

Inspection of Blackwell First School

St Catherine's Road, Blackwell, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire B60 1BN

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 December 2023

| | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|
| Overall effectiveness | Good |
| The quality of education | Good |
| Behaviour and attitudes | Outstanding |
| Personal development | Outstanding |
| Leadership and management | Outstanding |
| Early years provision | Outstanding |
| Previous inspection grade | Outstanding |

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils attend this warm, caring and nurturing school eagerly. They are keen to learn, and the excellent behaviour of all pupils means they can do so without interruption. They behave exceptionally well in lessons, when moving around the immaculately kept buildings and at playtimes. The school has developed an atmosphere where all pupils show a huge level of respect for each other. This is modelled for them by the committed, kind and dedicated staff.

Pupils say they feel safe in school. This is because the school has ensured this important aspect is a high priority. From the very beginning, pupils settle very quickly in an environment where everyone is included and valued. Pupils talk about the importance of being kind and supporting others if they feel lonely or have nobody to play with. The 'friendship bench' helps them to do this well.

The school has high expectations that all pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly and work to the best of their ability. This high ambition is realised particularly well in reading, writing and mathematics. This begins in the early years where children get off to an excellent start in a highly stimulating setting.

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

The school prioritises early reading. Staff are expert teachers of phonics. The school ensures that everyone who delivers the phonics programme is well trained. This ensures that the phonics sessions are of a high quality. The consistency of approach supports pupils to apply strategies they have been taught to reading new books and to decoding unknown words. Books that match pupils' phonics ability also support this. The vast majority of pupils are able to cope with the pace of the programme. Pupils who need extra support are identified quickly. Skilful teaching to address pupils' individual gaps in learning is effective in helping these pupils keep up with their peers.

Pupils also achieve very well in writing and mathematics. They take great pride in their work, and books are presented to a very high standard. In mathematics, careful consideration has been given to what pupils will learn and when. Prior learning is revisited regularly. This allows pupils to remember important facts and calculations that enable them to answer more complex mathematical problems. The support for pupils with SEND in these subjects is of a very high quality. The school dog, Hetty, and the guinea pigs, Gordon and Fluff, complement the offer for these pupils and all pupils. However, the school does not provide enough opportunities for pupils to learn some subjects in sufficient depth. In these subjects, the sophisticated approach to curriculum design evidenced in other subject areas is not of the same quality. This includes how well key knowledge has been identified and how pupils revisit this to check for understanding.

The school provides an exceptional personal development offer for pupils. They learn that it is never acceptable to treat people differently because of how they look, what they believe or difficulties they might face. The school has a very secure understanding of the pupils' personal context. It uses this to plan opportunities for pupils to learn about the wider world beyond the school gate. Pupils benefit from a wide range of enrichment opportunities, including sewing, art, recorder, sports and film clubs. The school also teaches pupils how to be safe in their community and when online. Pupils apply for jobs in school, based on recognising which skills they have to carry out these jobs well. They receive 'Blackwell pounds' that they can use to spend how they wish. Responsibilities such as running the school tuck shop further prepare pupils for life when they are older. Pupils learn to develop independence in a variety of ways. This begins in the stunning early years environment where pupils can easily access the many resources in the class and learn to put them away independently. The level of concentration children demonstrate towards their learning is impressive. It prepares them very well for their next stage of education.

The school is held in extremely high regard in the community. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the education, care and offer their children receive. Leaders place a high priority on continued staff training and staff well-being. All staff in school are highly appreciative of this. It is praiseworthy. Governors are extremely dedicated and highly passionate about the work of the school. However, while pupils are taught all national curriculum subjects, governors have not ensured that pupils study the whole curriculum in sufficient depth to enable them to have a secure and deep understanding of the key knowledge within the subjects.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn some subjects in the wider curriculum in enough depth. This means that pupils do not develop their knowledge and skills in some of the foundation subjects well enough. The school should ensure that pupils have opportunities to learn all areas of the curriculum in sufficient detail.
- In a few subjects, the school has not identified the key knowledge and skills to be taught and when. In these subjects, pupils do not build on their learning over time. The school should ensure that the knowledge and skills pupils should learn and the sequence in which they are taught them are clearly identified to enable pupils' progression of learning in these subjects.

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 | 116665 |
| Local authority | Worcestershire |
| Inspection number | 10267909 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 5 to 9 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 152 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair of governing body | Isabel Welch |
| Headteacher | Anna Moss |
| Website | www.blackwellfirstschool.com |
| Dates of previous inspection | 26 and 27 January 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. |

Information about this school

- This is a smaller-than-average primary school.
- The school runs a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school does not make use of 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and design, and music. 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 also looked at samples of pupils' work in a range of subjects, including English, history, science, geography, and design and technology.
- The lead inspector spoke with eight governors, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector spoke on the telephone with a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons at different times of the day and at breaktimes and lunchtimes. They spoke formally with groups of pupils, as well as talking to pupils in lessons and around school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: 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.
- The lead inspector reviewed a wide range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans and information on the school's website.
- Inspectors talked informally with pupils and staff to gather general information about school life. In addition, they took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's and parents' views. Pupil surveys were not shared, so these could not be considered.

Inspection team

Keri Baylis, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Mark Gilbert

Ofsted inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2023