

# Blue Coat Church Of England Aided Junior School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104230
<b>Local Authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	336262
<b>Inspection dates</b>	21–22 September 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rodney Braithwaite

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	325
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Margaret Tonks
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jacqueline Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 July 2007
<b>School address</b>	Springhill Road Walsall WS1 2LP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 26 lessons and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at documentation relating to self-evaluation, data on pupils' progress, school improvement planning and the safeguarding of pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- the attainment and progress of pupils in the last three years, including the present year, and its consistency across the school with a particular focus on mathematics
- the effectiveness of provision in the school for the needs of pupils with English as an additional language, and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities
- the effectiveness of middle managers and the governing body in the leadership and management of the school and how this contributes to the school's sustained capacity to improve
- the effectiveness of the school's provision for the safeguarding of its pupils

## Information about the school

Blue Coat Church Of England Aided Junior School is bigger than most junior schools. The great majority of pupils come from minority ethnic groups, the largest being those from Pakistani heritage. Many pupils joining the school are at the early stages of learning English or have recently entered the country. Almost half the pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, the majority of whom have moderate learning difficulties, is slightly below average. A much higher than average number of pupils either leave or join the school other than at the start and finish of the school year. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. Staffing during the last two years has become much more stable than in previous years with low staff turnover and absence.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school. It has a strong capacity to sustain its improvement. For example, the school has to overcome many barriers to learning, such as the large number of pupils whose first language is not English and the high number of pupils who enter the school at different times of the school year. It succeeds in deploying its resources very effectively to ensure that the needs of all its pupils are very well provided for.

Consequently, those pupils with English as an additional language make good and sometimes outstanding progress. Also, all groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress in most areas of their learning. An exception is the progress made by girls in mathematics which the school realises it needs to improve.

Progress in the last two years in English has been particularly good throughout the school but has been satisfactory in mathematics. Although attainment in mathematics has improved since 2007, the school knows that this remains an area for further improvement so that it comes in line with the good progress made in many other areas of the curriculum. The school has identified that many girls require more opportunities to practice their problem solving in mathematics.

Good assessment procedures for tracking the progress of pupils over time are in place. However, the information is not always fully understood by adults or interpreted sufficiently accurately in order for them to consistently plan work to accelerate pupils' learning.

The school has many strengths, the greatest being the attitudes to learning of its pupils. They show obvious enjoyment in their daily lives, appreciate how safe and well cared for they are, and express great joy in their learning. 'This is an amazing school...you will really love it here,' said one pupil. Care for pupils with particular difficulties is sometimes outstanding because the school is skilled at using partnerships and social support to provide for their needs. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is another strength. This is reflected in the feeling of the school as one single, happy community consisting of many different faiths and cultures. The provision for religious education is an outstanding feature. Behaviour is good. On occasion though, a small number of pupils can be disruptive which upsets their peers. The school has continued to introduce strategies to deal effectively with this.

The school has good leadership through the headteacher who has led staff through turbulent times and has created a highly effective school team. The team of teaching staff has now been stable for some time. They monitor and evaluate the work of the school well and share the same ambition for continual improvement. This is amply

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demonstrated in the teaching which is now good, and occasionally outstanding, throughout the school. School leadership has been strengthened by the rapid development of a middle management team. The governing body also offers continual challenge to the school, especially on the identified areas for improvement. The school has a broad and interesting curriculum, supplemented by many extra-curricular activities, which has led to pupils reaching good standards in music, art and physical education. Over the last two years, the school has become a vibrant centre of the community providing a safe and exciting education for its pupils. It has demonstrated the ambition and determination to get even better.

**What does the school need to do to improve further?**

- Continue to raise attainment in mathematics so that progress is similar to that shown by pupils in English by:
- improving the skills and understanding of pupils in problem solving
- ensuring that all pupils are moving at the rate of which they are capable
- introducing more effective strategies to improve the attainment of girls, based upon a better understanding of why they make less progress than other groups.
- Sharpen the accuracy of the analysis and use of assessment data tracking the progress of pupils by:
- encouraging a better understanding by staff of progress tracking data from pupils' starting points
- analysing the outcomes of assessment to accurately inform plans for learning
- ensuring that there is consistency in all classes in matching activities to pupils' learning needs.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****2**

During the inspection, pupils were very responsive to stimulating teaching which was good in over three quarters of lessons and outstanding on two occasions. Pupils' learning was most successful when teachers showed exemplary subject knowledge and used a range of strategies to make learning enjoyable and fun. As a result, pupils responded well to questioning, worked at a good pace, cooperated with each other in teams and groups, and took pride in their work. For example, in a lesson in Year 5, the teacher's questioning about a speech by Martin Luther King made pupils think and answer very seriously about the history of slavery. Their obvious enjoyment is reflected in the good progress that they make in their learning, and this includes those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. At all times pupils' attitudes to learning were good and their behaviour was commendable. Work in their books over the last year was well presented and marking was accurate and helpful in guiding pupils to improvement. Just occasionally, pupils were working at levels which did not reflect their needs.

The school has focused successfully in the last two years on raising the attainment and progress of all pupil groups. This has been most marked in English where attainment in

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the national tests is higher than the national average and pupils make very good progress in their learning. This signals a high level of achievement as many pupils have low starting points with a significant number having little knowledge of English when they enter school across all year groups. In mathematics, the trend is upward although attainment still remains broadly average. Some pupils make good progress, although the majority make satisfactory progress. Girls' attainment is below that of boys and the school is looking at new strategies to identify the impact of the teaching of problem solving. Leaders realise that there is still more to be done, especially in using assessment data to drive improvement. Attainment and progress in several other subjects observed are good.

Very good, happy relationships exist throughout the school. This is especially so between staff and pupils. Staff show great consideration and care for pupils, almost all of whom think 'they do a good job'. Pupils are respectful and polite and generally get on well with each other. Their responses to the questionnaires reflect that a few have concerns about bullying, although all were clear that the school deals quickly with this and any other unacceptable behaviour. Pupils feel very safe in school. 'The teachers keep us safe,' said one and pupils can identify many adults on the staff who would help them in times of personal difficulty. Pupils know and understand the benefits of having good health and fitness, although admit that they do not always choose to eat healthy foods. Many enjoy their regular physical education and participate enthusiastically in sports clubs in spite of the lack of a school field. Pupils enjoy responsibilities and are beginning to develop their role as school councillors. They are involved in improving the environment and charity fundraising. They have a good knowledge of the local community and its diversity, as well as the history of the local area. The school also has close links with the community through the church. Although having many faiths, the school is one community when in worship or reflection. Attendance and punctuality are satisfactory, although the school does have pupils withdrawn for extended holidays. The school works well with parents to improve the attendance of a small number of persistent absentees. Through lessons, their own backgrounds, learning how to work in teams and cooperate with others, and a growing knowledge of the world, pupils are being prepared well for their futures in a multicultural society.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

### How effective is the provision?

Teaching and learning are good because teachers have a clear understanding of how their pupils learn best. Much learning is based on practical 'hands-on' activities with good use of classroom technology to give visual clues. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and are often excited and animated. For example, pupils were fascinated in Year 5 by the many Victorian artefacts they could handle and investigate. Pupils in Year 6, acting as evacuees, were able to compare their plight with the children in Narnia. Teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory. However, in mathematics, although procedures are in place, there is inconsistency in the use of assessment information in planning work and some confusion in using data to track progress. This means that sometimes a few pupils are not working at appropriate levels and their progress slows. Teaching assistants work well with teachers, have a good understanding of the varied needs of the pupils and make a good contribution to learning.

The curriculum is balanced and gives pupils a wide range of learning opportunities. There are strong partnerships with local schools which provide good enrichment opportunities, for example in French. A wide range of extra-curricular activities, clubs and visits also enhance the curriculum and are much valued by pupils. English and information and communication technology are used extensively and well across many areas of the curriculum. Pupils receive especially good provision in music and religious education which strongly supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school is now planning to further develop a more consistently creative curriculum. The school offers a very caring and welcoming environment for all pupils. Provision for child protection and the safeguarding of pupils is rigorous. This includes opportunities

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for pupils to write their problems for the 'worry box' or the headteacher's secret pigeon hole. The school's provision for pupils with specific disabilities is exceptional. There are good arrangements for the transition of pupils to the next stages of their education. The school deals well with the occasional incidents of challenging behaviour. Although there have been a number of exclusions in recent years this rate is now falling

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<p><b>The quality of teaching</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p>Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning</p>	<p>3</p>
<p><b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>
<p><b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b></p>	<p><b>2</b></p>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has an accurate view of the strengths and improvement priorities in the school. With the able assistance of the deputy headteacher, she has successfully encouraged the staff to share her vision for improvement and to provide as well as possible for the wide range of needs of pupils in the school. This has resulted in a very inclusive school which has an increasingly effective staff team. This strong teamwork and desire to help each other is the driving force behind the increasingly rapid improvement in many aspects of the school's work, exemplified by the good standards being reached in English and in other subjects. Leaders recognise though that, as yet, they have been less successful in raising attainment in mathematics. Teaching has improved because of an effective programme of regular and accurate monitoring which leads to rapid action for further improvement. The management structure has also been improved through the development of the skills of middle managers who are consequently becoming increasingly effective. The governing body, led by an experienced chair, has a good understanding of the strengths of the school. Governors unhesitatingly challenge the school, especially over improvement, as well as working continually to enhance resources. The school leadership is encouraging both middle managers and governors to continue to expand their roles and contributions through further training. They and school leaders have a good understanding of safeguarding procedures and ensure that all are in place.

In a school with such cultural diversity, school leaders have been particularly active in ensuring that all pupils have equal opportunities and that any incidents of discrimination are dealt with quickly and fairly. This is clearly reflected in the views of parents and carers who have good relationships with the school and feel that their concerns can be taken to leaders and dealt with effectively. A strength in the management of the school is its provision for community cohesion. This is well promoted through many aspects of school life, within the school, in the local community, and globally, as for example in its



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links with a school in Kenya. The school plans to establish similar links in this country. The school deploys its resources, in an outdated building, very efficiently. All resources are of good quality and effectively used, ensuring that the school gives good value for money

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Views of parents and carers

Responses received from about a third of parents indicate a very positive view of the school. Almost all parents feel that the school is caring and safe and gives their children a good education. Only one parent indicated that his/her child did not enjoy school. A typical comment is, 'Blue Coat has provided a wonderful environment for my child's learning...she has shown great improvement academically and socially, and grown in self confidence.' Inspectors thoroughly investigated the very small number of issues raised by parents and found no compelling basis for their concerns. The inspectors agreed with the views of the very large majority of parents.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Blue Coat Church of England Aided School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 97 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 325 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	57	41	42	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	54	56	40	41	1	1	2	2
The school informs me about my child's progress	44	45	48	50	5	5	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	38	53	55	5	5	3	3
The teaching is good at this school	44	45	47	49	2	2	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	38	52	54	6	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	40	52	54	3	3	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	37	38	53	55	3	3	4	4
The school meets my child's particular needs	35	36	52	54	5	5	4	4
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	35	36	53	55	7	7	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	33	50	53	5	5	5	5
The school is led and managed effectively	38	39	53	55	3	3	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	46	47	43	44	4	4	2	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



Dear Pupils

Inspection of Blue Coat Church of England Aided Junior School, Walsall WS1 2LP

Your school provides you with a good education.

Thank you all for making us so welcome when we visited your school. It was a pleasure to see how much you enjoyed your learning, how polite and chatty you were, and how well behaved you were everywhere. Thank you for telling us so much about your school. We were really pleased to hear what a good job the staff do and how well they look after you.

We think you are very well taught by your teachers and their assistants and that they give you many enjoyable and exciting opportunities to learn. You are doing very well in your learning in reading and writing particularly. You have not been doing quite as well in mathematics and we would like you, especially the girls, to concentrate as hard as you can to understand your learning so that you can improve even more than you have done recently. The staff work really hard to keep you safe and are always there for you if you have a problem. We were delighted that you and your parents think very highly of the school and it was obvious to us how much you all enjoy being with each other. Your headteacher and leaders of the school are doing really well in trying to provide you with the best education possible. We have suggested to them that:

- they continue to help your recent improvement in mathematics by helping you to understand how to solve problems better, and finding fresh ways to help girls to do as well as boys
- use all the information they have about your learning so that they know exactly how well you are improving at all times and challenge you to do better.

You can help by telling teachers when you can't understand your learning, and we know that they will help you. Thanks again for your help, and keep enjoying your learning.

Yours faithfully

Rod Braithwaite

Lead Inspector

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