



# Blakesley C of E Primary School Prospectus

## About our School

Blakesley School is a rural Church of England Primary School, controlled by Northamptonshire Local Education Authority. There are about 65 pupils on roll, organised into three classes. The school is pleasantly situated opposite the village green and serves one of the largest catchment areas in Northamptonshire. Our school was founded as a church school in 1669 by a local benefactor, William Foxley. It was originally a boy's grammar school and we still use the original school room, reputedly the oldest continuously used schoolroom in the county. William Foxley's badge appears at the head of this prospectus and on our school uniform. The Latin motto means 'Our Faith in God Preserve'.

The school building has undergone many adaptations over the years. In addition to its good sized classrooms the school has a well equipped hall/gymnasium, an administrative block and a room dedicated to use by small groups/music lessons. The school boasts a large playground, a grassed play area with adventure style play equipment and a 'nature' garden. The Foundation Stage (Reception Class) pupils have their own outdoor space with climbing equipment and a covered play area. We also have access to the village playing field, located close to the school, which we use for a variety of sporting opportunities.





### **Our Ethos**

In caring for our pupils, we aim to support them sympathetically and encourage positive attitudes to learning, school and life. All aspects of the school revolve around our ethos statement:

*Blakesley CE Primary School is proud to be a Church of England School where every child, and adult, matters. We provide a happy, caring environment, based on our Christian values. We recognise that we are all created unique individuals; we support, value and celebrate these differences. We are committed to a high quality education which develops the potential of all.*

Our school has an 'open door' policy. We encourage parents to discuss their children with us and to participate in all aspects of school life.

### **Our Code of Conduct**

All pupils are expected to behave well and we are proud of our reputation for good behaviour. We believe that children should have respect for both adults and their peers, care for their own and others' property and look after their environment. Good behaviour or special efforts in work are rewarded by House Points, merits or congratulations in our weekly 'Praise' assembly.

Our Behaviour Policy and other related policies can be found on our website.

### **Our Anglican Character**

As a Church of England School we have strong links with our parish church, our local Benefice and our Diocese. We hold a daily act of worship of a Christian character and Christian values underpin our ethos. However, we welcome pupils from all faiths or no faith and do not have any selection criteria.

## **The Structure of Our School**

Because we are a small school we teach children in mixed age classes. We find that this has many advantages in giving pupils the flexibility to work with others at their level across the full range of subjects. Our class sizes are generally around the mid twenties in number. We like to keep year groups together however, sometimes this is not possible. Where this is not possible we will look at the age of the child to decide which class they would be best placed in but we will be very flexible and take into account the needs of the individual child and consults with parents. Because we believe that a good pupil/ adult ratio is important, each class has a suitably trained and qualified assistant working alongside the teacher.

## **Our Catchment Area**

Our catchment area is made up of four local villages; Adstone, Maidford, Farthingstone and Litchborough, as well as Blakesley itself and its satellite hamlet of Woodend. A supervised school bus provides free daily transport from these villages. Information about the bus timetable can be found on our website. However, a good proportion of our pupils come from other surrounding villages and they are brought to school by car.



## **Our Website:**

For up-to-date information about the school and what we are doing the website is a useful source.

[www.blakesleyprimary.com](http://www.blakesleyprimary.com)

The school also uses Twitter and Facebook to help keep parents informed and celebrate the successes of our children.

## **Our Curriculum**

We follow the National Curriculum for Key Stages One and Two and the Foundation Stage Curriculum for our Reception class. Within this framework we seek to make links between subjects by teaching them in 'themes' where possible.

When is it too cold for camping? How can we make a cloak for a wizard? These are just some of the many questions children are finding out in our school.

We teach a 'joined up' curriculum that link many subjects together into themed topics. These adhere to the requirements of the National Curriculum and are reviewed regularly to take account of different pupil needs and interests. We find that children become absorbed in a topic of work when taught in this way and that this increases their enthusiasm and engagement. We want our children to love learning! In order for children to make the most progress with their core learning (reading, writing, communication and maths), the skills taught in their English and Maths lessons are reinforced and practised through their topic work in the afternoons. Maths, Science, RE and PE are taught as separate subjects but linked where possible.

Each class is taught three themed units that are particular to that class and two themed units that the whole school is taught. These 'whole school' curriculum units are based on world themes because we love the fact that Blakesley CE Primary is a small school in a beautiful rural setting but we would like our children to have a global outlook and learn about other cultures and parts of the world.

Each year, every class has a 'child initiated' unit where the ideas come from the children – we want the children to be engaged with their own learning. For instance, if the class wanted to learn about pets or robots, we could build a unit of work around these ideas (making sure that we incorporated basic skills into the work, of course!).

Learning is not all about what goes on in the classroom though. In today's society, there is no guarantee of the life experiences children have had. Consequently, we believe that there should be a wealth of experiences provided as part of our curriculum – trips to enhance learning, visiting artists and making the most of our local facilities around Blakesley are just some of the experiences we aim to provide.



Details of our curriculum topics are sent out to parents/carers via our Curriculum Newsletter each term and the latest newsletters can be found on our website.

Our PE curriculum covers dance, gymnastics and games. All pupils in Class 3 are given swimming lessons at the Towcester Leisure Centre. In addition to PE lessons, pupils have the chance to take part in a wide range of sporting opportunities and competitions e.g. football, netball, rugby, dance, athletics, cross country, cycling, judo, basketball etc.

One of the advantages of being a small school is that pupils have an excellent chance to be part of a team for any competition.

We employ a specialist music teacher to deliver music lessons within the curriculum. In addition, pupils have opportunities to learn brass, woodwind and stringed instruments, to learn the recorder and to sing in our choir. Our school has a reputation for encouraging musical development and pupils regularly perform for parents and friends.

The school is well equipped to deliver the ICT (Information Communications Technology) curriculum. We have two roving suites of laptops, tablets, interactive whiteboards in each classroom, a projector and laptop in the hall and a wireless network throughout the school and playground. Pupils quickly acquire the skills they need and transfer these to all aspects of their learning. Safe use of the Internet is taught and the school network has a robust filter system for inappropriate content, ensuring that pupils remain 'safe' while using it.

## **Additional Needs – Including Gifted and Talented Pupils**

We are committed to meeting the needs of all children. We know that at some point in their education some pupils may require work which is different from their peers or a little extra help. Pupils who fall into this category are quickly identified and measures put in place to help them make progress. This may mean extra help from a teacher or specially qualified teaching assistant, small group or individual work. Suitable targets are set, regularly evaluated and parents are kept informed so that they can act in partnership with the school. The Local Authority provides a range of specialist help to be called upon when needed e.g. Educational Psychologists, Speech Therapists, Physiotherapists etc. All children identified as having any form of additional educational need are given full access to the curriculum with differentiation as and when needed.

Some pupils may be identified as more able or 'gifted and talented' learners. These pupils also have individual needs and we provide opportunities for them to extend their learning through differentiation in lessons and through work with similar pupils from other schools.

## **Learning Opportunities Outside the Curriculum**

We feel that it is very important for children to have learning experiences beyond the classroom and we have a wide programme of extra-curricular opportunities. The activities may vary from term to term, but they include a range of sports, music, modern foreign language, art, dance and chess. Clubs are run by school staff, external providers or volunteers.

Pupils can choose from a wide range of sporting activities which include: basketball, judo, football, netball, 'fun fit', dodgeball, rugby, fencing and dance. It is our intention to offer something for all



interests and pupils may be able to go on to take part in competitions. Some of these activities are suitable for Key Stage Two pupils only and others for all age groups. We foster links with local sports clubs and are able to direct pupils to a sport which interests them. Our cluster of schools and our local Secondary School (Sponne, in Towcester) organise a variety of competitions e.g. cross country running, football, rugby, netball, athletics and we take an active part in all of these. Pupils in Year 6 have safe cycling tuition called 'Bikeability'.

Music provision in school, beyond the curriculum, includes woodwind, strings, brass, guitar, 'Rock School', orchestra, recorder and choir. Tuition is provided by the County Music Service or independent providers, all of whom are very well qualified. Recorder is taught by a member of school staff. Many of our pupils take up music and progress to a high standard.

We take part in the Lego League Challenge, an annual competition which takes place in the Autumn. Pupils are prepared for this by a member of school staff in a club which meets on Saturdays. They learn to program Lego robots, give a presentation on a given subject related to conservation and compete against other schools. The school has done very well in this competition, often beating much older pupils.

Parents are welcome to help with or run extracurricular sessions. We have an active school council made up of elected representatives from each year group.

### **Other information about the curriculum**

Pupils in Year Five and Six are given lessons in sex education. Parents will be informed when these take place and they have a right to withdraw their child if they wish. For younger pupils there is no formal programme of sex education, any questions that arise from pupils' natural curiosity are answered in the context in which they arise. In addition we guide pupils in how to develop positive and healthy relationships.

### **Links with other Organisations**

We enjoy close links with our cluster of schools (Greens Norton, Silverstone, Towcester Primary, Nicholas Hawksmoor Primary and the Forest Federation) and our local Secondary School, Sponne in Towcester. We are able to join together to provide wider learning experiences and facilities for our pupils, which includes sporting activities, educational experiences (especially for Gifted Pupils of those needing additional support. We encourage links with local sports clubs and many of our pupils take advantage of this. Most of our pupils transfer to Sponne at age 11 and smooth transfer is aided by a good induction programme. However, a significant number of our pupils are successful in gaining places in schools in the Independent sector.

Blakesley village has a thriving pre-school and our Reception class staff have built up a close association with them. The pre-school holds their 'Rising Fives' sessions on school premises and the children have an excellent opportunity to get to know the school before starting. Our staff also make links with other local pre-school providers. This, with our own induction programme, gives children a smooth start to school.

Our local Beaver and Brownie packs hold their meetings in the school hall.

We are very aware of the possibilities afforded by our local environment. We enjoy close links with the village and make use of the Pocket park, the shop, the church and the farm to extend children's first hand experiences of the world. The village itself is an excellent resource for history and geography studies. Further afield, we regularly use the Everdon Activities Centre for residential and visits, local woods for outdoor activities and study and we visit Northampton museums.

The school has an active parent/ teacher association, Folks Associated with Blakesley School (FABS). They run an amazing array of activities to help support the school and they seem to have a lot of fun doing so! They are a friendly group so please contact them if you would like to get involved in anyway.

We welcome volunteers into our school to share their talents and time with us. If you would like to help, for example with hearing readers or craft activities, please let us know. All our volunteers are checked in line with safeguarding guidance.



