

# Inspection of a good school: Black Firs Primary School

Longdown Road, Congleton, Cheshire CW12 4QJ

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Inspection dates:

11 and 12 October 2022

## **Outcome**

Black Firs Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils love coming to the welcoming and nurturing environment of Black Firs Primary School. They said that everybody is made to feel welcome. Parents and carers speak highly of the school. They are appreciative of the approachable nature of school staff.

Pupils are helped to develop their personal qualities through the four school values of generosity, belonging, independence and mastery. Pupils are great friends to one another. Any concerns or worries that they may have, including those about bullying and name-calling, are dealt with quickly by teachers. This helps pupils to feel happy and safe in school.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and achievement. Pupils are polite and well mannered. They behave well and work hard. As a result, they achieve well. Pupils enjoy their positive actions being recognised and rewarded by teachers.

Leaders have ensured that pupils can access a wealth of extra-curricular activities. Pupils can foster their talents and interests through clubs such as rugby, netball, art and choir. They have numerous opportunities to take part in competitive sports. Pupils spoke with enthusiasm about their yearly residential trip to Conway. They explained how these trips help to develop their leadership and resilience skills.

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

Leaders have planned a broad and interesting curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Most curriculum leaders have ensured that their subject is designed to enable pupils to build on their previous learning, including their learning in the early years. In a few subjects, leaders' curriculum design is at an earlier stage of development. It is not as clear what knowledge or vocabulary should be taught. This hinders some pupils from building securely on what they already know.

In most subjects, pupils can confidently articulate their learning. For example, pupils spoke knowledgeably about how they have built on their mathematical knowledge in Year 3, to enable them to tackle a range of complex subtraction problems in Year 4.

Leaders have prioritised reading across the school. Children in the Nursery class join in with rhymes and songs to help develop their early language. This helps to prepare them well for learning the phonics curriculum as soon as they enter the Reception class. Well-trained staff ensure that this curriculum is delivered effectively, and as a result, younger pupils read with increasing fluency and accuracy. On occasion, pupils read books that do not match the sounds that they know. This slows down their progress in gaining a secure knowledge of phonics. Teachers read a wide range of high-quality books to pupils, to encourage pupils to explore new authors and different types of texts.

Pupils behave well throughout the school. Low-level disruption is rare. This means that pupils can learn without interruption. Children in the early years listen carefully to their teachers and maintain high levels of concentration. At breaktimes and lunchtimes, pupils play happily together. Older pupils look after their younger peers. They are kind and courteous to all of those around them.

Pupils have a strong understanding of other faiths and cultures. Teachers have ensured pupils know what constitutes a healthy relationship. Pupils can explain the importance of democracy and tolerance in society. Older pupils have recently learned how Rosa Park's experience helped many people begin to understand the negative impact of discrimination.

Staff quickly identify pupils with SEND. Effective systems are in place to help pupils with SEND receive the support that they need in school. Leaders can also access appropriate specialist support where required. Teachers know how to make appropriate adaptations to the delivery of lessons. This gives pupils with SEND full access to the curriculum. These actions are helping pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Governors and trustees are well informed about school performance. They use this knowledge to support and challenge leaders to further improve the school. The trust has provided staff with access to a well-being initiative. Staff are grateful for this, and the other actions taken, to improve their workload and well-being.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff receive regular safeguarding training. This enables them to identify any pupils who may be at risk of harm. Leaders encourage staff to report any safeguarding concerns quickly, no matter how small. Leaders take the necessary actions in a timely manner.

Teachers use the curriculum well to ensure pupils understand how to keep themselves safe. Pupils understand any risks in the local area, including water safety. Leaders ensure

that pupils recognise what is inappropriate online content, and to report to an adult if any is seen.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, leaders' curriculum design is at an early stage. This means that they have not identified the key knowledge or vocabulary that pupils should know and remember. This hinders pupils from building on what they know, and making links across their learning. Leaders should finalise their curriculum design so that teachers know what should be taught and when pupils should learn this content.
- The books that some pupils read do not match the sounds that they are learning. This stops pupils from building their phonics knowledge and reading fluently. Leaders should ensure that pupils at the earlier stages of reading read books that enable them to practise what they have learned.

## **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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged school to be good in November 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.

## **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>	140981
<b>Local authority</b>	Cheshire East
<b>Inspection number</b>	10226219
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	355
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	David Wootton
<b>Headteacher</b>	Martin Casserley
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.black-firs.co.uk">www.black-firs.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	19 April 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the deputy headteacher has retired and an assistant headteacher has been appointed.
- Black Firs Primary School is part of the Learning Alliance Trust.
- The board of trustees manage the before- and after-school provision.
- School leaders do not make any use of 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 with leaders and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, history and mathematics. This involved visiting lessons with subject leaders, discussing the subject curriculums, talking to pupils and teachers and looking at pupils' work. He also observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.

- The inspector held discussions with the leaders of other subjects.
- The inspector checked leaders' safeguarding procedures. He viewed a range of safeguarding documentation and discussed how incidents are managed and recorded.
- Pupils talked to the inspector about their views of their school. The inspector observed pupils' behaviour at playtimes, lunchtimes and during lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and three governors, including the chair of governors. The inspector also spoke with the chief executive officer of the trust and a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke to parents at the start of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View. He also reviewed the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff questionnaire.

### **Inspection team**

John Tomlinson, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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