

# Inspection of Blackthorn Primary School

Waingrove, Northampton NN3 8EP

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
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>
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

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

Blackthorn Primary School is thriving. There is an air of optimism about the place. Pupils skip through the school gates. One pupil told inspectors, 'I feel joyful coming to this school.' Pupils say that they feel safe. They are proud of their school. Pupils enjoy their learning and the opportunities that the school provides for them. They say that they feel happy and confident.

Staff prioritise pupils' personal and academic development. They have very high expectations of pupils. The school's values permeate its work. Pupils know and understand the values. Pupils are aspirational. They know that they can achieve well.

Pupils behave well. They are polite and respectful. Pupils know what is expected of them. They work hard and care for each other. They know and understand the school rules. They know that staff quickly sort out any problems and that bullying is not tolerated. Pupils have a very clear understanding of difference and equality.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They feel very welcomed by staff. Parents appreciate the support that their children receive. One parent, typical of many, said 'The school has gone above and beyond for my child, and I can't thank them enough.'

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

Leaders have developed a clear and ambitious curriculum. The curriculum has been organised to ensure that pupils build their knowledge gradually. Leaders ensure that pupils' vocabulary develops progressively in subjects. Pupils remember most of the curriculum content that they have learned. For example, in history, pupils can explain differences between the Stone Age and the Bronze Age. Other pupils know that the Vikings came from the area that became modern-day Scandinavia. However, there are inconsistencies in what some pupils can remember about their learning. Some pupils struggle to recall facts about different world faiths and beliefs.

Staff and pupils are passionate about books and reading. Leaders ensure that reading is a high priority in the school. They are determined that all pupils will become fluent and enthusiastic readers. There is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. Staff make sure that books are closely matched to the letters and sounds pupils are learning. Pupils use their phonic knowledge to sound out unfamiliar words. Staff check how well pupils learn new sounds. Staff provide pupils with extra phonics sessions if they fall behind.

Leaders have planned the mathematics curriculum carefully. It is set out so that pupils build their understanding and knowledge securely. Pupils understand, and use, mathematical vocabulary precisely. For example, they can explain that the product is the result of numbers being multiplied. Other pupils explain how to order numbers. They can give examples of number bonds to 20. Pupils say that knowing

their multiplication tables helps them with other work in mathematics. Teachers frequently check pupils' learning. They are quick to address misconceptions. Staff provide regular opportunities for pupils to recap their knowledge.

Leaders ensure that there is a sharp focus on developing children's communication and language in the early years. Children are confident in using vocabulary such as 'rectangle' and 'circle' when talking about shapes. Staff ask questions which deepen children's understanding. Relationships are very positive between children and adults in early years. Children have positive attitudes. They are respectful to staff and each other. Staff make sure that the learning environment is very engaging.

Staff provide strong support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have high expectations for pupils who attend the provision in the 'Treetops' classes. Pupils in these classes follow the same curriculum as their peers in the mainstream setting. Staff regularly check how successfully pupils access the curriculum. Leaders communicate well with parents. They work closely with external agencies when this is needed.

Leaders support pupils to be confident and resilient individuals. They help pupils to develop strength of character. Staff provide opportunities for pupils to be responsible. They enjoy making a positive contribution to the life of the school as school councillors. They like it when they are chosen to receive awards for high attendance at school. Pupils know that their views are valued. They know how to eat healthily and keep fit.

Leaders consider the well-being and workload of the staff. Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the professional support from the Northampton Primary Academy Trust. Governors, trustees and representatives of the trust know the school well. They understand the school's strengths and what could be better. Trustees fulfil their statutory responsibilities.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to learn how to stay safe, including when working online. Pupils say that they know who to go to if they have a concern. They know that staff will take their concerns seriously.

There is a strong culture of care at the school. Leaders provide support to vulnerable pupils. Staff pass on concerns promptly. Record-keeping is meticulous. Leaders ensure that they provide regular safeguarding training for staff, governors and trustees. They check that staff know how to spot pupils at risk. Governors and trustees regularly check the school's safeguarding procedures.

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

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

- Leaders have developed a coherently planned and well-sequenced curriculum. On occasions, there are inconsistencies in what pupils can recall about their learning in some subjects. Pupils do not reliably remember what they have been taught in all subjects. Leaders should ensure that all pupils, including those with SEND, know more and remember more of the school's curriculum thinking, including the curriculum for pupils' personal development.

## 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.

## 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>	146035
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241318
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	218
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Jeremy Stockdale
<b>Headteacher</b>	Becca Williams
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.blackthornprimary.net">www.blackthornprimary.net</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The school joined Northampton Primary Academy Trust in June 2018. When its predecessor school, Blackthorn Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be inadequate.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2019.
- The school has a special educational needs base for pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties (BESD).
- The school does not make use of any 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 leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, curriculum leaders, the leader with responsibility for provision for pupils with SEND, the leader with responsibility for the BESD provision, and teaching and support staff.
- One inspector met with representatives of the governing body and the trust.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and religious education. 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.
- The inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects.
- The inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documentation relating to attendance and behaviour.
- The lead inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead. The inspector considered the safeguarding policy, training records and examples of safeguarding concerns. Inspectors considered the responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, and the responses to Ofsted's free-text service. They also considered the responses to the staff survey and the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Damien Turrell, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Shazia Lydon

Ofsted Inspector

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