

Blisworth Community Primary School

Courteenhall Road, Blisworth, Northampton, Northamptonshire NN7 3DD

Inspection dates

14–15 June 2017

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- The headteacher is a good leader. Her drive to secure better teaching and learning has been successful and led to better pupil outcomes.
- Leadership is shared more effectively throughout the school staff than at the time of the previous inspection. Staff, at all levels, are helping to improve the quality of teaching and learning.
- Leaders' judgements about the school's performance are accurate. However, records they make, for example when they check pupils' books, do not routinely identify how learning could be improved.
- Governors are well informed and ambitious for the school. Their support and challenge have played an important part in the school's improvement.
- Pupils of all abilities, in key stages 1 and 2, now make progress in line with the national averages. Standards are consistently above the national averages at the end of both key stages.
- Children in the Reception Year achieve well across the early years curriculum. However, opportunities to extend learning, when children are working on activities that they have chosen themselves, are sometimes missed.
- In key stage 2, progress in reading is slower than progress in writing and mathematics.
- The standard of pupils' work is now of good quality across the curriculum. This reflects the high expectations of staff and the determination of the pupils to live up to the school's motto, 'Be the Best You Can Be!'
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities achieve well. Staff who support them have high expectations of their ability to learn effectively and independently as well as with additional help.
- The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and explain new ideas clearly. Their feedback to pupils ensures that pupils know how they can improve their work.
- The pupils' personal development is outstanding. The rich curriculum ensures that pupils develop the personal qualities key to thriving at the next stage of their education and in their future lives.
- Pupils enjoy school and behave well. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils feel safe and well cared for.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate the progress pupils in key stage 2 make in reading by ensuring that:
 - the recently introduced strategies to encourage them to read more frequently are successful
 - teaching places more emphasis on developing the pupils' understanding of what they are reading
 - pupils are more skilled at inferring meaning from a text and predicting what might happen next.
- Improve the impact that leaders have on teaching and learning by ensuring that:
 - when checking the quality of teaching, including book scrutinies, they highlight how pupils could make even better progress.
- Improve the quality of learning in the Reception Year by ensuring that:
 - when children choose their own activities, staff keep a watchful eye on what they are doing and intervene skilfully to extend learning when necessary.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher is ambitious for the school to provide a great education for its pupils. Staff value her leadership and their morale is high. Following the previous inspection, the school has been very effectively supported by the local authority and benefited, in the academic terms immediately following the inspection, from close links with another local school.
- The previous inspection identified a number of aspects of teaching that required improvement. The headteacher's determination to tackle these issues has been crucial in securing better provision and outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders responsible for subject areas value the increased opportunities that they have had since the previous inspection to fulfil their roles. Across the curriculum, leaders now track closely how well pupils are doing and check that they are mastering subject-specific skills and knowledge as they move through the school.
- Quite a few subject leaders have taken up their posts this academic year. Already, their positive impact is evident in the quality of pupils' work. Senior leaders ensure that staff have good opportunities to improve their skills by attending training courses that match their individual requirements.
- The school's exciting curriculum motivates pupils and contributes greatly to their outstanding personal development. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are threaded into each year group's termly plans. Discussions with pupils show how the high priority given to developing the pupils' personal qualities leads to outstanding outcomes in these areas.
- Pupils are very well prepared for their lives in modern Britain. Carefully selected educational visits and visitors to the school mean that pupils have an outstanding understanding of British values. In lessons and assemblies, they gain impressive insight into the rights and responsibilities of living in a democracy.
- The leadership and provision for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are strengths of the school. Teachers are supported well to enable them to meet the needs of individual pupils as well as being held to account for their progress. Leaders make effective use of the additional funding provided for this group.
- Leaders use the physical education and sport premium effectively. The subject leader for this area analyses closely participation rates in extra-curricular sporting clubs. When it was spotted that disadvantaged pupils were not all benefiting from the excellent range of activities on offer, she acted quickly. Now, all disadvantaged pupils attend at least one club. Expert coaching by external and school staff ensures that the school does very well in competitive sporting events.
- Leaders and governors check each term the impact of pupil premium spending on the outcomes of disadvantaged pupils. Funding is targeted closely at the specific needs of individuals. There is compelling evidence that the attendance rates, behaviour and reading skills of targeted pupils are improving.
- Across the curriculum, subject leaders check the quality of teaching in their subject

areas. However, on occasions the written accounts of these activities do not place sufficient emphasis on the progress that pupils are making, or identify how learning could be accelerated. For example, some book scrutinies focus on how closely teachers have followed school policies rather than how well pupils are learning.

Governance of the school

- Governors have played a key role in the improvement of the school. They have acted decisively to tackle weaknesses in governance identified in the previous inspection. They have benefited from a broad range of training which has equipped them well to both challenge and support school leaders in order to improve outcomes for pupils.
- Governors now receive high-quality information about the performance of different groups. This means that they can ask searching questions about, for example, the progress of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Across the governing body there is a broad range of skills and experiences. The team has expertise in finance, education, health and safety, safeguarding and special educational needs. When governors visit the school, to meet staff and pupils, or to check the school's procedures, these skills enable them to ask perceptive questions about the quality of provision and outcomes for pupils.
- Staff performance, including that of the headteacher, is managed rigorously through an effective performance management system.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Checks on the suitability of staff are appropriate. Regular training ensures that staff know what to do if they have any concerns about a child's welfare.
- Safeguarding records are well organised and stored securely. A sample of these records, and a conversation with a parent whose children have benefited from the school's safeguarding work, both show how actions taken by the school have secured the well-being of individual children.
- Leaders ensure that pupils are kept safe in the school environment and on educational visits. Risks that different activities may present are identified and staff are clear about the measures they must take to minimise risk.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved and is now good. The previous inspection noted that teachers did not plan carefully enough to ensure that all groups of pupils made at least good progress. Teachers have tackled this issue successfully.
- Teachers and teaching assistants have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. When providing additional help to pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, they are alert to the danger of 'doing too much' for individual pupils. Instead, having explained a concept or task, they often move away so that the pupil

works independently. This not only leads to good progress, but also enhances the self-esteem of potentially vulnerable pupils.

- Teachers act quickly if there are signs that individual pupils, including the most able pupils, are not learning as well as expected. If, for example, a pupil's spelling, handwriting or understanding of a mathematical concept appears to be slipping, short one-to-one sessions with a skilled teaching assistant are quickly arranged to get the individual back on track.
- The most able pupils are benefiting from lessons that do not hold back on challenge. For example, in mathematics, they receive tasks which require them to be thoughtful, collaborative and determined mathematicians. Such activities are leading to an above average proportion of pupils, throughout the school, working above age-related expectations.
- Strong subject knowledge also promotes good learning. For example, one teacher drew upon a personal love of poetry to deepen their pupils' understanding of adverbs, conjunctions and prepositions. The teacher was able to promote a strong understanding of these grammatical terms without diminishing the pupils' response to the poem being considered. As a result, pupils were in turn able to write very effective poems of their own.
- Teachers make learning fun. In a school assembly, one year group celebrated their learning through the year in dance, drama and music. Their dance to depict the Great Fire of London amazed teachers, parents and other pupils alike.
- The high priority given to the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) leads to consistently above average outcomes in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Teachers monitor each individual's progress very carefully and provide any additional interventions that are required.
- The previous inspection found that pupils were not clear how to improve their work and, therefore, make better progress. Teachers now assess work carefully and give pupils excellent guidance on their 'next steps'. Pupils reflect very carefully on the comments teachers make about their learning and subsequently improve their work.
- In key stage 2, pupils do not make as good progress in reading as in other subjects. Effective phonics teaching has ensured that pupils can read fluently. However, until recently, there has been an insufficient focus on developing reading skills such as predicting and inferring. The school's newly introduced strategy to accelerate better progress in reading is having a very positive initial impact.
- Parents are kept well informed of their children's progress. In addition to open evenings and school reports, pupils take their books home for parents to see each term. This practice motivates pupils and contributes effectively to the good quality of work and presentation in all subject areas.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils are committed to meeting the ambition captured in the school's motto, 'Be the

Best You Can Be!’ They feel proud to be part of the ‘Blisworth Family’ and contribute to the smooth running of the school in many ways. For example, older pupils give their time readily to help younger pupils practise their reading and writing skills.

- Pupils make visitors to the school, including the elderly residents in the village who join them for lunch each week, feel very welcome. The school is very successfully nurturing behaviours and attitudes that will serve the pupils well in later life.
- Pupils are confident learners. The school’s curriculum promotes resilience, resourcefulness, reciprocity and reflectiveness extremely successfully. As a result, pupils are happy to show initiative when working and ‘have a go’ when the challenge is high. Pupils know that making mistakes is an important part of effective learning.
- The school gives a high priority to promoting emotional well-being. Pupils learn how to recognise situations that can lead them to feeling stressed, bullied or threatened. Expertise among the staff ensures that they learn too about practical ways to deal with these situations and stay safe.
- The pupils gain an excellent understanding of healthy lifestyles through their physical education and science lessons, input from external agencies and the wide range of clubs which encourage physical and emotional well-being.
- Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to stay safe online. They are fully aware of the serious potential dangers of sharing personal information and images online.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above the national average. Staff work very closely with any families whose children are persistently absent. As a result, the attendance of this small number of pupils is improving.
- Staff who completed their online questionnaire unanimously agreed that behaviour in the school is good.
- On the playground and around the school, pupils’ behaviour is calm and considerate. The high quality of work in pupils’ books and careful presentation show that pupils have good attitudes to learning. However, pupils did report that just occasionally, in some classes, a few of their classmates do lose concentration and disturb others.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils are well prepared for their secondary schools. The proportions of pupils who attain the skills expected in reading, writing and mathematics, at both the end of Year 2 and Year 6, are consistently above the national averages.
- The quality of work in pupils’ books, learning observed in lessons and information about pupils’ performance provided by the school all show that pupils currently in the school are making good progress.
- In 2013 and 2014, progress through key stage 2 in reading, writing and mathematics was significantly below average. Since then, rates of progress have been in line with the national averages.

- Progress in reading in key stage 2 is not as strong as in other subjects. The school has only recently adapted its curriculum to meet the higher demands of the revised national curriculum in reading. Pupils are now beginning to read more regularly and are starting to develop the skills needed to be thoughtful readers.
- In both 2015 and 2016, 100% of pupils reached the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check. This high score is anticipated again this year.
- Throughout the curriculum, teachers provide additional challenge for the most able pupils. This ensures that these pupils make good progress. The proportions of pupils who achieve above age-related expectations at the end of Year 2 and Year 6 are consistently above the national averages. For example, in 2016, 43% of Year 6 pupils achieved a high score in the English, grammar, punctuation and spelling assessment. The national average was 22%.
- In most year groups, there are very few disadvantaged pupils. Teachers keep a close eye on their progress and act promptly if any individuals are at risk of underachieving. This ensures that the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils are as good as they are for other pupils.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. This is because the expectations of what they can achieve are high and any additional support they are given is well matched to their specific needs.
- Good-quality provision, including the excellent range of extra-curricular clubs, results in good outcomes across the curriculum. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of their school's achievement in sport and music. There is also plenty of evidence around the school of good outcomes in art and design, and design technology.

Early years provision

Good

- Children make good progress from their starting points. The proportion who achieve a good level of development by the end of the Reception Year is consistently above the national average. This school year, the school's assessments of the children were checked by the local authority. Eighty per cent of children have achieved a good level of development.
- Expectations are high. At the start of the school day, children are expected to settle quickly and complete a writing task. They do this without any fuss and most of them are able to write at least one sentence independently.
- Pupils are taught phonics both in whole-class sessions and in small groups. The area where the class is taught as a single group is quite small. This hinders the ability of teaching assistants to provide additional support to those who are struggling to recognise sounds or to use their knowledge to spell words accurately.
- The early years staff work closely with parents, nurseries and pre-school settings to ensure that right from the start they can tailor provision to meet the needs of individuals. Additional funding for disadvantaged children and children who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively to help them make progress at least as good as their classmates.
- The children love their learning, whether in the classroom or outside. On the day of the national general election, they voted for an 'ambulance station' to be the curriculum

theme in the last few weeks of term. The children's good personal development and language skills were evident in the way they played and learned together as ambulance drivers, paramedics, doctors and nurses.

- The outdoor area has a wealth of exciting places to learn. Places such as The Maths Nest, The Writing Hut and Polly's Pantry provide opportunities for pupils to play imaginatively and practise their basic skills. Other areas, some with plants and hens, encourage children to explore their interests and curiosity.
- The children get along well with their classmates and are kind to one another if someone needs help or is upset because they have tumbled over. Staff keep a watchful eye over their well-being and ensure that both the indoor and outdoor areas are safe places to work and play.
- Leadership of the early years has sustained the good quality of teaching and learning identified at the previous inspection. However, on occasions when children choose their own activities, such as riding wheeled vehicles or exploring capacity, adults do not intervene quickly enough to introduce a level of challenge that would fire the children's inquisitive minds and so enhance their learning.

School details

Unique reference number	121794
Local authority	Northamptonshire
Inspection number	10031155

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Liz Carter
Headteacher	Celia Irwin
Telephone number	01604 858414
Website	www.blisworthprimary.org.uk
Email address	head@blisworth.northants-ecl.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 April 2015

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- This is a smaller than average-size primary school.
- The great majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expected standards for pupils' attainment and progress.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classrooms. Some of these observations took place with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors attended two school assemblies.
- Inspectors met with pupils and spoke with them about what it is like to be a pupil at Blisworth Primary. They also heard pupils read and observed their behaviour at breaktimes.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other staff, four members of the governing body and with an officer from the local authority.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of both school days. They took into account 71 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and 38 written responses made by parents.
- Inspectors also took into account 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation; the school improvement plan; the school's most recent information on pupils' performance; and information relating to teaching, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Jane Moore	Ofsted Inspector

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