

Inspection of a good school: Blackawton Primary School

Blackawton, Totnes, Devon TQ9 7BE

Inspection date:

28 March 2023

Outcome

Blackawton Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Blackawton Primary School are happy, safe and proud of their school. Leaders provide many roles of responsibility for pupils to contribute to the school. As an example, pupil reading leaders cherish the time they have to read to younger pupils. One pupil said, 'We enjoy reading to the younger ones and helping them to learn to read.'

Leaders have created a broad and ambitious curriculum that is carefully sequenced from Nursery through to key stage 2. All pupils follow the full curriculum, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils build their knowledge well.

Pupils are respectful to others. Staff build positive relationships with pupils. This helps to create a calm and orderly environment. Most pupils show positive attitudes to learning. They understand what bullying is and say that it rarely happens. Pupils are proud to be trained as anti-bullying representatives. Any concerns are resolved quickly.

Parents are supportive of the school. They speak highly of the regular opportunities leaders provide for pupils to learn outdoors. One parent said, 'We feel so grateful to be part of this wonderful, caring school community.'

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

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. The curriculum is designed well. Teachers are clear about the knowledge pupils need to learn to prepare them well for their next stage. The development of staff subject knowledge is a priority alongside the curriculum design. Leaders want all pupils to do their best. They identify pupils with SEND accurately. Pupils' needs are well known and understood. Teachers think carefully about how to adapt learning to enable all pupils to be successful.

In some subjects, such as mathematics, teachers use effective systems to check pupils' understanding. They identify any gaps in knowledge and support pupils to build their knowledge well. However, in other subjects, these gaps are not always known. As a result, pupils do not fully understand their learning, and they do not build their knowledge. For some pupils, this can weaken their attitudes to learning.

Children in the early years get off to a strong start. They are eager to take risks in their learning, which deepens their understanding. Staff support children to develop their vocabulary. Children show high levels of curiosity and independence. For example, they enjoyed finding the petals collected from a spring walk that had been frozen in ice.

Leaders prioritise teaching pupils to read. Pupils develop a love of reading. Teachers invest time in supporting the youngest children to enjoy stories. This includes staff modelling reading stories for parents. The early years curriculum is centred around high-quality texts. This continues throughout the school, as pupils take home a 'reading like a champion' book to enjoy with their family. As a result, pupils have a love of books and authors. Pupils are taught the knowledge they need to read well. Leaders provide regular phonics training for staff. Consequently, pupils read books that match the sounds they are learning. This helps pupils to practise their reading and grow in confidence. Staff identify pupils who fall behind and support them to catch up quickly.

Most pupils display positive attitudes to their learning. Pupils respond well to leaders' expectations for them to follow the school rules, 'be responsible, be respectful, be safe'. However, some staff do not have high enough expectations of pupils' behaviour. Some pupils do not follow instructions as well as they could. As a result, some learning time is lost.

Leaders prioritise the personal development of pupils. They have thought carefully about how to support character development and a sense of responsibility. Pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. They know that equality is important and believe everyone should be included. Pupils have a lived experience of democracy through standing in elections for the many roles available across the school. Pupils' knowledge of democracy has been supported further for Year 6 pupils who recently visited the Houses of Parliament. Pupils also enjoy the other trips and clubs on offer. This includes the local church, which the pupils visit weekly.

Leaders at all levels know the school well. Staff value being part of the trust and the support provided on many levels. The trust's commitment to supporting staff well-being is realised. Staff are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff and governors receive regular training to understand their safeguarding responsibilities. Leaders make the appropriate checks on adults before they join the

school. Staff are confident to report any concerns about pupils. Leaders take all concerns seriously. They put support in place quickly for families who need it.

Pupils feel safe and know how to seek support if they have a problem. They value the support of their 'trusted adults' in school. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of risk. This includes knowing how to keep safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff expectations of pupils' behaviour are not always high enough. As a result, some pupils do not behave as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that staff have equally high expectations for behaviour.
- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to check pupils' understanding. Subsequent learning does not always build on what pupils know and can do. Leaders need to ensure that assessment is rigorous across the curriculum. This will help teachers to adapt learning based on pupils' prior knowledge.

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 the predecessor school, Blackawton Primary School, to be good in June 2010.

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	141284
Local authority	Devon
Inspection number	10227163
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	159
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Kellie Knott
Headteacher	Liam Fielding
Website	www.blackawtonprimary.org.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, there has been a change in headteacher. The headteacher joined the school in September 2022.
- Leaders use one unregistered alternative provision.
- This school is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The nursery includes provision for two-, three- and four-year olds.

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 physical 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.

- Inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils, governors and representatives from the trust.
- An inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- To evaluate safeguarding, inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding leader, staff, governors and pupils, and evaluated record-keeping and staff training.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and comments made by parents online during the inspection. They also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff questionnaire. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Matthew Shirley

Ofsted Inspector

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