

Inspection of The Bliss Charity School

The Green, Nether Heyford, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN7 3LE

Inspection dates: 1 and 2 November 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Bliss is a friendly and nurturing village school. Most parents and carers hold the school in high regard. One parent reflected the views of many parents and carers when they said: 'My children love going to Bliss. It is a very important part of our local community.'

Pupils learn to be 'good friends'. They know staff care about them. They trust that their worries or concerns will be resolved, no matter how small their concerns may be. However, many systems for the development of the school's curriculum and behaviour are new. Some of these are not yet fully embedded.

Most pupils listen well in lessons. They are polite and considerate. The school's 'Respect Tree' reminds pupils to be courteous and kind to all. Older pupils are proud of their roles as 'buddies' for their younger peers. They enjoy playing games with each other during shared social times. This helps to create a calm and purposeful school day. Pupils who need additional support to regulate their emotions are well supported. They are thankful for all the support they receive.

Teachers carefully select stories to help pupils learn more about wider, modern British society. Pupils celebrate diversity. They learn to rejoice in the things that unite communities.

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

The school is reviewing many of its systems, procedures and routines. This includes implementing new approaches for pupil behaviour and the school's curriculum. The pace and quality of these changes reflects the school's ambition for all pupils to receive the best possible education. Some of this work is not yet complete.

The school has made significant changes to its curriculum. All subjects precisely identify what pupils must know and remember in a clear and logical order. The school continues to refine this curriculum. For example, it is ensuring that the key knowledge that children in early years should know links closely to Year 1.

In some subjects, teachers are in the early stages of delivering the new curriculum. There are signs that the curriculum is beginning to have a positive impact on pupils' knowledge. For example, in physical education (PE), pupils can recall what makes an effective roll or jump.

Most lessons start with pupils recalling knowledge from previous lessons. Teachers use questions to help pupils make links and deepen their understanding. However, this is not yet consistent in all subjects. Sometimes, adults do not give clear explanations. Occasionally, the checks adults make on pupils' learning are not precise enough. This slows the learning in some lessons.

Pupils love to share and read a wide variety of books. For example, in assembly, pupils reflect on stories that celebrate disabilities. Pupils delight in performing in 'poetry jams' alongside their parents. Staff receive regular training to develop their knowledge and expertise in early reading. Pupils who need additional support receive daily help. This support is precise. It focuses on the specific aspects of reading that pupils find tricky. This has improved outcomes in reading.

Expectations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are high. They access the same curriculum as their peers. They receive the right equipment to help them with their learning. The school continues to strengthen its procedures for communicating with families of pupils with SEND. It is also reviewing how SEND support documents help staff to meet the needs of these pupils.

Most pupils attend well. This ensures that pupils learn more of the school's curriculum. Where pupils need help with attendance or punctuality, leaders provide tailored support.

Strong relationships are formed in the early years. Children use their learning environment with confidence. They make links to the stories they share in their own independent learning. For example, while painting, children chatted about animal habitats after sharing a Percy the Park Keeper story. Children get off to a good start in early reading and mathematics because what they must know and remember is precisely outlined. Other areas of the early years curriculum are in a period of refinement.

The school promotes pupils' broader personal development well. Where pupils do not access this provision, leaders act quickly to rectify it. Pupils learn to play instruments, perform in choirs and take part in sports events. They learn to grow a variety of plants, know more about the natural world and have moments of reflection in outdoor learning lessons.

Governors have a clear understanding of what is working well in the school and what needs further development. Staff speak highly of the support and training they receive. They are proud to be associated with this school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some recently introduced systems, practices and procedures are not fully implemented. This means the school's new, ambitious vision is not yet fully realised. The school must ensure that recent developments in the curriculum,

SEND, behaviour and the early years are consistently implemented across the school so that outcomes for all pupils continue to improve.

- Occasionally, checks on pupils' learning and understanding are not precise enough. In these lessons, staff do not have an accurate understanding of what pupils know and can recall. Teachers' questioning and explanations are not reliably precise. This slows down learning. The school must ensure that all adults in school use the agreed approaches to assessment so that pupils can know and recall more of 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](#)' is used to mean pupils with SEND; pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	122048
Local authority	West Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10268906
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	186
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sherry Hornagold-Prosser
Headteacher	Laura White
Website	www.bliss.northants.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant leadership changes. The headteacher was appointed in September 2022. There has also been changes in the local governing body, including a new chair of governors.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors reviewed the single central record took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils and

considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and other senior leaders, groups of staff, and pupils. They met with the chair and members of the local governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading, mathematics, PE and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, looked at samples of work and spoke to pupils about their learning. The lead inspector listened to pupils read to an adult. Inspectors also spoke to leaders about curriculum development in other subjects, including history.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, during social times and around the school site throughout the school day.
- The lead inspector met with the local governing body and held a telephone conversation with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke to parents on site. They also considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View and the staff survey.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including school improvement plans, local authority reports and minutes of the local governing body.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Ryan Brown	Ofsted Inspector

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