

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Blakesley Church of England Primary School

The Green, Blakesley, Towcester, Northamptonshire NN12 8RD

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Inspection dates:

23 November 2021

## **Outcome**

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of outstanding as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

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

Blakesley is a small school where everyone knows each other well. Pupils play and learn together well. Their conduct in lessons and around school is exemplary. Disagreements are resolved quickly because pupils are encouraged to listen to 'both sides of the story'. Pupils feel safe, and say that bullying does not happen in school. They know that staff would deal with any issues that did arise.

Pupils understand how to stay safe online and offline. They know who to go to should they need help. They understand the school's values of wisdom, compassion, courage, thankfulness and fellowship, and are taught how to live out these values day to day.

Pupils enjoy the range of extra-curricular activities that are on offer. These include street dancing, gardening, music and arts clubs. Almost all pupils attend clubs. Pupils with specific talents have opportunities to participate in regional and national competitions. Parents and carers value the school's family feel. As one commented, 'This is a great little school with teachers who care and go the extra mile.'

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

Positive relationships between all members of the school community ensure a harmonious school. Pupils are at the heart of leaders' actions. Expectations are high from the time pupils start school. Disruption to learning is rare. Pupils show tolerance and respect for other viewpoints and differences. For example, pupils in the Reception class cooperated and collaborated to build structures. Older pupils spoke about how they had learned about historical figures that helped them understand diversity.

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Curriculum plans in some subjects set out what pupils should learn and when. The trust has supported leaders to develop long-term curriculum plans. In some subjects, such as history and geography, school leaders have adapted these plans to make them more suitable for pupils in this school. Currently this is not the case for all subjects. However, leaders are taking time to develop plans in sequence to ensure that they do not overburden staff.

Staff make regular checks to ensure that pupils have remembered key knowledge in mathematics. Leaders have adapted plans so that there are opportunities to revisit learning if need be. Leaders have not ensured that the work that all pupils do in all subjects helps them to know and remember more. Trust leaders have developed training for subject leaders to help them check whether all pupils, including those with SEND, are remembering more of the curriculum.

Reading is prioritised by leaders. There is ongoing support for staff to develop their expertise in the teaching of early reading. Pupils who need additional support to learn to read get this quickly. Pupils receive reading books that match the sounds they have learned. Older pupils enjoy the range of books that leaders provide. They comment how it helps them to learn new vocabulary and explore different worlds. Pupils with SEND are routinely provided with support and additional resources to help them access the curriculum.

Leaders make robust checks to ensure that all pupils are in school. When families need additional support to help pupils attend school, leaders ensure they get this support.

Staff are proud to work at the school. They feel valued and say that the school is a special place to work. Teachers at the early stages of their career are well supported. Leaders at all levels are considering ways to help staff further manage their workload.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that curriculum development and subject leadership may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have developed a culture of vigilance. This means that everyone is alert and can quickly identify any pupils who may show signs of being at risk. Staff know they have a 'right to pester' leaders if they feel the response to a safeguarding concern is not to their satisfaction. Leaders work with external agencies to support the needs of vulnerable pupils.

Leaders keep well informed about safeguarding. They are proactive in considering how they will respond to issues. For example, leaders reviewed the safety of the school environment following the publication of Ofsted's review into sexual abuse in schools and colleges.

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

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

- Some curriculum plans are not yet complete. They do not clearly set out the key knowledge that all pupils need to learn in all subjects. This limits teachers' ability to ensure that pupils know and remember important knowledge in all subjects. Leaders should ensure that all curriculum plans are complete and identify the key knowledge pupils need to know and remember so that they are ready for their next stage in education. They should ensure that subject leaders who need it receive additional training to carry out their roles effectively.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Blakesley Church of England Primary School, to be outstanding in July 2016.

## 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.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

## Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	145091
<b>Local authority</b>	West Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10208990
<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>	102
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Margaret Holman
<b>Headteacher</b>	Laurie Hill
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.blakesleyprimary.org.uk">www.blakesleyprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected

## Information about this school

- The headteacher took up post in September 2020.
- The school joined the Peterborough Diocesan Educational Trust in February 2019. There has also been a restructuring of governance by trust leaders.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.
- Inspectors met with school leaders, including the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator, representatives of the local governing body and the trust, curriculum leaders and teachers.
- Curriculum plans for early reading, mathematics, history, music, and art and design were discussed. The inspection team visited lessons, spoke with teachers and pupils and looked at examples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors analysed information on attendance, behaviour logs and safeguarding records. They held meetings with leaders to discuss the safeguarding of pupils.

- Pupils' behaviour was observed at various times of day, including in lessons, play times and lunchtime.
- Views of parents, pupils and staff were considered through the Ofsted surveys and by meeting parents during the inspection.

### **Inspection team**

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Caroline Oliver

Ofsted Inspector

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