

Inspection of a good school: Blackheath Primary School

Blackheath Primary School, Britannia Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands B65 9NF

Inspection dates: 19 and 20 October 2021

Outcome

Blackheath Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and enjoy coming to school. They talk enthusiastically about the wide range of 'memorable experiences' the school provides. They appreciate trips to places such as the Thinktank and the zoo. They learn a lot from these events. Pupils describe a trip to Wroxeter as 'the best day ever'.

Pupils learn to treat everyone with care and respect. They consider other pupils' feelings and accept others' differences. Bullying is rare. Staff take concerns seriously and act quickly when they arise.

Pupils work with many organisations, such as the local police community support officer. These organisations help pupils learn about keeping themselves safe and being responsible. Pupils feel safe in school and know that the staff will always look after them.

Pupils behave well in lessons. They listen carefully to adults and this helps them to learn. Pupils know a lot about what they are currently learning in many subjects. They also remember a large amount from some of the topics they have learned before. However, there are some important things that they do not remember. This is because the work is sometimes too easy, and children do not have to use the knowledge they have.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum to give pupils the knowledge and skills they need to be successful. The curriculum plans for all subjects, including early years, clearly identify the knowledge that pupils should know and remember. Staff have used assessment to identify gaps in pupils' learning. They have adapted this year's plans to make sure that pupils catch up on any learning missed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Children get a good start in early years and settle into routines quickly. Staff have high expectations, and the children respond to them. As a result, children start learning straight away. There is a clear focus on the vocabulary children will know, understand and

use in all areas of learning. This helps to develop children's language and communication skills.

There is a detailed sequence of learning for all year groups, including the early years, in mathematics. The plans make sure that pupils' knowledge builds lesson by lesson. Pupils are confident about new learning because it builds on what they have done before in small steps. They know and remember what they are learning now and what they have learned before.

Reading is a high priority in the school. Leaders make sure that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of reading. This starts with phonics in early years and Year 1. There are currently two sessions of phonics a day in Years 1 and 2 to help pupils catch up on the learning missed due to the pandemic. Staff have good subject knowledge and they use assessment well to help pupils keep up and catch up. The books pupils read are well matched to the letter sounds they know. Pupils who struggle to read are developing the skills to read fluently and confidently. Daily reading lessons in all year groups also help pupils to understand what they are reading. As a result, pupils gain a wider vocabulary as they move through the school.

In other subjects, including history and geography, lessons have a clear structure. Pupils are able to remember learning from previous lessons. Reading texts and answering questions on previous learning support this well and help pupils to make links to previous learning. However, the questions that staff ask are sometimes very simple and pupils do not need to think about the answers. This does not help them to deepen their understanding or gain a sufficient range of knowledge in these subjects. This is especially true for the older pupils.

Leaders make sure that they quickly identify the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They work with specialist services to get the right support for the pupils and their families. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum, where possible, as all pupils. Staff receive ongoing training to help them provide appropriate support. They make adaptations to lessons by using a range of resources.

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is good. Pupils can learn in lessons because there are few interruptions.

The schools' work to broaden pupils' personal development is strong. There are several student committees that play an active role in the work of the school. Pupils develop their understanding of rights and responsibilities through a range of other well-chosen events.

Leaders work well with the staff and they feel valued. They consider the workload and make changes where possible to reduce it.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, staff and governors have a good understanding of how to keep children safe. There are thorough processes in place for staff to raise a concern. Leaders respond swiftly to any concern raised. The family support worker works closely with families and outside agencies to provide help and support. The school teaches children how to keep themselves safe, both online and in the community. The safety day for children in Years 5 and 6 reflects the issues that the local community experiences.

Leaders make checks on all staff regularly to ensure that they are suitable to work with children.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some of the humanities curriculum, work given to pupils is not demanding. Some of the work does not match the aims of the curriculum and does not contribute effectively to pupils gaining sufficient knowledge in that subject. Leaders must ensure that work given to pupils is sufficiently demanding so that it helps them to deepen their understanding and to know, remember and do more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2016.

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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 are the school and you are 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

Unique reference number	103981
Local authority	Sandwell
Inspection number	10199950
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	492
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	David Walker
Headteachers	Anna McElwee and Matthew Hytch
Website	www.blackheathprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	12 July 2016

Information about this school

- The school has the well-being charter mark, the basic skills quality mark and the bronze anti-bullying quality mark.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Prior to the inspection, the lead inspector reviewed documents on the school's website as well as published information about the school's performance and previous Ofsted inspections.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteachers; the deputy headteacher; the special educational needs coordinator; the designated safeguarding lead (DSL); subject leaders; the family support worker; and governors, including the chair of the governing body. Inspectors also spoke to the school improvement partner.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and discussed subjects and other activities with staff and pupils.
- The lead inspector met with the headteacher, who is the DSL, and the family liaison officer. Pupils' case files were reviewed. The single central record of the checks on staff's suitability to work with children was scrutinised.
- Inspectors met with staff, including early career teachers, experienced teachers, and support staff, to discuss their workload and the support they receive to carry out their roles.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about how safe they feel in school and how they learn to keep themselves safe.
- Inspectors visited the Nursery and Reception classes.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and to the pupils' survey and the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Helen Forrest, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Catherine Crooks

Her Majesty's Inspector

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