

Oasis Academy Blakenhale Junior School

Homestead Road, Garretts Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B33 0XG

Inspection dates

3 to 4 July 2019

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| 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 |
| Overall effectiveness at previous inspection | Requires improvement |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders are ambitious for the school. They have worked hard to successfully drive improvements. As a result, outcomes, teaching and behaviour have improved.
- The trust provides effective challenge and support. As a result, leaders have successfully tackled all areas identified at the time of the last inspection as requiring improvement.
- Leaders gather assessment information from a range of different sources. However, this sometimes leads to variations in results produced. Additionally, some teachers' assessments of pupils' writing are too high.
- Teaching is good. Teachers provide pupils with regular opportunities to use and apply their skills in reading and mathematics. However, pupils' writing skills are not as well developed, and their skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar are not secure.
- Leaders make effective use of the additional funding for disadvantaged pupils. Consequently, these pupils make as much progress as their classmates.
- Excellent use is made of the sports funding received. Pupils hugely enjoy and benefit from the strong focus placed on being physically and mentally fit.
- Leaders have developed a well-balanced curriculum. Enrichment activities are a strength. Pupils, parents and staff all spoke passionately about the excellent and exciting range of activities offered.
- Safeguarding is effective. Leaders ensure that when concerns are raised, they are dealt with in a timely way, ensuring that pupils are kept safe.
- Pupils work hard, enjoy their learning and behave well. They say they feel safe in school and that everyone gets on well together.
- Leaders strongly promote the importance of regular attendance. As a result, attendance is above average for all groups of pupils.
- Progress at the end of key stage 2, in 2018, was significantly above the national average in all subjects. Work in pupils' books shows that current pupils are making good progress.
- Most parents and carers are highly supportive of the school and value the recent improvements.
- Pupils from all backgrounds work and play together happily. However, pupils do not have a secure understanding of fundamental British values.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further improve outcomes in writing by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to write at length and independently across all areas of the curriculum
 - improving the teaching of spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - ensuring that teachers use a wide range of evidence to assess pupils' attainment in writing
 - raising teachers' expectations of pupils' presentation and handwriting.
- Further improve leadership and management by agreeing and implementing a consistent and robust method for gathering assessment information and checking that writing assessments are reliable.
- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values and of how these influence their daily lives.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the last inspection, leaders have worked determinedly to ensure that they have tackled previous weaknesses in the school. The executive headteacher's strong and ambitious leadership is successfully driving further improvements and raising aspirations for all pupils.
- School leaders regularly check the quality of teaching in collaboration with the trust. Together, they provide help and support to all staff to develop their skills. Through coaching, training and visits to other schools, staff learn from each other and share best practice. The staff survey revealed that teachers value the support and training they receive. Staff morale is high, and staff have full confidence in the leadership and management of the school.
- Subject and year-group leaders are well informed about their roles. They provide training and support for their colleagues. Subject leaders also produce action plans which show their understanding of where additional work is needed. The trust provides good levels of support and training for all leaders.
- Leaders monitor pupils' progress closely. Systems are in place to track the progress of all groups. However, the use of different methods of assessment has led to variations and inconsistencies in results. Leaders are aware of this issue and have made changes to how they assess pupils and are also rethinking how often pupils are assessed.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Planning is based around a central theme, for example the Olympics, and links are made to other subject areas. Leaders have begun to assess and track pupils' abilities in all national curriculum subjects. Pupils use their English and mathematics skills well across the curriculum. However, the quality and quantity of writing in subjects other than English is restricted by the overuse of writing frames.
- Curriculum enrichment is a strength of the school. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about the wide range of activities offered on Fridays, for example photography, health and beauty, gardening and cookery. Parents, staff and academy council members are enthusiastic about the changes to the curriculum that have been made. Visits and visitors also supplement pupils' knowledge and add to their enjoyment of school.
- Leaders use additional funding for disadvantaged pupils effectively. There are specific interventions to support learning and pupils' emotional well-being. Additional support provided ensures that pupils make good progress and achieve well. Attainment differences over time are diminishing as a result.
- Primary physical education (PE) and sports funding is used extremely well. A wide range of activities has been implemented to raise the profile of pupils' fitness. Pupils themselves monitor, track and record their fitness levels over time. Regular training, for example skipping, has had a significant impact on pupils' stamina. As a result, pupils have achieved greater success in sports competitions, including cross country and girls' football. Attendance has also improved as a result of pupils' good health.
- Pupils work and play well with pupils from all backgrounds. However, their knowledge and understanding of fundamental British values is underdeveloped. Pupils are unable

to say what these values mean or how they impact on their daily lives as members of the school and wider community. As a result, pupils are not fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

- Parents have very positive views of the school. They feel the school has improved vastly since the previous inspection. They are very pleased and say that their children are happy and safe. Comments from parents include: 'The staff go above and beyond and really care for our children.'

Governance of the school

- Governance is effective. The trust has provided good levels of challenge and support to school leaders. Its members ensure that regular reviews are carried out to assess teaching and its impact on pupils' outcomes.
- Extensive training and coaching are provided for all staff by the trust, including for middle leaders, to increase their capacity and contribution to school improvement. Regular collaboration and sharing of expertise and ideas with other trust schools ensures that good practice is shared. Teachers' assessments are checked with other schools to ensure that they are accurate. Writing, however, needs further scrutiny.
- The trust has a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses within the school. It recognises the stability that the executive headteacher has brought to staffing and the positive impact that this is having in raising achievement. School leaders meet regularly with the trust's regional director. Reports show that senior leaders are held fully to account.
- The academy council does not hold any statutory responsibility but provides a strong community link. It is made up of parents, school staff and community members. The chair of the committee is committed to representing parents' and pupils' views fully. She ensures that concerns raised are addressed and is not afraid to contact the chief executive officer if these are not resolved. There are clear lines of accountability.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and staff are vigilant in keeping pupils safe. Staff follow the school's procedures for alerting safeguarding leaders when a pupil may be at risk of harm. Teaching and support staff have access to the school's new electronic system and midday supervisors continue to complete the appropriate sheets and submit these to the designated leader for safeguarding.
- The designated safeguarding leaders ensure that all training is up to date, including in preventing extremism and radicalisation. Leaders work well with external agencies so that they can support pupils and their families effectively. They ensure that accurate records are kept and that referrals are followed up in a timely manner.
- All staff vetting procedures are carried out to ensure that adults working with pupils are safe to do so.
- Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through lessons, visitors and assemblies. Pupils have a good understanding of internet safety and are aware of site security.

Leaders responded well to pupils' request to screen the main gate in order to provide them with additional privacy and aid their feeling of safety.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection. Teachers model key learning well, ask pertinent questions and maintain an appropriate pace in lessons. The use of questioning, modelling and resources is effective.
- Pupils deepen their understanding because teachers' explanations of key learning are clear and activities are well planned. Discussion at the end of lessons enables pupils to reflect on what they have learned and assess their own progress and, on occasion, the progress of their classmates.
- Pupils read fluently and with understanding. They read regularly at home and at school. Good-quality class texts enable pupils to consider underlying themes and issues which link closely with the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum.
- Teaching in mathematics is effective as a result of the school's focus on this subject since the previous inspection. Teachers' subject knowledge is good. Work is pitched at an appropriate level. Teaching ensures that pupils develop their fluency, problem-solving and reasoning well. Pupils are encouraged to mark their own work and address errors. Books checked show that pupils of all abilities are making good progress.
- Teachers model how they expect pupils to write, and pupils are taught to write for different purposes. However, teachers do not consistently identify pupils' errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. The overuse of writing frames also limits pupils' ability to write at length or independently in different subjects, for example science, religious education (RE) and curriculum topic books. Some teachers also accept poor-quality handwriting and untidy work. These factors all limit the quality of pupils' writing and hinder their progress.
- Teachers work closely with teaching assistants to ensure that additional support is effective and carefully targeted to move pupils' learning on. Teaching assistants are successfully deployed to ensure that pupils are well supported. Occasionally, they give too much support for lower-ability pupils in writing activities, writing sentences which pupils then copy. This reduces pupils' independence and their ability to use their own ideas. It also masks how well pupils can actually write.
- Teachers follow and apply the school's marking and feedback policy closely. They check pupils' understanding and develop their thinking by asking further questions and setting additional tasks to build on learning. A range of strategies is used to assess pupils' abilities in reading, writing and mathematics. These include standardised tests and teacher assessments. However, teachers do not always use a wide range of evidence to make sure their assessments of pupils' abilities in writing are accurate. Some assessments are too high.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- School leaders are justifiably proud of the high quality of care they provide to pupils and their families. Pupil premium funding contributes towards additional staffing, including the pastoral team, to ensure that vulnerable pupils and their families are well supported.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are positive and they apply themselves diligently to their work. Pupils persevere to complete tasks, particularly when they are matched closely to their ability.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay healthy. This is because the school's motto of 'Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds – Promising Futures' is embedded strongly. PE is a strength of the school and pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and clubs. Staff provide excellent nurture and support so that pupils feel valued and cared for. Pupils know that they can seek advice and help from the pastoral team if needed.
- Pupils say that bullying is rare. They are confident that they can report concerns to a member of staff if they are worried.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Behaviour in and around school is good. This is because pupils enjoy school and want to do well. Almost all parents agree that the school makes sure its pupils are well behaved and that it deals effectively with bullying.
- Pupils are self-controlled and compassionate in the playground. They make good use of the equipment provided and ensure that everyone is included in play. Their conduct around school shows maturity and respect for others. They are polite and courteous to visitors and adults.
- Pupils have a good understanding of the school's behaviour policy and know the sanctions that are in place for behaviour that is not acceptable. Records show that there have been no permanent exclusions in the last three years and that the number of fixed-term exclusions is reducing rapidly. This is testament to the systems that the leaders have put in place to manage pupils' behaviour.
- Pupils say that behaviour is good. They value the opportunity to have 'time out' in the thrive room to reflect and calm down at lunchtimes if needed.
- The use of derogatory language is rare. Pupils value one another's differences and appreciate that they are all unique. The school is an orderly environment where lessons run smoothly and pupils are keen to learn.
- Pupils enjoy school. This is shown in their above-average attendance. Close links and

positive relationships with families help endorse the importance of good attendance. Leaders follow up any absences quickly. They carefully monitor the attendance of any pupils who are persistently absent. Pupils enjoy the celebration assemblies and are proud of the rewards they receive for their good attendance.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils' work shows they are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics across the school. In 2018, progress in all subjects was well above the national average and in the top 10% of all schools nationally. This is due to improvements in teaching and learning.
- There is a three-year rising trend in attainment at the end of key stage 2. Published results for 2018 were in line with or above the national average in reading and mathematics but slightly below average in writing at the expected standard and greater depth.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress because of the effective support they receive both in class and through intervention programmes. Work is tailored to their individual needs.
- The difference in achievement between disadvantaged pupils and others has diminished rapidly over recent years. This is because leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively and teachers pinpoint the support that disadvantaged pupils need in order to achieve as well as other pupils.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language and those from different minority backgrounds make good progress. Most pupils speak English fluently, and the school's strong, inclusive culture ensures that all pupils are treated equally and given support if needed so that they achieve well.
- Standards of reading fluency are good across the school. Most pupils make strong progress and develop good skills of reading comprehension. Pupils show an interest in reading and read regularly.
- Work in pupils' books shows that pupils make good progress in writing. However, progress and attainment in 2018 in writing were not as strong as reading and mathematics for Year 6 pupils. Current pupils are also making good progress but many lack secure spelling, punctuation and grammar skills. Writing frames also restrict pupils' ability to write at length and independently. This limits their progress.
- Pupils make strong progress in mathematics because the school has worked hard to develop their problem-solving and reasoning skills. Pupils calculate fluently and efficiently. The most able pupils are challenged well and, consequently, an increasing number now reach the higher standards.
- Teachers' assessments for 2019 suggest that results will be in line with the national average at both the expected and higher levels at the end of key stage 2 in all subjects. Inspectors validated these assessments in reading and mathematics but judged that writing assessments were too high and not supported by examples of pupils' writing from across the curriculum.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 139129 |
| Local authority | Birmingham |
| Inspection number | 10088497 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 7 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 323 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair | Paul Tarry |
| Principal | Clare Hoods-Truman |
| Telephone number | 0121 783 3960 |
| Website | www.oasisacademyblakenhalejunior.org |
| Email address | info@oasisblakenhalejunior.org |
| Date of previous inspection | 16 to 17 November 2016 |

Information about this school

- Oasis Academy Blakenhale Junior is part of the Oasis Community Learning multi-academy trust. The trust members of Oasis are the school's accountable body. The trust board holds the statutory responsibility for all aspects of governance. Local community governance is provided through an academy council.
- The executive headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection. She also leads and manages Oasis Academy Blakenhale Infant School, which is on the same site.
- This school is larger than most junior schools.
- The proportion of pupils who are from minority ethnic backgrounds and who speak English as an additional language is above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above average.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is above average.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed teaching and learning in all classes. Joint observations were carried out with the executive headteacher and both deputy headteachers. Inspectors also looked at pupils' books with senior leaders.
- Inspectors observed an attendance assembly, playtime, lunchtime and small groups of pupils working with support or teaching staff.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, subject and year group leaders and the SENCo. Inspectors met with the chief executive officer and regional director from the academy trust and the chairperson of the academy council.
- Inspectors took account of the views of parents as they brought their children to school. The 73 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, together with 14 parents' text comments were also considered.
- Survey responses from 31 staff were received and their views taken into account.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read in different year groups and also checked the phonics abilities of pupils in Year 3. Inspectors talked to pupils about their learning and reviewed the work in their books.
- Inspectors reviewed a number of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, action plan and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding. Reports by the trust were considered together with minutes of meetings from the academy council meetings.

Inspection team

| | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Heather Simpson, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Christopher Ogden | Ofsted Inspector |
| Justine Lomas | Ofsted Inspector |

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