

# Inspection of Bloxham Church of England Primary School

Tadmarton Road, Bloxham, Banbury, Oxfordshire OX15 4HP

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Inspection dates: 4 and 5 October 2022

## **Overall effectiveness**

## **Requires improvement**

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The quality of education

**Requires improvement**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Good**

Personal development

**Good**

Leadership and management

**Requires improvement**

Early years provision

**Requires improvement**

Previous inspection grade

Good

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

This is a caring school where pupils feel happy and are inspired to do their best. Pupils are proud to belong, polite and kind. Staff care for pupils very well and get to know them as individuals. Pupils feel part of a team that is focused on helping them to succeed and keeping them safe. There are warm and respectful relationships between pupils and staff.

Pupils behave well. They understand the school's rules and follow them. Pupils value the rewards systems and are proud to take on leadership roles, such as playtime buddies or sports reps. Playtimes are harmonious and social occasions. Pupils know how to respond should anyone say or do anything that makes them feel uncomfortable. Equally, they trust staff to resolve any worries they may have, including about bullying.

Pupils are committed to equality of all kinds. For example, they talked about the visiting inspirational speaker. This enabled them to think deeply about broadening horizons and the impact of discrimination. Pupils learn about different beliefs and traditions, including attitudes towards life, relationships and spirituality.

Learning is enriched by a wide range of engaging activities and experiences. Pupils appreciate and take part in a growing range of sporting and cultural activities on offer.

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

Pupils do not learn as much or as consistently as they should. Significant leadership turbulence, and a lack of trust within the team, has affected staff. There have been three different headteachers in the last 18 months, and a fourth headteacher is due in January 2023. This tension has contributed to staff struggling to deliver the consistently good quality of education pupils deserve. Leaders are determined to get it back on track and have the capacity to do so. Their ambitions are beginning to be realised, but much of the improvement work is at its earliest stages.

The underlying cause of these problems is inconsistent oversight. For example, governors have not held leaders to account for the quality of education. Despite their best intentions, governors have not been effective in getting to the heart of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The culture of the school has deteriorated and has been unchecked for some time. For example, governors have not always protected staff (including leaders) from bullying and harassment.

Leaders have not yet fully established a coherent and ambitious curriculum. Curriculum planning identifies what they want pupils to know by the end of the unit. However, the details of how this knowledge is introduced and developed over time to help pupils achieve these goals are not plainly set out, including in the early years. Consequently, not all teachers are clear enough about what important skills and knowledge pupils need to learn, and when. In some subjects, including in

English, planning is new. In the early years the curriculum is still being developed. Assessment is not always being used well enough by teachers to check pupils' understanding and inform what needs to be taught next.

Capable leadership of provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures that these pupils are being supported effectively. The inclusion manager ensures that their needs are carefully identified, and their progress tracked well. Staff work together using a range of strategies that help pupils with SEND to learn more successfully alongside their peers.

Leaders have made reading a priority. Staff teach early reading with precision. Effective training ensures that staff have expertise when teaching phonics. Staff ensure that beginner readers practise with books carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. This helps them develop fluency and confidence. For older pupils, teachers support pupils to deepen their understanding of the books they read, and to broaden their vocabulary. However, in the early years, children are not taught enough new words to acquire a wide vocabulary. There are missed opportunities for children to develop their language and strengthen their learning across the curriculum.

Leaders have identified that some pupils struggle to manage their behaviour. Where this is the case, they have taken care to identify pupils' particular needs and devise appropriate strategies. This starts successfully in the early years where staff help pupils understand their emotions and how these affect others. This means pupils take more responsibility for themselves and can refocus on learning.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy. The high-quality pastoral support, with particular emphasis on pupils' mental health, is helping pupils understand themselves better. Leaders are currently improving the personal, social and health education curriculum, with more emphasis given to teaching pupils about British values.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders work together as a team to keep pupils safe. All staff receive regular, effective safeguarding training. Consequently, adults in the school know how to spot the signs that might indicate potential harm to pupils. If they are worried about any pupil, they report it immediately. Leaders follow up on concerns promptly, including consulting with local safeguarding partners to ensure that pupils get the help that they need. Pupils feel safe in school and know adults will listen to them if they have a problem. They also learn about how to keep themselves safe outside of school, for example when online.

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

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

- Leaders and governors at the school have been out of step with each other for some time. Therefore, the governing body does not fulfil its core functions well enough. For example, governors do not hold leaders to account over the quality of education or have strong oversight of the school's strategic direction. A significant proportion of staff are dissatisfied with the way leaders take their well-being into account or are protected from bullying and harassment at all levels. Leaders, and those in positions of governance, need to re-establish effective professional relationships across the school quickly. Trust, respect and a positive school culture need to be rebuilt.
- Planning of the curriculum and training in its delivery are not precise enough. This means that teaching, including in the early years, does not always focus on what pupils need to know and remember. Leaders should ensure that curriculum plans are clear about what pupils need to know and the best order to learn it in. In addition, leaders should ensure that high-quality training supports teachers to implement these plans effectively.
- Assessment across several subjects, and in the early years, is not yet consistently in place. Teachers are therefore not always confident in knowing how secure pupils are in their understanding of key knowledge. Leaders should improve the effectiveness of assessment to ensure that pupils know and remember more across the school's curriculum.
- There is insufficient focus for children in the early years to develop their language. This means that children do not consistently learn enough new words to help them communicate and for future reading. Teachers require further training or support to design and sequence the key vocabulary they need children to know and practice across the school's curriculum.

## 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>	123098
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10227053
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	414
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Ian Broome
<b>Headteacher</b>	Johanna Donnellan (Interim Headteacher)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.bloxhamprimary.org">www.bloxhamprimary.org</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	8 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is currently led by an interim headteacher, who was appointed in June 2022. A substantive headteacher is due to take up post in January 2023.
- This school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2017.
- The school provides and manages a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently 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 that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the interim headteacher, deputy headteacher, phase leader and inclusion manager.

- The lead inspector met with two governors, including the chair of governors. The lead inspector held separate telephone calls with representatives from the local authority and Diocese of Oxford.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, physical education, geography and English. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed curriculum planning with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. The lead inspector also heard pupils read to a known adult.
- Inspectors checked a wide range of safeguarding documentation and school policies, including the single central record. They also reviewed the school's records regarding child protection and welfare of pupils.
- The lead inspector reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation, school improvement plan and relevant school policies.
- Inspectors took account of parents' responses to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire, along with their written comments. Inspectors also talked with parents on the morning and afternoon of the first day of inspection.
- Inspectors gathered pupils' views about their learning, what behaviour is like at the school and whether they felt safe. Inspectors also talked to pupils about their views on personal development and the wider school curriculum.
- Inspectors met with a range of staff to gather their views on how leaders support them, along with their written comments, and took account of the staff survey.

### **Inspection team**

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Claire Martin-O'Donoghue	Ofsted Inspector
Toby Martlew	Ofsted Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate  
Store Street  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
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