

Inspection of a good school: Blackshaw Moor CofE First School

Buxton Road, Blackshaw Moor, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 8TW

Inspection date: 7 December 2023

Outcome

Blackshaw Moor CofE First School continues to be a good school.

The headteacher of this school is Samantha Crawforth. This school is part of Talentum Learning Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the senior executive leader, Ian Wilson, and overseen by a board of trustees chaired by Patricia Fisher.

What is it like to attend this school?

Blackshaw Moor CofE First School is a small school with a big ambition for its pupils. Inspirational staff, supportive parents and carers, and special pupils come together in a caring and nurturing environment. Values of courage, trust, compassion, friendship, truthfulness and respect are more than just words at Blackshaw Moor; they are what guides this community each day.

Expectations for what pupils will learn while at Blackshaw Moor are high. Teachers know pupils well and work hard to ensure that lessons and experiences enrich their lives. Pupils learn well. Most quickly acquire and understand the important knowledge they need.

A strong Christian ethos underpins relationships across the school. Staff are attentive and responsive to pupils when they need help. Pupils respond in kind and take care of each other. Pupils told inspectors that 'Everyone lives by our school values, they really do.' Consequently, behaviour is positive in lessons and at all other times.

Every moment matters at Blackshaw Moor. An exciting range of school clubs, such as cooking, computing or young farmers, enrich experiences. Trips to the seaside or the zoo develop pupils' understanding of the world. School and worship councils and ambassador roles foster a sense of responsibility.

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

The school has very high expectations for what pupils should learn and when. Staff work together across all subjects to plan for pupils to learn and remember more over time. In all subjects, the curriculum maps out what pupils need to learn within and across year

groups. The curriculum is well ordered, which enables pupils to build their level of understanding from Nursery to Year 4.

Teachers work hard to ensure that learning builds on what pupils already know and can do in lessons. For example, inspectors saw teachers encouraging pupils to quickly recall number facts or complete mental calculations. Most lessons are precisely adapted to what pupils already know. However, at times, the work is not well matched to what some pupils have previously achieved. This makes learning harder for those pupils.

Reading, quite rightly, holds a very high profile. From the moment children start in nursery, they learn to recognise sounds in words. Inspectors saw some nursery children learning to count syllables in words by feeling how their chin moves when they say words. As they get older, most pupils are taught to understand more complex words and have opportunities to talk about what they have read. However, for some pupils, reading is too focused on decoding words rather than also understanding new words and what they have read.

The school is as ambitious for its pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) as it is for all pupils. Staff quickly spot when those pupils need more help or support. For pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs, staff have worked with services such as educational psychology to understand the pupil's needs. This means that the support is precisely matched to what the pupil needs. However, for some other pupils, there is not a clear enough assessment of their needs. This means that the resulting provision does not overcome barriers to learning quickly enough.

Pupils are excited and happy to be at Blackshaw Moor. They are eager to come to school in the morning. When attendance for some pupils drops, the school works with families to overcome why the pupil is not attending as much as they should. Consequently, attendance is high across the school. This school radiates warmth and care for others. At lunchtime, some pupils brought an inspector a drink because they thought he 'looked thirsty'. This is just one of many acts of kindness witnessed by inspectors.

The school wants the pupils' time at Blackshaw Moor to be enriching and exciting. Planned diversity days develop an understanding of different faiths around the world. Charity plays a considerable part in the pupils' lives. Macmillan Cancer Support and Christian Aid are just two examples of organisations that have benefited from the pupils' work. During the inspection, the pupils were enjoying their own Christmas fair, where the older pupils organised stands and games for the younger pupils to spend their money on buying things and winning prizes.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They value the support and guidance they receive to do their best for pupils. Parents are equally positive. One parent who replied to the Ofsted free-text service reflected the views of many others by saying that this is 'a fabulous little school with warm, approachable staff who do everything they can to nurture each child.'

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils are not routinely taught to understand new vocabulary in their reading and given opportunities to talk about what they have read. This slows their development into confident, fluent readers who love reading. The school needs to ensure that all pupils are provided with consistent opportunities to learn the meaning of new vocabulary in their books and to discuss and answer questions about what they read.
- In some lessons, the curriculum does not precisely match what some pupils know and can already do. This makes learning harder as they do not have the prior knowledge and need to access the current learning. The school needs to ensure that the curriculum is precisely adapted to what the pupils already know, can do and remember from previous lessons in order to enable them to make the best possible progress over time
- For some pupils, there is not yet a clear enough understanding of the precise nature of their special educational needs and/or disabilities. This, in turn, means that the provision to meet those needs is not focused precisely on what they need to overcome potential learning barriers. The school needs to ensure that they continue to refine their systems for assessment of SEND so that all staff have a clear understanding of the needs of the pupils and what provision should be put in place.

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 to be good in October 2014.

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 special educational needs and/or disabilities (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	147103
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10294654
Type of school	First
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 9
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	71
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Patricia Fisher
Headteacher	Samantha Crawforth
Website	https://bms.ttlit.org.uk/
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- At the previous inspection on 18 September 2018, the predecessor school, Blackshaw Moor CofE (VC) First School, was judged to be good. Blackshaw Moor CofE First School converted to become an academy in October 2019. It is part of The Talentum Learning Trust, a multi-academy trust.
- The school operate its own before- and after-school provision called Super Stars Kids Club.
- The school does not use any form of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- 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.

- During the inspection, inspectors completed deep dives in the following subjects: reading, mathematics and art. In these subjects, they visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, and talked with pupils and staff about how these subjects were taught. Inspectors also looked at other subjects in less detail to check how they were planned and taught.
- Inspectors observed informal times to evaluate safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- During the inspection, the inspectors had formal meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, subject teachers, governors, a trustee and pupils. They also talked informally with parents, pupils and staff to gather general information about school life.
- An inspector also spoke with representatives of the multi-academy trust.

Inspection team

Chris Pollitt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Adam Montague-Clewes

Ofsted Inspector

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