

Inspection of a good school: Blacko Primary School

Blacko Primary School, Gisburn Road, Blacko, Nelson, Lancashire BB9 6LS

Inspection date: 29 November 2022

Outcome

Blacko Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders, staff and pupils work closely to fulfil the school mission to be respectful, collaborative and ambitious. Pupils benefit from the wealth of opportunities that leaders provide. For example, older pupils enjoy a residential trip, where they take part in exciting activities such as canoeing and climbing. Pupils take on active roles in the school and the community. Sports leaders organise playtime equipment. Buddies take care of younger children. Pupils develop as caring, thoughtful citizens.

Leaders are determined that all pupils will achieve well, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils meet this ambition and learn successfully across a range of subjects. They are well prepared for their next stage in education.

Pupils are excited to arrive at school each morning. The school is like a family. All are welcome. Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and friendly. At playtimes, pupils play well together. They enjoy the many fun activities that staff provide. Pupils behave well in class.

Pupils feel safe in school. They know that they can speak to their teachers if they have any worries or concerns. Leaders take decisive action to ensure that should bullying occur, it will be dealt with promptly and appropriately.

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

Leaders have set out a broad, balanced and interesting curriculum which makes good use of the school's location. For example, in geography, pupils find out about features of the local area. In history, they learn what it was like to live in Pendle in the past.

In all subjects, leaders have identified the most important knowledge that pupils need to secure before moving on to new learning. The curriculum is carefully organised to enable

pupils to revisit and build on their learning as they progress through the school, starting in the Reception Year. For example, in geography, pupils develop their knowledge of locations in carefully ordered steps.

Teachers check how well pupils are remembering important knowledge. In lessons, staff ask questions to identify where pupils need more support. Teachers make sure that pupils do not move on to new work too quickly. In subjects other than mathematics and English, leaders have improved the checks that teachers make on how well pupils are learning the curriculum. These checks are at an early stage of implementation. This means that in some subjects, teachers do not know how well pupils are progressing.

The school has undergone considerable changes in staffing in the past year. Most teaching staff are new to the school. These new staff are being well supported by leaders from within school, and across the trust, to develop their knowledge of the curriculum. That said, at present, some new staff do not have a secure understanding of how pupils' learning builds from year to year.

Leaders have ensured that reading lies at the heart of the school's curriculum. Pupils enjoy reading and know that it is an important part of their learning. Leaders have identified a wide range of novels, texts and poetry that pupils will experience during their time at the school. The school's beautiful school library is well stocked and inviting. Pupil reading ambassadors help to choose new books for reading areas. Pupils develop as fluent readers. They read for pleasure.

Children begin learning phonics soon after starting in the Reception Year. Leaders provide regular training. This underpins the expertise that staff have in the teaching of phonics. Staff provide effective daily support for any pupils who need additional help in learning to read accurately and fluently. The books that pupils take home are matched closely to the sounds that they learn in class. This helps pupils to strengthen their learning through practice.

Leaders have strengthened systems to ensure that the needs of pupils with SEND are identified quickly and accurately. In each subject, leaders have considered how best to organise learning to ensure that pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their peers, where possible. Through a range of thoughtful support, staff help pupils with SEND to achieve well.

Pupils work hard in class. They listen carefully to their teachers and work together with cooperation. This means that everyone can get on with their learning. In the Reception Year, children move around the classroom sensibly and calmly. They help with caring for and tidying up equipment.

Leaders ensure that pupils develop personally. Pupils benefit from participating in a wide range of after-school clubs, including coding, art and different sports. They find out about the wider world, for example by visiting different places of worship. Pupils learn important social skills, such as what it is to be a good friend to others.

The trust provides wide-ranging and effective support and challenge to leaders. They ensure that staff benefit from frequent opportunities to visit other schools in the trust to work collaboratively and share expertise. This helps with school improvements, for example to the curriculum. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being when making decisions.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have regular safeguarding training. This helps to ensure that all are alert to possible signs of abuse. Staff report any concerns to leaders quickly. Safeguarding leaders follow the latest government guidance when dealing with any safeguarding concerns.

Leaders work closely with a range of external agencies to protect pupils, where needed. They ensure that pupils and their families get the support they need.

Through the curriculum, pupils find out about a range of situations which may lead to harm. For example, they learn about the dangers of drugs and alcohol and how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Most teaching staff are new to the school and are in the process of strengthening their knowledge of the subjects and key stages that they teach. They have had limited time to access subject-specific training in different areas of the curriculum. This means that teachers sometimes do not implement the curriculum as leaders intend. Leaders should ensure that they continue to develop and deepen teachers' understanding of the curriculum and ensure that it is taught as intended.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Blacko Primary School, to be good in January 2012.

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

Unique reference number	145816
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10256102
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	103
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Marie Burnham
Headteacher	Kate Richards
Website	www.blacko.lancs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 March 2017

Information about this school

- Blacko Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2018. When its predecessor school, Blacko Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.
- There have been significant changes in teaching staff in the last two terms.

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.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 observed pupils reading to a familiar adult. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about some other subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about school life, including behaviour.

- Inspectors held meetings with a range of staff, including with the headteacher and the school's special educational needs coordinator. They spoke with a member of the local governing committee, the deputy chief executive officer of the trust and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View. They spoke with parents at the start of the school day and considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff. There were no responses to the pupil survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation about safeguarding and spoke with staff to understand how they keep pupils safe. They reviewed the school's record of checks undertaken on newly appointed staff.
- Inspectors spoke with a range of staff to discuss leaders' support for them.

Inspection team

Elizabeth Stevens, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Kevan Naughton

Ofsted Inspector

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