

# Blaby Thistly Meadow Primary School

Hospital Lane, Blaby, Leicester, LE8 4FE

## Inspection dates

2–3 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils achieve very well in Reception and make good progress as they move through the school.
- Teachers work closely with their partner school and share ideas. This has helped improve the quality of teaching.
- Additional adults give helpful support to individual pupils and small groups, which allows them to make good progress.
- Classrooms are bright and welcoming and pupils are happy and enjoy school. This is shown in most pupils regularly coming to school each day.
- Reading is taught well and pupils read regularly and enjoy books.
- Pupils develop good social skills and say that they feel safe at school. They are sociable and speak clearly and confidently. They behave well and have good manners.
- The headteacher's relentless determination to improve all aspects of the school, coupled with support from other leaders and the governing body, have brought about improved pupil achievement and quality of teaching.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Not enough teaching is outstanding and there is still some which requires improvement.
- Some learning in lessons does not move at a brisk enough pace and teachers do not always set work which requires pupils to think for themselves or become independent learners.
- Teachers check pupils' work for accuracy but do not always tell them how to improve it further, especially in pupils' written work.
- Middle leaders check and track the progress that pupils make but do not monitor the quality of teaching enough to ensure that it is at least good and take action to improve it where necessary.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, of which two were joint observations with the headteacher. In addition, the inspection team made a number of other short visits to lessons.
- Meetings and discussions were held with groups of pupils, members of the governing body, senior and middle leaders and with a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors took account of the 30 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) during the inspection. They also spoke to parents and carers as they brought their children to school. Questionnaire returns from 21 staff were also scrutinised.
- The inspection team listened to pupils read, spoke with them about their learning and looked at the work in their books. The inspectors looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents relating to safeguarding.

## Inspection team

Heather Simpson, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Joanne Sanchez-Thompson

Additional inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is an average-sized primary school.
- The largest group represented in the school population are of White British heritage and the overwhelming majority speak English as their first language.
- Very few pupils have minority ethnic or Gypsy Roma heritage.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by school action, school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- Since the last inspection, an executive headteacher has been appointed who also leads and manages another local primary school. The headteacher took up his post in September 2011.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

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

- Improve the consistency of teaching so that all is good or better by ensuring that:
  - all learning in lessons moves at a brisk pace and pupils are not kept waiting for the teacher to check their work
  - teachers provide more open-ended tasks which encourage pupils to think, generate ideas and become confident, independent learners
  - teacher comments, especially on pupils' writing, make it clear how pupils can improve their work further.
- Give middle leaders more opportunities to make a greater contribution to improving the quality of teaching so that they play a full part in improving it and driving improvement.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children start school in Reception with skills that are below those typical for their age. All groups achieve very well because the curriculum is planned well and provides interesting and challenging activities that move learning forward rapidly. Indoor and outdoor environments are used effectively to promote literacy and numeracy skills, along with physical and personal, social and emotional development. As a result, pupils achieve at least in line with and, in some areas, above others of a similar age when they enter Year 1.
- Relationships in Reception are a strength, and all adults have high expectations of what the children can achieve. For example, in a lesson about numbers, a child in the role-play area was encouraged to weigh the 'baby' and read the weight on the scales.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment has improved over recent years and pupils reach standards that are above the national average. All groups of pupils make good progress, especially in writing. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels has also increased in writing and mathematics, indicating that the more able achieve well.
- Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress and achieved broadly in line with the national average in the 2012 national tests. There was a dip in attainment of the pupils who left the school in 2012, especially in writing, but these pupils were below others, nationally, when they were in Year 2. However, they made good progress and closed the gaps in attainment between themselves and most pupils nationally, especially in mathematics. Current progress data and work in books show that pupils are on track to achieve above-average standards by the end of Year 6.
- Pupils make good progress in reading and read widely, including books written in French. Reading is promoted well and features prominently in all areas of the school. The value placed on reading is evident from the moment visitors enter the school. Pupils say that they enjoy reading and can discuss and give opinions about what they have read. Many read at home or to volunteers or a range of adults in school.
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium funding make good progress. This funding is used effectively to provide a range of support, such as additional adult time in lessons; to accelerate literacy and numeracy skills; sports coaching; attendance at lunchtime clubs; and subsidised school visits.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress due to the well-focused additional adult support they receive in lessons. Individual support is also provided for those with specific difficulties, for example those who find it difficult to pronounce sounds or words properly.
- Pupils from Gypsy Roma heritage make slower rates of progress than their peers, but this is often linked to their attendance being lower. Pupils from other minority ethnic heritages and the very few pupils who are learning English as an additional language, make similar progress to that of their peers.

**The quality of teaching is good**

- Links with the local partner school have a positive impact on the quality of teaching, which has improved and is now typically good. Strong relationships between all staff and pupils help create a very positive climate for learning which makes sure that pupils are motivated and participate well in lessons. High expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour are set.
- Teachers plan learning which matches the differing abilities of the pupils. They build on previous learning and provide a wide range of activities which interest pupils. This was seen, particularly, in excellent learning in Reception, where imaginative and lively teaching allowed children to develop their knowledge of numbers. Both indoor and outdoor areas were used to practise counting, ordering numbers, adding on and taking away. This was done using action songs, role play, reading and computers.
- Teachers make good use of resources, including technology to engage pupils and extend their writing skills into other areas of the curriculum. For example, in a history lesson for Year 5 pupils, laptops were used to compile a quiz about the Second World War. Pupils were able to use search engines, download photographs and create work which would be placed on their class web page.
- Where teaching is not always as effective, pupils often have to wait for the teacher to check their work or give them something else to do before they can move on. This reduces the amount of work pupils complete and the pace of learning. Additionally, in some lessons pupils do not have enough opportunities to develop their own ideas, explain their work to a partner or organise their learning themselves.
- Additional adults are used effectively to support and further develop learning. They add significantly to progress pupils make by asking probing and challenging questions. They are good role models and provide valuable support in reading, writing and mathematics, particularly for those who are disabled and those who have special educational needs.
- Teachers assess learning within lessons and pick up common errors as they happen. Books are marked regularly and the new marking system introduced is being applied consistently well. However, this tends to focus on what pupils have got right or wrong and pupils are not always given the chance to correct their mistakes or know how to. Written comments, in particular, do not inform pupils enough how they can improve their work.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well supported. For instance, a school assembly was used to discuss a local news item about the discovery of the skeleton of King Richard III in Leicester. Pupils listened carefully and behaved well throughout. They also sang the chosen hymn with high levels of energy, and in two parts.

**The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They concentrate well and most persevere in order to complete tasks set. They behave well in lessons and around school and are polite, respectful and friendly towards visitors.
- Responses received from parents show that they think behaviour at the school is good and pupils are kept safe. They describe it as a 'genuine, caring, school'. Pupils also say that behaviour is good and they are looked after well. They know and follow the school rules. Pupils say that they enjoy the rewards they get for good behaviour, especially 'golden time' and the raffle-ticket prizes.

- Pupils have a good level of understanding about cultural similarities and differences. They learn about other countries and world religions and this helps to ensure that there is no discrimination and good relationships are fostered. All groups of pupils are included in the full range of activities provided by the school.
- Pupils say they feel safe and can give examples of how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet. Instances of bullying are rare and pupils say that incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively. Pupils understand and know what types of bullying exist, including cyber-bullying.
- Children in Reception are developing good social skills. They play together harmoniously, share equipment and ask and answer questions politely. Staff model language well and, as a result, children are becoming articulate and confident speakers who take part readily in conversation with each other and with adults.
- Attendance has improved and is now in line with the national average. This is as a result of action taken by leaders to address persistent absenteeism. Additionally, more enjoyable experiences are now offered at school, such as lunchtime clubs, which make pupils want to attend. During one enthralling activity, a Reception child said, 'I love school.'

### **The leadership and management** are good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Clear vision and high expectations are communicated and shared by all staff. Effective procedures manage teachers' performance, and links with the partner school, together with good-quality training, have led to improvements in the quality of teaching.
- Most leaders are involved in monitoring the progress pupils make. However, middle leaders are not involved enough in lesson observations and are, therefore, unable to check the impact of the teaching on pupils' learning, progress and behaviour so that action can be taken to ensure improvement takes place where necessary.
- Rigorous pupil-progress meetings are used to hold teachers to account, and are linked to the performance management targets set for them annually. These meetings make sure that additional support is provided for pupils who are not making swift enough progress.
- Senior leaders ensure the school's good capacity to improve further. There have been notable improvements in achievement in mathematics, the quality of teaching and in attendance rates.
- Leadership in Reception is good. Children achieve well from their start at school due to a well-planned curriculum, imaginative and lively teaching and quality support from all adults, who work together as a united team.
- Pupils of all abilities and learning needs have equal access to a good range of learning opportunities that assist them to achieve well, including in literacy. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of visits and visitors. Pupils say they enjoy the recent clubs introduced, including Master Chef, archery and the gardening project. The curriculum also promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development; for example, pupils learn French very successfully and study the cultures of other countries. Sports coaches work with pupils at lunchtime and this improves the pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

- Parents are very pleased with the school and express positive views. They are kept well informed through newsletters, and curriculum workshops are provided so that they can support their children at home, for example with mathematics.
- The local authority provides helpful support as needed or requested. In its last report, it summarised, accurately, the school's current position with regard to achievement, quality of teaching and leadership and management.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - challenges the school well and, with the guidance of an external adviser, sets the headteacher well-directed performance management objectives
  - actively participates in monitoring activities, including talking to pupils and looking at the new marking system used in books
  - is kept regularly informed through headteacher reports which include analyses of school data, updates on school improvement and evaluation of development priorities
  - fulfils its duties well, including meeting all safeguarding requirements
  - allocates funding, including the pupil premium, to ensure that all pupils achieve as well as others nationally.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	119956
<b>Local authority</b>	Leicestershire
<b>Inspection number</b>	401893

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	201
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mike Edwards
<b>Headteacher</b>	Colin Bowpitt (Executive Headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 July 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	0116 2775648
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