Inspection of a good school: Blockley Church of England Primary School

Park Road, Blockley, Moreton-in-Marsh, Gloucestershire GL56 9BY

Inspection dates: 11 February 2020

Outcome

Blockley Church of England Primary School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Leaders are committed to providing pupils with a rich and interesting curriculum. Pupils enjoy school and are keen to learn. Parents comment favourably on the interesting activities that pupils can choose from. For example, archery, sport and gardening club. A typical parental comment was, 'Teachers bring the curriculum to life.'

Adults form caring relationships with pupils, which help them to feel safe and valued. Most parents appreciate the extra support given to pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders and teachers work hard to make learning exciting. For example, pupils are inspired to develop a love of reading. However, leaders' expectations of what pupils must learn in each subject are not consistently high enough. This limits how well pupils are challenged. Some parents state that the support for pupils' learning could be better.

Most pupils behave well because they know what is expected of them. Leaders take appropriate action to reduce the risk of poor behaviour and bullying. However, a minority of parents and pupils do not believe their concerns are dealt with well enough.

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

Leaders, including governors, and teachers strive to provide pupils with an education that equips them well for life. They understand that it is important for pupils to develop deep knowledge and skills, appropriate to their age. As a result, leaders are revising the curriculum in reading, mathematics and foundation subjects. But, this has not yet been fully implemented. Consequently, leaders cannot ensure that pupils achieve what they are capable of.

Children in the early years begin learning to read as soon as they start school. Phonics teaching is effective. Pupils regularly practise reading. This helps them to develop their expression and fluency. Even so, reading books do not consistently match the sounds that pupils are learning. This limits how well they consolidate their reading skills.

Teachers plan opportunities for pupils to develop their reading skills as they progress through the school. However, activities are not routinely matched to what pupils are expected to learn for their age. Pupils like listening to stories that adults read to them, such as 'Journey to the River Sea' by Eva Ibbotson. This motivates them to read for pleasure.

The mathematics curriculum has recently been redesigned. Pupils regularly practise their mathematical skills. Nevertheless, leaders do not routinely ensure that teaching helps pupils to develop the knowledge that they need. For example, some pupils are set work that is matched more closely with the curriculum for the previous year group. As a result, some pupils, including pupils with SEND, are not learning well. This limits how well they move through the curriculum.

Children in the early years benefit from a welcoming learning environment. Adults care for children well. Children understand what is expected of them. They listen carefully to adults, which helps them understand what to do. They are given valuable opportunities to develop their knowledge and skills. For example, children count objects in the water tray to develop their knowledge of numbers.

The subject leader for physical education (PE) has a good understanding of the subject. Series of lessons are well planned and taught. Teaching builds on pupils' prior learning. Pupils participate enthusiastically in lessons and understand the skills they are learning. Pupils enjoy extra-curricular sports clubs.

The special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) works closely with parents and teachers to meet pupils' needs. Pupils at risk of falling behind in their learning are given extra help. This enables pupils to catch up. The curriculum is as equally ambitious for pupils with SEND as it is for other pupils.

Pupils' wider development is well supported. For example, pupils try new experiences, such as climbing and night hiking when they go on residential trips. Pupils understand that participating in sport can improve their physical and mental health. Pupils are proud to take on positions of responsibility, such as sports leaders.

Adults have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. As a result, most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. However, when learning does not challenge pupils, they sometimes lose interest and become distracted.

Despite leaders' efforts, a minority of pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This means they are not able to take full advantage of all that the school offers.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders carry out appropriate checks on all staff, to ensure that they are suitable to work with children. Leaders provide safeguarding training for all staff. Adults understand how to refer concerns. Leaders maintain thorough safeguarding records. They routinely check that their actions are making a difference.

Visits from the 'Life Bus' and a local police officer help pupils learn how to keep safe. For example, pupils learn about internet safety and the dangers of drugs.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not ensure effectively enough that teaching helps pupils to learn what they need to learn. This hampers pupils' learning. Leaders' improvement plans do not precisely identify how their actions will improve pupils' achievement, particularly in foundation subjects. Leaders must improve their plans, so that they sharply identify how their actions will improve the quality of education.
- Sequences of teaching in some subjects, such as reading, mathematics and some foundation subjects, are not coherently planned. As a result, pupils are not consistently supported to develop the knowledge and skills they need. Leaders and teachers must ensure that they improve the content and sequencing of teaching plans, to enable pupils to achieve their best in all subjects.
- Some pupils do not attend school as regularly as they should. This limits how well they can benefit from all that the school offers. Leaders must continue to improve attendance.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, 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 convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Blockley Church of England Primary School, to be good on 14–15 September 2010.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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

Unique reference number	139524
Local authority	Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10122383
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	139
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Hilary Thornburgh
Headteacher	Michael Pudifoot
Website	www.blockleyprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 February 2016

Information about this school

- Blockley Primary School is a Church of England school. The school was graded outstanding in the last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in October 2015. The next SIAMS inspection is due in 2020.
- The school converted to become a stand-alone academy in April 2013. When its predecessor school, Blockley Church of England Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- The headteacher started in post in 2016, following the last short inspection.

Information about this inspection

- We held several meetings with the headteacher. The lead inspector met with the SENCo. A meeting was held with a group of governors.
- We did deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and PE. We held discussions with subject leaders and visited lessons in both key stages. We talked to pupils and teachers. Other subjects were considered as part of the inspection.

- We discussed safeguarding arrangements with the headteacher. We checked the school's single central record and safeguarding records. We also reviewed attendance and behaviour logs.
- We observed pupils' behaviour in and out of lessons, including at breaktime and lunchtime.
- We spoke to pupils, staff and parents to gain their views of the school. We reviewed 40 responses to Ofsted Parent View, along with 16 additional free-text comments. We also considered over 50 responses to the school's recent questionnaire for parents. We took account of 13 responses to the online staff survey and 52 responses to the online pupil survey.

Inspection team

Catherine Beeks, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nick Sheppard	Ofsted Inspector

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