

Blaby Stokes Church of England Primary School

Queen's Road, Blaby, Leicester, Leicestershire LE8 4EG

Inspection dates

14–15 March 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an inadequate school

- Pupils have not made enough progress from their different starting points over the last three years. As a result, standards in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have been below average.
- In 2016, boys of middle ability achieved particularly poorly in all three subjects.
- Pupils' attainment by the end of key stage 1 was also below average in writing and mathematics in 2016.
- Until recently, leaders have not taken effective action to tackle the weaknesses in writing and mathematics in key stage 2. The achievement of current pupils still varies too much in these subjects.
- Teaching is not consistently good. Teachers are not equally skilled at providing pupils with work that is challenging enough or in developing pupils' skills in mathematical reasoning.
- Some teachers do not implement the school's strategies to improve pupils' handwriting and their spelling, punctuation and grammar.
- Leaders' monitoring and evaluations of pupils' progress have not ensured that all groups of pupils make the progress they should. Planning for improvement is not rigorous enough.
- Governors have not ensured that the curriculum takes sufficient account of the protected characteristics required by the Equality Act 2010.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher has secured a collective determination among the staff to improve pupils' achievement quickly.
- The early years provision is improving rapidly as a result of good leadership, an imaginative curriculum and effective teaching.
- Pupils' achievement in reading throughout the school is also improving quickly.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their attendance and behaviour are good.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. The school's caring ethos contributes well to pupils' personal development and well-being.
- The curriculum provides pupils with a wide range of learning experiences, which they very much enjoy. It promotes creativity and reflective thinking very effectively.
- The overwhelming majority of parents are highly supportive of the school.

Full report

In accordance with sections 44(2) and 13(3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than it might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to perform.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise achievement throughout the school, particularly in writing and mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - teachers consistently provide work for pupils that is sufficiently challenging, including by moving pupils on to the harder work more quickly
 - teachers provide more opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in mathematical reasoning and problem solving, so that their conceptual understanding deepens and they are more able to tackle unfamiliar problems
 - all teachers implement the school's strategies to improve pupils' handwriting and their spelling, punctuation and grammar
 - leaders closely check on teaching that is less than consistently good and provide support where it is needed so that it quickly improves.
- Strengthen the effectiveness of leadership and management, by:
 - sharpening leaders' checks on teaching, learning and pupils' achievement, by analysing more forensically the impact of teaching on the progress pupils make from their different starting points
 - strengthening the rigour of planning for improvement by ensuring that the actions taken to improve the school are evaluated for their effectiveness against clear and measurable success criteria
 - ensuring that the curriculum fully prepares pupils for life in modern Britain by developing their understanding of the different ways in which people, including those with characteristics protected by the Equality Act 2010, live their lives.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not acted effectively enough to tackle pupils' poor achievement over the last three years in writing and mathematics, particularly in key stage 2.
- Leaders also did not ensure that teaching and the curriculum were amended effectively enough to meet the increased demands of the revised national curriculum. As a result, last year's Year 6 cohort underachieved significantly when compared with similar pupils nationally.
- Changes to the curriculum in mathematics have only recently been implemented. Leaders have not ensured that all teachers provide pupils with sufficient opportunities to deepen their conceptual understanding through applying their reasoning and problem-solving skills. As a result, pupils' progress in mathematics varies.
- Leaders' evaluations of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment have not focused sufficiently on how quickly teaching helps pupils make progress from their different starting points. This has hindered leaders' ability to identify rapidly which groups of pupils are not achieving well enough.
- The school has set out its priorities for improvement in a five-year strategic plan but the effectiveness of planning for improvement is impeded by the lack of clear and measurable success criteria. This means leaders and the governing body are not able to check how quickly improvements are being secured.
- In January 2017, leaders provided training for staff that made clear to them all where the most rapid improvement is needed. The headteacher has skilfully secured a collective determination from staff to raise pupils' achievement quickly. Staff are highly motivated and committed to securing rapidly the improvements needed.
- Leaders and teaching staff are working effectively with colleagues from a local teaching school alliance to sharpen the accuracy of assessment and improve the quality of teaching and leadership. This support has strengthened the capacity of the school to improve quickly.
- The headteacher has taken decisive action to tackle the weakest teaching. Good use of performance management reviews ensures that staff are receiving appropriate training matched to their individual needs. Teachers are held to account for the effectiveness of their teaching over time. Teachers with additional responsibilities are set clear targets related to their management roles and supported to help them achieve these.
- Other than in mathematics, the curriculum has many strengths. Pupils enjoy learning through the school's cross-curricular approach outside English and mathematics. Topics are imaginative and intriguing, with titles such as 'peasants, princes and pestilence', and 'burps, bottoms and bile'. Pupils' topic books reflect the good curriculum coverage in subjects such as geography, art and design, and technology. The curriculum also ensures that pupils develop their skills in thinking scientifically by designing and carrying out experiments.
- The school provides plentiful enrichment opportunities in the arts and sport and these are supplemented by a good range of educational visits.

- The learning environment promotes pupils' love of learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Displays of pupils' work celebrate their achievements in art, music and sport, for example. These are accompanied by displays linked to the school's religious ethos, such as a collage telling the story of Jonah and the whale.
- Leaders, governors and teachers have created a school where pupils are kind towards one another and respectful of differences. They listen to others' opinions well and have a good understanding of different cultures and lifestyles. Leaders have not ensured, however, that pupils are fully prepared for life in modern Britain by teaching them about the importance of respecting people with the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010, including people who are transgender.
- Leaders ensure that the additional funding provided through the primary physical education (PE) and sport premium is used well. They have used the funding to strengthen provision for PE in the school, increased teachers' skills in teaching PE and considerably increased pupils' participation in sports.
- Similarly, leaders have made good use of pupil premium funding to ensure that pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds receive any pastoral and academic support they need. Disadvantaged pupils who fall behind receive additional support, for example through specialist mentoring. As a result, these pupils often make better progress than other pupils.
- In the online survey, parents' views about the quality of support for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities varied. Inspectors looked closely at this aspect of provision and found that pupils who need additional help are identified and supported appropriately. Governors closely monitor the impact of this support to ensure that it is securing value for money.
- The school works very effectively with parents. The 'fun and families' initiative is proving to be a valuable and effective strategy in helping parents improve their skills in supporting their children's learning and development.

Governance of the school

- The relatively new chair of governors has made major changes to the way in which the governing body checks on and evaluates the school's work. These have brought considerable improvements to the effectiveness of governance.
- Governors have carried out an audit of their skills to identify where they need additional training. They have demonstrated their commitment to the school by making sure they have made the most of the opportunities for additional training provided.
- Governors share the determination of all staff to tackle the weaker aspects of the school's provision quickly. As a result of the changes implemented by the chair, their capacity to support and challenge leaders is good and improving quickly.
- The governing body is proving to be much more effective in holding the school to account than previously. Minutes from its meetings highlight how governors now provide good levels of challenge to school leaders in response to the detailed and accurate information that they receive from the headteacher and other staff.
- Governors are not complacent, however. They recognise that the governing body has

not ensured that the curriculum fully meets the requirements set out in the Equality Act 2010. They also acknowledge that the governing body's oversight of the school's safeguarding arrangements had not until recently been rigorous enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders ensure that all necessary checks are carried out on staff and volunteers to ensure that they are suitably qualified to work with children.
- The headteacher ensures that all staff receive regular and up-to-date training in safeguarding and also ensure that all volunteers who work at the school are equally well trained. As a result, adults know about the potential risks to pupils' welfare and readily report concerns to the designated safeguarding leaders.
- The school's support for pupils at risk of harm is strong. The headteacher maintains a watchful oversight of these pupils' well-being. She ensures that they receive the necessary support in school and from external agencies to ensure that they are safe and protected.
- A number of parents made reference to an incident on a school trip last year which highlighted weaknesses in the school's procedures with regard to external visits. Inspectors looked in detail at all aspects of the school's safeguarding arrangements, including the procedures for assessing and managing risks on school trips. They found that leaders have strengthened considerably the safeguarding arrangements on school visits and that all necessary procedures are in place to ensure that pupils are safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching has, for some time, not been effective enough in ensuring that all groups of pupils make the progress they should in reading, writing and mathematics.
- While there is much teaching of good quality in the school, teaching requires improvement because some is still not consistently good. Leaders know that this weaker teaching needs to be remedied to ensure that the pupils who have fallen behind catch up quickly, particularly in writing and mathematics.
- The changes to the way in which mathematics is taught and assessed have only recently been introduced. While these are beginning to bring about improvements in the quality of teaching in mathematics, they have not been in place for long enough to ensure that all groups of pupils are achieving as well as they should be. Pupils in Year 6, for example, are not achieving standards above those reached last year, and continue to underachieve in mathematics.
- Pupils' work in their mathematics books shows that, too often, they repeat tasks that they have quickly understood and that tasks provided do not get more difficult quickly enough. In some of the lessons observed, the pupils were not challenged enough. In discussions with pupils in these lessons, inspectors found that their knowledge of their current learning or of work previously completed was not always sufficiently secure.
- Pupils' books also highlight the limited opportunities teachers have given them until very recently to apply their reasoning skills. This inhibits their understanding and

resilience in mathematics and makes them less confident in applying their skills to unfamiliar problems. It also weakens the ability of teachers to identify accurately where pupils' understanding is fragile.

- Teaching in mathematics is improving, however, and some high-quality mathematics teaching was observed during the inspection. Pupils in Year 5, for example, built up their confidence through a range of increasingly difficult short division sums in response to their teacher's assessment that they needed more practice in this area. The teaching was strong because the teacher provided pupils with plentiful opportunities to explain their reasoning and then skilfully challenged any misconceptions they had through her precise questioning.
- Improvements to the teaching of writing are resulting in more pupils reaching the standard expected for their age. Pupils benefit from a range of opportunities to write for different purposes and with increasing stamina. Not all teachers implement the school's strategies to improve pupils' handwriting or their spelling, punctuation and grammar effectively.
- The teaching of reading has improved and pupils are making more rapid progress than before. Leaders have established a strong culture of reading in the school. Pupils were keen to tell inspectors about the books they have recently read. Good communication with parents helps parents to support their child's reading. Good use is made of strong role models, such as the PE coach, to encourage boys to read more regularly.
- Almost all lessons benefit from the positive relationships staff have cultivated with their pupils and from pupils' willingness to work hard. Teachers are skilled in providing opportunities for pupils to discuss and share their ideas. They manage these discussions well to ensure that they are purposeful and productive. These approaches build pupils' confidence in speaking about their work in front of their peers.
- Teaching provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning and consider different viewpoints. The pupils relish the opportunities they are given to consider philosophical or topical issues, for example, 'Should we get homework?'
- Classrooms are stimulating and well organised and reflect well on teachers' commitment to supporting the pupils to learn, achieve highly and develop well. Lessons are thoroughly planned and most are managed effectively.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils work and play happily together in an environment that is caring and supportive.
- All pupils said they feel very safe and well looked after at school. They reported that there is very little bullying and the school's records confirm this. Pupils described how they could approach any of their teachers for help if they were worried about something.
- Pupils know it is important to be kind to each other. They celebrate acts of kindness by other pupils and their friends' achievements through the 'wow wall'. They know that it is important to apologise if they get things wrong and they make use of the 'sorry box'

to do so.

- Pupils are well informed about how to stay safe from potential risks, for example when using the internet. They also understand the importance of living healthy lifestyles and are well informed about how to ensure that they have a healthy diet.
- Pupils benefit from many opportunities to take responsibility, for example as road safety officers, playground buddies or sports ambassadors. The school council gives pupils an opportunity to air their views and to help improve the school. They have recently, for example, revised the school's house system in response to the views of their classmates about how it could be improved.
- Pupils enjoy the regular opportunities they are given to reflect on their learning and to discuss topical issues, such as pollution.
- Teaching, the curriculum and the school's ethos together ensure that the pupils are well rounded, well informed and polite.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils almost always behave very well in lessons and around the school. One pupil, typifying the views of others, said, 'behaviour is super-good, 95% of the time'.
- They get along with their teachers and each other well. Teachers help pupils learn how to build bridges with their friends if ever they fall out.
- The school works very effectively to support pupils who exhibit challenging behaviour but staff take a firm line if they behave roughly towards others.
- The introduction of a wide range of activities at lunchtime has helped improve behaviour at lunchtime. During the inspection, the pupils were seen to be having a great time as they played outside. They engaged in games, using an excellent range of equipment, chatted with their friends, played on the climbing frame or read a book. The atmosphere was exceptionally happy and harmonious.
- Very occasionally, when teachers' expectations of pupils' behaviour and productivity are too low, some pupils lose focus and become distracted. When this happens, their learning slows.
- Effective strategies by senior leaders have meant that attendance has improved year-on-year and is now above average. The school works very effectively with the very small minority of pupils who do not attend school regularly enough. As a result, the proportion of pupils who are persistent absentees is low.

Outcomes for pupils

Inadequate

- Standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of key stage 2 have been low for the last three years.
- Pupils' progress in writing has been similar to that made by the bottom 10% of pupils nationally in each of the last three years. Their progress in mathematics has been in the bottom 10% nationally for the past two years.
- The results of the national tests at the end of key stage 2 in 2016 show that middle-

attaining pupils made particularly slow progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Boys achieved poorly in all three subjects and girls achieved poorly in mathematics. Although results were affected by the lower achievement of some pupils who joined the school in the final years of key stage 2, this does not fully explain the low standards, either for this year group or for previous cohorts of pupils.

- In 2016, too few of the higher-ability pupils attained at a greater depth in reading, writing or mathematics.
- Attainment at the end of key stage 1 was also below average in writing and mathematics last year.
- Pupils make uneven progress in mathematics, although better teaching means that pupils are beginning to make faster progress. Gaps in pupils' knowledge and in their skills in applying the reasoning strategies mean that they have difficulties tackling familiar and unfamiliar problems. Teaching is not consistently strong enough to eradicate these gaps.
- The work in pupils' books and current assessment information shows that pupils are making better progress in writing than in previous years. Leaders know, however, that some middle-attaining boys are still working below age-related expectations.
- Strategies to improve pupils' reading are proving to be effective. While standards in reading at the end of key stage 2 were significantly below average last year, they were better than those in previous years. The proportion of pupils in Year 1 that met the expected standard in the national phonics screening check rose from being below the national average to being in line with it. This reflects well the improved strategies introduced to strengthen provision for reading throughout the school, including consolidating pupils' basic skills.
- Effective strategies to support disadvantaged pupils led to this group of pupils achieving standards broadly in line with those of other pupils nationally last year. The school's current information shows that this positive picture is being maintained.
- The large majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making secure progress. The work seen in a sample of books shows that they are well supported in lessons. Leaders know that, of the pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, lower-attaining pupils are not making the same good progress that middle- and higher-attaining pupils make.

Early years provision

Requires improvement

- From starting points which are broadly typical, the proportion of children in the Reception Year who achieve a good level of development is lower than that seen nationally. Last year, results in mathematics and reading were well below the national averages.
- Children in the early years are currently achieving in line with last year's cohort. The school's targets in the early years are not sufficiently ambitious to accelerate children's progress more rapidly so that they achieve as much as they could.
- Nevertheless, the early years provision is improving quickly as a result of the changes introduced by the teacher in charge.

- Since taking over the leadership of the early years, the teacher responsible has made considerable improvements to the curriculum and the quality of teaching. She has ensured that all adults who work in the early years are well trained and make a strong contribution to the increasingly good progress the children are making.
- More accurate assessments of children's starting points are ensuring that provision is better tailored to their different needs. For example, the curriculum has been adapted to provide more opportunities for children to develop their early reading and writing skills through imaginative and varied activities. Provision has also been strengthened to help improve the personal, social and emotional development of pupils who arrive at the setting with more limited social skills.
- Children who have additional needs are quickly identified and supported. Leaders also ensure that the very small minority of children from disadvantaged backgrounds receive the support they need to make progress in their learning and development.
- In the sessions observed, the children were all very well engaged as a result of the rich and stimulating activities that their teachers had planned. Some were pretending to be estate agents as they identified different types of houses and made appointments for viewings; others became dinosaur experts hunting for fossils. The children are currently working out what to do about the Komodo dragon that has been locked in the shed.
- Leaders ensure that the curriculum is planned to develop children's skills across each of the areas of learning. They ensure that all pupils are given opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills, as well as their mathematical understanding. Good use is made of the outside space to aid pupils' physical development.
- The children are happy, safe and well cared for.

School details

Unique reference number	120116
Local authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	10023268

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	386
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Zoe Warner
Headteacher	Deirdre Kallquist
Telephone number	0116 277 2082
Website	www.blabystokes.com
Email address	admin@blabystokes.com
Date of previous inspection	6 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-size primary school.
- Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of key stage 2.
- The school does not meet requirements on the publication of information about the curriculum on its website. Details of the curriculum are not set out for each subject and for each year group as is required.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in all classes. On the first day of the inspection, the observations were carried out jointly with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed children at lunchtimes as they played in the playground.
- Inspectors met with different groups of pupils and also spoke with pupils in lessons and in the playground. The lead inspector spoke with parents as they dropped their children off at school on the first day of the inspection. Inspectors also considered the views expressed in the 52 responses to the Ofsted online questionnaire, Parent View, and 51 comments made by parents using the free-text service.
- Inspectors held meetings with senior leaders and governors and with groups of teachers. They considered the 28 responses from staff to an online questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered a wide range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and strategic plan, published information about pupils' attainment and progress, and the school's records about pupils' current achievement. Inspectors looked at a wide range of pupils' work, as well as the school's records on the quality of teaching. They considered evidence of the school's management of teachers' performance and their continuing professional development. Inspectors scrutinised the school's website and the minutes of meetings of the governing body.
- A wide range of documents was evaluated regarding the school's safeguarding arrangements. These included the child protection policy, records of risks assessments carried out on school visits, accident logs and records of actions taken to protect children at risk of harm.

Inspection team

Daniel Burton, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Philip Garnham	Ofsted Inspector
Jeannie Haigh	Ofsted Inspector
Jeremy Bird	Ofsted Inspector

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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. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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