

# Inspection of a good school: St Blaise C of E Primary School

School Lane, Milton Heights, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4DR

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Inspection date: 24 April 2024

## **Outcome**

St Blaise C of E Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

The school has a clear vision for being at the heart of the growing community. It is a safe, happy and inclusive place. The school values are at the centre of everything that takes place: reflecting, love, respect, creativity, determination, confidence and kindness. Staff have high expectations and pupils achieve well. Displays in the classrooms and around the school celebrate pupils' learning across the curriculum. Pupils value the warm and trusting relationships that they have with staff. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere.

Right from the Reception Year, pupils are cheerful and inquisitive learners. The school sets high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils are thoughtful and respectful towards each other. They know there is always someone to talk to if they have any worries. Pupils enjoy and have fun playing a wide variety of activities at breaktimes.

The school provides a wealth of opportunities for pupils, helping them become well-rounded individuals and citizens. These include residential trips, visiting the onsite science garden, visits to a wildlife park and supporting charities. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. One parent's comment, typical of many, was 'great school and committed staff, with happy and thriving children'.

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

The school has an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum. Children in Reception get off to a strong start that continues throughout the school. Pupils flourish because of the high level of support, clear boundaries and the nurturing environment. Pupils are enthusiastic about their learning and determined to do their best. Teachers select activities carefully that help pupils to develop their skills and knowledge. For example, children in Reception appreciate the work of Matisse. They carefully design and make snail collages based on his famous collage, 'The Snail'.

Staff have secure subject knowledge. They use it carefully to present information clearly so pupils can relate learning to what they already know. Staff check routinely how well

pupils have understood the learning. This allows adults to adapt learning to make sure that all pupils understand. Pupils are motivated and keen to participate in lessons. They are proud and talk enthusiastically about their learning. The school strives for continuous improvement, evaluating the curriculum routinely and making careful adaptations where appropriate. Staff are working together to refine curriculum thinking in a few subjects. In these subjects, staff are identifying precisely the important knowledge that pupils should commit to their long-term memory. They are also finding out the most effective ways to use assessment to check pupils' understanding.

The school acts decisively to identify pupils' special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This enables adults to ensure the correct support is in place. Staff make careful and effective adaptations to how the curriculum is taught, so that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their classmates. The school liaises closely with external professionals where appropriate, so pupils receive the right support for particular needs.

The teaching of reading is a key priority so that pupils develop a love for reading. There is a consistent and effective approach to the teaching of phonics. Any gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified quickly. Those who require it receive timely and appropriate support that helps them to catch up. The activities to promote reading are well chosen. These include adults reading to pupils, older pupils sharing texts with younger ones, and celebrating National Book Day.

Pupils are supported effectively to develop beyond their academic learning. They gain an age-appropriate understanding of healthy relationships. Pupils learn about diversity, equality and tolerance. This learning is linked to the promotion of the school's values. Staff encourage pupils to be respectful of differences. This includes teaching pupils how to offer alternative viewpoints. They do so maturely and with the correct language. The school provides a range of activities, along with after-school clubs, to help pupils develop their interests and talents. They learn about reducing risk in situations such as those involving water and being online, as well as bike safety and personal safety. Through the curriculum, they learn about living in modern day Britain. For example, they deepen their understanding of democracy by inviting politicians to talk to them in school.

The school makes attendance a high priority. Staff monitor attendance closely, identifying patterns in absence quickly and taking effective action to address them. Those responsible for governance are passionate about the school. They have an accurate oversight of the strengths and areas for development. Staff appreciate how the school considers their well-being and workload. They value the support given by the school to help them to concentrate most on teaching effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## What does the school need to do to improve?

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum in a few subjects needs refining. In these subjects, the important knowledge that the school expects pupils to know is less precisely defined. The school should ensure it understands the important content that pupils should know. It should check how well pupils have remembered the essential knowledge and use this information to support future teaching.

## 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 school to be good in October 2018.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	123178
<b>Local authority</b>	Oxfordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321871
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	140
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Linda Shatford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ruth Leach
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.st-blaise.oxon.sch.uk">www.st-blaise.oxon.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	16 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not currently use alternative providers.
- Since the last inspection the school has undergone additional building work to accommodate more pupils.
- The school is part of the Church of England Diocese of Oxford. The school's last section 48 inspection was carried out in January 2018.

## 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.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, staff and pupils. The lead inspector also met with representatives of the governing body.

- The lead inspector spoke with a representative from the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors met with a range of pupils to discuss their views about the school and talked to pupils during playtimes and in lessons.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and art. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, including parents' free-text comments, were considered. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; evaluated safer recruitment practices; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; met with the designated safeguarding lead; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.

### **Inspection team**

Darren Aisthorpe, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Andy Yeoman

Ofsted Inspector

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