

# Inspection of Blakesley Church of England Primary School

Blakesley Ce Primary School, The Green, Blakesley, Towcester, Northamptonshire  
NN12 8RD

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Inspection dates: 11 and 12 June 2024

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

The interim headteacher of this school is Barbara O'Brien. This school is part of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Ruth Walker-Green, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Margaret Holman.

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

Pupils love coming to this happy village school, where they feel safe and secure. This is reflected in the school's high attendance rates. Pupils say the school is 'like a big family'. Parents and carers are equally positive. One parent typically described the school as 'a gem of the local community'.

Pupils can explain the school's values of courage, compassion, thankfulness, fellowship and wisdom, and they strive to uphold them. They are well mannered and courteous to adults and visitors. Pupils trust adults to listen to them and help them when needed.

Pupils are enthusiastic about learning. Most pupils listen well and sustain their concentration in lessons. Staff model the kindness and respect that they expect pupils to show. Staff are determined that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), receive the support they need to thrive and achieve well.

Staff recognise and celebrate pupils' hard work and good behaviour. Pupils enjoy receiving 'praise cards' for individual achievements and collecting 'values tokens' towards class treats.

Parents praise the education and care their children receive. A typical comment was: 'This school embodies kindness and care, with staff who consistently go above and beyond. We couldn't be more grateful for the nurturing environment the staff have created.'

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

The school has introduced a curriculum that is broad, ambitious and well planned. It builds pupils' knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Staff use activities consistently well to help pupils recall prior learning. Pupils appreciate this help. For example, one pupil explained that starter activities in mathematics, 'help us to get our brain ready and remember what we have already done'.

Teachers have a good understanding of how to teach well. They have particularly strong subject knowledge in English and mathematics. They model learning effectively to help pupils understand what is being taught. Teachers assess pupils' knowledge and understanding well in some subjects. They typically identify when pupils might have misconceptions or gaps in their knowledge and use this information to inform future planning. However, checks of pupils' knowledge and understanding are not used consistently well in some subjects. These checks do not always highlight when pupils need to revisit part of the curriculum to secure their learning.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Staff know individual pupils well. Pupils with SEND are identified promptly. They are well supported in lessons that are adapted to ensure that these pupils get help that is linked precisely to their needs.

Reading is prioritised at this school. Children begin to learn to read as soon as they start in the early years. Pupils enjoy learning new sounds to help them to read successfully. They read books that match their ability. As a result, they develop into confident readers. The school provides high-quality support for any pupil who is struggling so that they can catch up quickly. Pupils love to read. They speak enthusiastically about being a 'reading buddy' for other pupils. The school's 'Books at Blakesley' display identifies books that demonstrate the school's values and explore diversity. This helps pupils to broaden their understanding of the wider world.

Children get off to an exceptionally strong start in the Nursery Year and the Reception class. They learn in an environment that inspires their curiosity. Stimulating and precisely planned activities help children understand and practise new skills and vocabulary. For example, children enjoyed building a den outside and discussing how to include camouflage and a hidden entrance. Staff's high levels of interaction and care mean that children are challenged and expertly supported. Children immerse themselves fully in learning. They concentrate on tasks independently. Children are being well prepared for the next stage of their education.

There is a well-planned personal, social and health education programme. Pupils learn about relationships and keeping themselves safe. The school makes sure that pupils learn how to be a good citizen. It is passionate about giving pupils experiences in and out of school, such as trips to the Tower of London, residentials and zoo visits. Pupils develop their character by focusing on the school values. They recognise that everyone is unique and that this is something to be celebrated. One pupil explained that: 'Everyone is different, which is a good thing!'

Staff feel supported with their workload and well-being. They are proud to be part of the school team. They spoke about being 'a strong set of people, supported within school. We look after each other and look out for each other'.

Governors and trustees provide the school with strong support. They know the school's strengths and areas to develop well. They make sure that the school has what it needs to keep improving.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- Some aspects of the curriculum need further refinement. Teachers' use of assessment does not consistently identify gaps and misconceptions in pupils' knowledge. As a result, pupils do not always progress through the curriculum as well as they should. The school must ensure that the curriculum is delivered consistently well in each subject and that checks of pupils' learning are always effective in identifying gaps in knowledge.

## 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

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| <b>Unique reference number</b>             | 145091   |
| <b>Local authority</b>                     | West Northamptonshire  |
| <b>Inspection number</b>                   | 10240861   |
| <b>Type of school</b>                      | Primary  |
| <b>School category</b>                     | Academy converter  |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>                 | 4 to 11  |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>                    | Mixed  |
| <b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b> | 104  |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>               | Board of trustees  |
| <b>Chair of trust</b>                      | Margaret Holman  |
| <b>CEO of the trust</b>                    | Ruth Walker-Green  |
| <b>Headteacher</b>                         | Barbara O'Brien (Interim headteacher)  |
| <b>Website</b>                             | <a href="http://www.blakesleyprimary.org.uk">www.blakesleyprimary.org.uk</a> |
| <b>Date of previous inspection</b>         | 23 November 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005                  |

## Information about this school

- The school is part of the Peterborough Diocese Education Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- Blakesley Church of England Primary School is a Church of England faith school. It was last inspected for its religious character under section 48 of the Education Act 2005 on 4 May 2017.

## 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.
- The inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the interim headteacher, other school leaders and representatives of the trust.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to groups of pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. An inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a member of staff. Inspectors also looked at curriculum plans and samples of pupils' work for art, design technology and French.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site during playtime.
- The inspectors spoke with groups of pupils and staff. An inspector considered the responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, as well as Ofsted's survey for staff.
- 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' interest first.

### **Inspection team**

Dawn Ashbolt, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Julie Hodgson

Ofsted Inspector

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