

# Inspection of Blackboys Church of England Primary School

School Lane, Blackboys, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 5LL

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Inspection dates: 14–15 November 2019

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education	<b>Good</b>
Behaviour and attitudes	<b>Good</b>
Personal development	<b>Good</b>
Leadership and management	<b>Good</b>
Early years provision	<b>Good</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Outstanding

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy here. Christian values and a strong sense of fellowship lie at the heart of this small village school. Pupils told inspectors, 'We are part of a community and we all contribute to making the school what it is.' Staff have caring relationships with pupils and know their families well. Pupils thrive within this compassionate and trusting environment.

Pupils want to learn. They listen well in their lessons and are eager to acquire new knowledge and skills. There are a lot of things going on at school that excite pupils. They told inspectors that 'every day is jam-packed with things to do'. For example, during the inspection, one class went to Fishbourne Palace, older pupils made biscuits for Children in Need and younger pupils took part in forest school activities.

Pupils behave well. They say that there is no bullying in the school and incidents of poor behaviour are rare. They enjoy their friendships and play happily together during social times.

The school's motto to 'be the best you can be; living life in all its fullness' is well understood. The whole school community, including governors, are united in making sure that all decisions they make are rooted in this vision. Leaders genuinely want every pupil's school experience to be a positive and successful one.

## **What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?**

Leaders, staff and governors have high ambitions for pupils to achieve well. They provide pupils with a broad and interesting curriculum. This is enhanced by interesting trips and visitors. Recent work on improving outcomes in writing and grammar, punctuation and spelling has been effective. The standards pupils achieve at the end of key stage 2, particularly in mathematics, are high and prepare them well for the next stage in their education.

Leaders are now rightly focusing their efforts on further strengthening the teaching of the foundation subjects. Teachers' subject knowledge is not consistently strong and planning is not well sequenced in these subjects. Teachers do not routinely consider what pupils need to know and how it should be taught so pupils can remember their learning. Subject leaders are developing their knowledge and skills so that they can more effectively bring about improvements needed to the curriculum. The school's current development plan and actions already under way reflect the importance that leaders place on this work.

Leaders make sure that reading is a top priority. The teaching of phonics is well organised and effective. Some staff would benefit from further training to ensure that they have exactly the right knowledge and skills to help pupils even more. Nonetheless, teachers spot pupils who fall behind and give them extra help to catch up. Outcomes in the national Year 1 phonics screening check have been consistently

high for the past three years.

As pupils move up the school, their interest in reading continues to develop. Teachers use well-considered class texts that interest pupils. Older pupils proudly showed inspectors the 'book flix' display in their classroom where they are guided to newly published or 'trending' books. Consequently, pupils are motivated to read widely and often.

Much successful work goes into meeting the needs of the small number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The general culture of respect, high ambition and genuine care extends to this group of pupils. Their potential and needs are identified quickly and built upon skilfully. As a result, they are flourishing.

Children get off to a good start in Reception. They are settled and happy. Staff work closely with families to support children's learning. Adults provide resources and activities which capture children's interests. For example, inspectors observed children confidently using scissors to cut out 'superhero puppets' and excitedly mixing items into a 'phonics soup'. Leaders have made sensible improvements to the outside area, enhancing opportunities for children to learn.

Children are unfailingly polite, for example opening doors and greeting visitors. Staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which they model explicitly. Everyone is clear about the rules. Leaders' tenacious work to improve attendance has been successful. Pupils want to come to school. Pupils' attendance overall, as well as that of the low number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND, is high and improving.

Pupils embrace the many opportunities on offer. They enjoy sports clubs, with hockey being a firm favourite. They welcome opportunities to take part in the school council, be head boy or girl, take on prefect responsibilities or join the social club at lunchtimes. Whole-school assemblies are a chance for pupils to celebrate their many successes and get a mention in the popular 'gold book'.

The headteacher and the governors fulfil their duties with great integrity. This is recognised by staff and parents, who are unanimous in their praise for the school. Staff feel that they can discuss their views freely and that their well-being is considered carefully.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families extremely well. Staff are well trained and given regular updates. They are highly alert to any pupil who may be at risk and report their concerns swiftly. Leaders seek and follow advice from specialist professionals if serious concerns are raised or if they are unsure.

Leaders conscientiously ensure the safety of the site and premises. Pupils say that

this makes them feel safe. Leaders and governors make sure that all adults who work or volunteer at the school undergo the necessary checks. All parents spoken to and those who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire agree that their children are safe at school.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- The school's curriculum offers a wide range of subjects for pupils to learn. However, pupils' learning in the foundation subjects is not sequenced coherently. Teachers should ensure that curriculum plans for these subjects contain the knowledge that pupils should know and the order in which they should learn it. These plans need to be implemented reliably so pupils learn successfully in a wide range of subjects.
- Subject leaders need to have a secure knowledge of the subject they lead and how it can be taught successfully. These leaders should check the quality of provision in their subject so that any actions for improvement can be swiftly identified and put into place.
- Leaders are determined that pupils learn to read well. Further training is necessary to strengthen teachers' and support staff's understanding of how to teach phonics. This is to ensure that pupils get off to the best possible start in their reading.

## **How can I feed back my views?**

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## **Further information**

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114547
<b>Local authority</b>	East Sussex
<b>Inspection number</b>	10111435
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	116
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Katharine Rabson Stark
<b>Headteacher</b>	Graham Sullivan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.blackboys.e-sussex.sch.uk">www.blackboys.e-sussex.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	25–26 March 2009

## Information about this school

- A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018.
- The school offers a before- and after-school club each day.
- In March 2015 the school federated with a nearby school. This federation is called The Thomas à Becket Federation. Both schools in the federation are governed by a single governing body.
- This is a voluntary aided Church of England school. The previous section 48 inspection of the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England school took place on 23 October 2019. Section 48 inspections are carried out every three to five years. The school's next section 48 inspection will be due from October 2022.

## Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We deemed the inspection a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders, middle leaders and teachers.
- Inspectors did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science and

history. They discussed curriculum design with subject leaders, carried out a series of lesson visits, scrutinised pupils' work and spoke to pupils and teachers about the curriculum.

- Inspectors evaluated the effectiveness of safeguarding. The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead to check the procedures in place to ensure that pupils are kept safe. The lead inspector scrutinised the single central record to make sure that the school is checking thoroughly that there is no known reason that adults should not be working with children. Inspectors spoke to pupils about how the school keeps them safe.
- The lead inspector met with four governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of staff and pupils to gather their views about the school.
- Inspectors took account of the 62 responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and spoke to parents at the start of the first day of the inspection.
- The lead inspector held a telephone call with a representative from the local authority.

### **Inspection team**

Frances Nation, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Sam French

Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
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