on the 'family atmosphere which helps foster a friendly inclusive environment'. This is a school where leaders place great value on knowing each individual child. They ensure that pupils' well-being is central to all the school's work. As a result, the school is a happy, welcoming place.
- Positive relationships between pupils of all ages are evident across the school. When they start school, younger children are given a buddy from Year 6. Spending time together in assemblies, breaktimes and lunchtimes breaks down any barriers and strong relationships develop. A deep sense of trust is evident.
- Pupils have well-developed social skills. They take turns and listen to one another. They understand the conventions of holding a conversation and do not talk over each other. Respectful relationships exist in every classroom and outside on the playground.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the different forms of bullying and say it is rare at school. Pupils feel safe at school. They trust adults to help them sort out any worries or anxieties they may have. A couple of parents expressed concern about behaviour at the school. However, inspectors found no evidence to support this view. Any incident, no matter how small, is dealt with seriously and quickly. Behaviour observed during the inspection was good. Pupils explain the school's values, which are underpinned by strong Christian values. Adults and children alike are good role models for these in action. There is evidence of a strong moral code in the school.
- Opportunities built into the curriculum help pupils develop skills to keep themselves safe, for example when they are using the internet or playing in the park. Older pupils participate in a citizens' challenge. They develop personal safety skills while learning about road, fire and water hazards. By the end of Year 6, all pupils can swim the required 25 metres. Leaders make good use of external agencies, such as the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children and Childline, to further develop pupils' individual skills. As a result, over time, all pupils develop a secure understanding of how to stay safe.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite, courteous and use manners exceptionally well. They show respect to adults and visitors to the school. For example, pupils hold doors open for others and offer to help.

- The school's behaviour policy is implemented consistently by all staff. Zone boards are used effectively by all adults. Pupils know what is expected of them and have a secure understanding of the rewards and consequences. Behaviour logs are concise and indicate that leaders deal effectively with the very few incidents that occur.
- In lessons, pupils are well behaved and cooperate well together. Talking partners are used effectively to deepen working relationships between pupils. A small number of pupils expressed concern about the behaviour of a small group of pupils in lessons. However, inspectors observed only good behaviour during the inspection. Teachers make expectations clear about the conduct expected in lessons and follow up any behaviour that is less than good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance rates are higher than the national averages. Leaders support the few individual pupils who have periods of time away from school for various reasons, such as medical appointments. Leaders ensure that pupils catch up with work that is missed so that they do not fall behind.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- There is a strong trend of improvement in outcomes for pupils across the school. This is a result of the headteacher's determination to ensure that every pupil makes at least good progress and reaches the standards of which they are capable.
- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics have risen since the last inspection. At the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2, the proportions of pupils reaching the expected standard is consistently in line or above national averages.
- The proportion of pupils reaching the expected standard in the phonics screening check by the end of Year 1 is consistently above the national average. This is a result of securely good phonics teaching across Reception and key stage 1. Pupils engage in lively, challenging work and enjoy reading a range of books.
- Over the last three years, there has been an upward trend in outcomes at the end of key stage 1. More than 80% of pupils reached the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics in 2017 and 2018.
- Progress in mathematics has been exceptionally strong over the past three years. Pupils are fluent in their calculations and can apply them to solve a range of problems. A greater proportion of pupils reach the expected standards and achieve greater depth than that seen nationally.
- Leaders focus on further improving the progress pupils make in reading. Although outcomes are good, and progress by the end of key stage 2 has improved, progress is not as strong as that made in writing and mathematics.
- Current pupils make good progress, with many more pupils making better than expected progress now. Leaders continue to work with staff to ensure that there are high expectations of every pupil. However, this is not yet consistently the case across the school and results in some pupils not reaching the higher standards as quickly as they might.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress and the differences with other pupils are diminishing. This is a result of early intervention and catch-up support. Leaders know which pupils need to make more accelerated progress in order to reach the highest

standards possible. There are too few disadvantaged pupils to compare their attainment with that of others nationally.

- The progress of pupils with SEND is good, given their individual starting points. Effective systems are in place to ensure that support provided is appropriate and proportionate to their needs.

Early years provision

Good

- Leaders have maintained the good provision for the youngest children that was in place at the time of the last inspection.
- Outcomes at the end of the early years have further improved. Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities typical for their age. As a result of high expectations, the proportion reaching a good level of development has risen and is consistently above the national average. Children are well prepared for their move to Year 1.
- The leadership of the early years is strong. The leader is experienced, skilled and knowledgeable about how young children learn. She has a secure understanding of the setting's effectiveness. Her action plan is robust and focused on making sure that children's early development improves further.
- Teaching is typically good in the early years. Leaders ensure that an accurate initial assessment of children's abilities informs teaching and learning.
- Adults ensure that the learning environment engages children in activities they find enjoyable and interesting. For example, children enjoy playing in the hibernation station. They enjoy sharing facts about animals that hibernate and know why these animals sleep in the winter.
- There is a clear vision for the teaching of early writing skills. Adults ensure that children have many opportunities to develop their physical ability to hold a pencil and to write. Progress is carefully tracked so that those who need additional support receive it quickly. As a result, children quickly develop the skills to write independently.
- The teaching of phonics in the Reception class is highly effective. Children participate enthusiastically, repeating sounds which are modelled clearly by adults. They make links to the letters and sounds in their names. They suggest words which link to the sound and practise saying them. However, adults sometimes miss opportunities to extend children's vocabulary and understanding.
- Behaviour is good and children cooperate well. They listen to each other's ideas and share equipment. Adults are skilled in helping children develop the ability to deal with situations when someone has been unkind or not willing to share. Consequently, children develop confidence in themselves and empathy for others.
- Links with parents are strong. Entry into school is carefully planned and children and their families are well prepared for starting school. Visits to pre-schools and nurseries, as well as meetings with parents, ensure that important information is shared. Parents comment on how settled their children are and that the transition into school was smooth.
- All statutory requirements for safeguarding and health and safety are met. Parents are confident that their children are well cared for and safe.

School details

Unique reference number	116784
Local authority	Worcestershire
Inspection number	10048181

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Freda Griffith
Headteacher	Helen Beckford-Bond
Telephone number	01562 700243
Website	www.blakedowncofeprimary.co.uk
Email address	head@blakedownprimary.worcs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8–9 June 2016

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Numbers on roll continue to rise as a result of the increase in the school's admission number in September 2014. Pupils are currently taught in single-age groups up to and including Year 4. The remaining mixed-age class is for pupils in Years 5 and 6.
- The early years consists of one Reception class, which children attend full time.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage and all speak English as their first language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium funding is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is similar to the national average. A smaller proportion of pupils have an education, health and care plan than is found nationally.
- An Ofsted monitoring visit was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 in

July 2017.

- The school was judged to be outstanding at its last section 48 inspection in May 2017. A section 48 inspection reports on the religious character of the school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other key leaders. The lead inspector spoke with four members of the governing body, including the chair. The lead inspector discussed the school with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspectors made visits to classrooms on both days of the inspection. Many of these visits were with the headteacher or assistant headteacher.
- The inspectors scrutinised a wide selection of pupils' books from different subjects.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils formally and informally. A group of pupils met with an inspector to discuss a range of issues. Pupils read to the inspectors. The inspectors observed behaviour in classrooms, in corridors, at lunchtime and outside on the playground.
- An inspector talked to parents before school. The lead inspector also considered the 89 responses to Ofsted's parents' survey, Parent View, and the 47 responses to the free-text service.
- The inspector considered the 16 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 18 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Various school documents were scrutinised, including the school's self-evaluation and school development plan, records of monitoring, reports to governors and minutes of meetings. Information about pupils' progress, behaviour, attendance and safety was also analysed and discussed with leaders.
- Documents relating to safeguarding were checked and an inspector looked at published information on the school's website.

Inspection team

Nicola Harwood, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Michael Onyon

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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Piccadilly Gate
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Manchester
M1 2WD

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