

# Inspection of a good school: Little Bloxwich CofE VC Primary School

Grenfell Road, Little Bloxwich, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 3DL

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Inspection dates:

2 and 3 February 2022

## **Outcome**

Little Bloxwich CofE VC Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

This is a calm, safe and inclusive place to learn.

Pupils and parents are very positive about school life. The school's four core values of courtesy, caring, conscientiousness and courage guide everyone's behaviour. Bullying of any sort is not accepted and staff sort out any upsets promptly.

Staff help children to settle in quickly when they first start. They learn to respect and help others. Pupils have a say in how things are done at school, and adults make them feel good about themselves. This helps them to grow in confidence and to enjoy their school days.

Pupils do well in reading and mathematics and are well prepared for learning at secondary school. They learn many other subjects through topics. These are carefully organised so pupils cover everything that they should.

In all subjects, pupils do lots of interesting things, and everyone is included in all the school does. Pupils go on trips to different places and learn about the diversity of the world. However, teachers' checks on what pupils have remembered, and attention to good handwriting habits, could be better.

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

Parents, staff and pupils describe this school as a caring, happy place to be. Inspection evidence supports these views.

Pupils achieve well in English and mathematics. Right from the start in early years, staff focus on early number and phonics. Children learn what they need to know through regular routines and staff's high expectations. Consequently, they are well prepared for later learning.

Several other subjects, such as history and geography, are taught through topics. Often, staff start these topics with questions that check what pupils know. These questions and the pupils' answers help to set the scene for what comes next. During this inspection, for example, pupils were learning lots about the Druids, in response to a well-shaped question. Classroom discussions focus on what pupils need to know and remember and teaching regularly emphasises the most important things. Consequently, pupils can make links with what they already know.

This approach is common across the school and subject leaders have provided staff with guidance about what to teach. This ensures that the right things are covered. In addition, staff frequently revisit previous learning to remind pupils about earlier lessons. However, teachers' checks on how well pupils understand new information are not consistent. In some instances, staff notice straight away if any pupils are not keeping up. They respond quickly and go over things again, or explain in a different way to help them understand. In other instances, staff press on with the lesson, and do not pick up on any misunderstandings or mistakes until later. This slows learning for some pupils when it happens.

While the school is successful at teaching early reading, attention to early letter formation and handwriting is not as strong. Staff do not pick up on incorrect pencil holding or give children enough instruction about how to form letters. All children learn to write and are taught important rules for spelling. However, pupils' handwriting skills are less well developed.

As pupils move up through the school, staff use quality texts to help them learn about English and other subjects. Pupils enjoy their lessons and find out lots of new things in different subjects. Nevertheless, pupils do not read a wide range of different books or literature, including poetry, in school or at home.

The school's work to support pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is a strength. Leaders accurately identify pupils' needs, include them in all aspects of school life and enable them to succeed.

Pupils have a voice in making decisions. Pupil-led committees, such as the school council, reinforce their understanding of democracy. Pupils also make choices about helping others. Recently, for instance, they raised money for a homeless charity. Through actions like this, they learn empathy and thoughtfulness, and realise that their efforts can bring about change for the better. Pupils also debate moral choices, which helps them explore the difference between right and wrong.

Governors know and support the school well. They ask the right questions and follow the correct procedures. The school is well led, and staff feel supported in their work.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff training is up to date. Adults notice and act on any concerns that arise, and make sure that information is recorded and shared in the right way. If pupils are absent without explanation, staff find out where they are. The school has systems for noticing any patterns or changes in behaviour.

Pupils learn about safe behaviours and how they should behave towards others through the well-organised curriculum. Pupils trust adults in school to help them with any problems or worries.

Adults' suitability to work in school is checked and recorded.

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

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

- The school's approach to teaching letter formation and early writing is inconsistent. This means children are not getting into good habits from the start. Leaders need to refocus everyone's attention on an agreed and consistent approach to good-quality instruction and practice in writing.
- Teachers' checks on whether pupils have understood and remembered the right things are better in some classes than others. Leaders' oversight of learning across the school should steer all staff to make better use of ongoing assessment in lessons. The aim of this should be to ensure that the intended learning sticks in pupils' minds.
- The school is very effective at teaching pupils to read but could do more to promote a love of reading. Leaders should consider how they can do more to encourage pupils to read widely across the curriculum and for pleasure, both within and beyond school.

## **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 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 second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2013.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104222
<b>Local authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	10211135
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	210
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Luke Morgan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ellen Taylor
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.lit-bloxwich.walsall.sch.uk">www.lit-bloxwich.walsall.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	10 January 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. Its most recent diocesan inspection took place in January 2020.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. In these subjects, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, pupils and staff, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. She also looked at some other subjects in less detail and spoke with staff and pupils about them.
- The inspector looked at the 2019 external performance data about the school and examined school documents. This included information about behaviour, school

improvement planning, the curriculum and attendance. She also checked the school's website.

- The inspector asked pupils, staff, leaders and governors about the school's safeguarding arrangements. She examined the record of employment checks on school staff, looked at other school records, and checked safety procedures at the school. She watched pupils' behaviour in class, at lunchtime, in the playground and at other times during the day.
- During the inspection, the inspector had formal meetings with the headteacher, other leaders, staff and governors. She talked informally with pupils and staff to gather information about school life. She also considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaires for parents, pupils and staff.

### **Inspection team**

Diane Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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