

Inspection of Blakenall Heath Junior School

Field Road, Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3JF

Inspection dates: 25 and 26 January 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils' well-being is a priority. Staff do all they can to ensure that pupils feel safe and happy. Leaders instil in pupils a 'You can do it' attitude. Pupils are proud to display this motto on their school uniform.

In classrooms, there is a purposeful buzz. Pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other. Most pupils concentrate on their work and are keen to learn. Vulnerable pupils receive extra support to overcome any difficulties they have.

Pupils behave well. They know they will be rewarded if they work hard and do the right thing. They know what will happen if they do not. Pupils build strong friendships and show respect for others. Pupils say that sometimes friends fall out. They know how this is different from bullying. Leaders take bullying incidents seriously. They work with pupils and parents to make sure it does not happen again.

Leaders have planned a broad and ambitious curriculum. Music is a particular strength. Pupils become skilled at playing musical instruments, such as the violin and flute. During COVID-19, leaders have focused on reviewing what is taught in reading, mathematics, science and physical education. Leaders are developing plans in other subjects so that pupils achieve similarly well.

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

Leaders have made some carefully considered changes to the curriculum. These changes are making a difference. In subjects such as mathematics, music and physical education, teachers build pupils' knowledge in a logical order. They plan time for pupils to practise what they are learning before moving on to something new. As a result, pupils are achieving well in these subjects.

Reading is a high priority. Leaders have focused on developing pupils' understanding of what they read. This approach is working for most pupils. Leaders have introduced a phonics programme for pupils who are at an early stage of learning to read. These pupils read books that help them practise the letter sounds they are learning. However, staff have not had the training they need to teach phonics well. As a result, a small number of pupils are not learning to read as quickly as they should.

In other subjects, leaders have set out what they want pupils to know and be able to do at the end of each year. They have started to break this down into the specific chunks of knowledge they want pupils to learn along the way. However, this work is at an early stage. As a result, pupils' knowledge is not secure in some topics.

Teachers receive training and support to teach different subjects effectively. In lessons, they explain concepts clearly to pupils. Teachers ask pupils questions to make sure they understand. They place emphasis on broadening pupils' vocabulary in different subjects.

Most pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get lots of practice at the things they need to learn. These pupils are doing well. Occasionally, teachers do not set the right targets for pupils to learn what they need next. Leaders are addressing this.

Leaders and governors broadly know the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are working on improving the right things in the curriculum. However, leaders and governors do not check closely on the difference their actions are making. This can slow improvements.

Staff manage pupils' behaviour effectively. As a result, lessons are rarely disrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils who need extra help with their emotional health or behaviour receive high-quality support. This ensures that these pupils are ready and able to learn.

Pupils learn to respect difference. They understand that people hold different beliefs and have different characteristics. Pupils learn how to look after themselves. For example, Year 3 pupils learn about dental hygiene. Leaders plan trips and after-school clubs to broaden pupils' experiences. COVID-19 has made this difficult, but leaders have found some ways round this. For example, they have invited visitors into school instead of pupils going on trips.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe at school. They value being able to share their worries with trained counsellors. Pupils learn about the risks they might face in the local community, such as knife crime. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online.

Staff know pupils and their families well. They are vigilant to signs that might show a pupil is at risk of harm. Staff report any concerns in detail and leaders respond swiftly. Leaders are not afraid to challenge if they do not think external agencies are taking the action necessary to keep pupils safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in some subjects. However, it is clear from leaders' actions that they are in the process of bringing this about. Leaders need to complete the process of reviewing the curriculum in all subjects within their identified timescale. For this reason, the transitional arrangements have been applied.
- In subjects such as history and art, leaders are at an early stage of identifying the precise knowledge they want pupils to learn. As a result, pupils' knowledge in these subjects is not secure. Leaders should identify and sequence the specific

knowledge they want pupils to know and remember. Teachers need to check that pupils remember this knowledge so that they achieve well in all subjects.

- Leaders and staff lack the subject knowledge to teach phonics effectively. This means that a small number of pupils do not learn to read as quickly as they should. Leaders need to continue with their plans to train staff so that they have the necessary knowledge to teach phonics well and ensure that the weakest readers catch up swiftly.
- Leaders and governors do not have a sufficiently detailed understanding of how pupils are doing and what improvements are needed in some areas, such as phonics. As a result, improvements can be too slow to happen. Leaders and governors need to make more precise checks on the difference their actions are making. This will help them to address any weaknesses more quickly.

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	104144
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10211293
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	235
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jennifer Johnson
Headteacher	Kim Baker
Website	www.blakenallheathjunior.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	25 and 26 January 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The governing body manages a breakfast club for pupils who attend the school.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken this into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, special educational needs coordinator and other senior leaders.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of the governing body and two governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some

pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in some other subjects.

- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils from each year group read.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at lunchtime. They spoke formally with groups of pupils as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school. Inspectors reviewed the 35 responses to Ofsted's online pupil survey.
- Inspectors met with leaders about the school's safeguarding procedures. Inspectors reviewed policies and records relating to safeguarding, behaviour and attendance. They spoke to pupils, parents and staff about pupils' safety.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings, records of monitoring and evaluation and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors took account of the five free-text responses to Ofsted Parent View. One inspector spoke with parents at the beginning of the school day. Inspectors also considered the 26 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Claire Jones, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jonathan Leonard

Her Majesty's Inspector

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