

# Blidworth Oaks Primary School

Haywood Avenue, Blidworth, Mansfield, NG21 0RD

**Inspection dates** 30–31 January 2013

<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 make good progress from starting points which are well below expectations for their age.
- Teachers provide activities which are interesting, lively and varied. They know each pupil's needs well and give them good advice on how to improve their work.
- Pupils behave well, feel safe, and enjoy school, although attendance rates are only average.
- Leaders keep a close check on the quality of teaching. On-going training for staff has led to marked improvements in teaching.
- The governing body knows the school very well. Governors provide a good level of support. They share the school leaders' vision for further improvement.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are good. They cooperate well with one another and with staff. They are being well prepared to take their places in the modern world.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Although some teaching is outstanding and allows pupils to make outstanding progress, there is not enough of this for teaching to be graded outstanding overall, and some teaching is not yet consistently good.
- Attendance figures are only average. Most pupils attend well but a few pupils are persistently absent.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes. They observed 18 lessons, two of them jointly with the headteacher, and made brief visits to several more. They also closely examined the work in pupils' books.
- They held discussions with pupils, parents and carers, school staff, governors, and an officer representing the local authority.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents covering safeguarding, attendance, behaviour, pupils' progress and attainment, the work of the governing body, the school improvement plan, and the monitoring of teaching quality.
- They consulted the Parent View website, although only seven parents and carers had posted responses to the on-line questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Richard Marsden, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Andrew Truby	Additional Inspector
Wendy Davies	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school. Pupils are taught in eight mixed-age classes.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average, and almost none speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is almost double the national average. (This is additional government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, those in local authority care and pupils with a parent in the armed forces.)
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action, is almost double the national average.
- The proportion of these pupils supported at school action plus, or with a statement of special educational needs is average.
- A very few pupils attend alternative off-site provision for short periods on a part-time basis. This is organised by 'R.E.A.L. Education', an organisation which helps support the behaviour and learning of pupils who have difficulties in mainstream schools.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum standards for pupils' attainment and progress.
- At the time of the inspection the teachers in five of the school's eight classes had been in post for less than one year.

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

- Improve teaching so that it leads to faster progress in English and mathematics by:
  - insisting on higher standards of handwriting and presentation and a closer attention to spelling and grammatical accuracy in pupils' written work in all subjects
  - extending opportunities for pupils to practise the skills of extended writing in a variety of subjects, not just in English classes
  - ensuring that, when teachers have marked pupils' work, pupils always read and act on the advice they are given.
- Strengthen the school's engagement with the small number of families who do not yet see the value of their child's regular attendance at school.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- When children join the school in the Early Years Foundation Stage, their knowledge and skills are well below those typical for their age. They make good progress from the very outset. By the end of Year 6, the gap between their attainment and that of pupils nationally in reading, writing and mathematics closes markedly.
- In 2012, pupils reached the end of Key Stage 2 with levels still below the national average. However, inspection evidence shows securely that current pupils in Year 6 are now on track to reach standards in line with the national average. Leaders' tracking of pupils' progress show that in other year groups, too, pupils have made good progress over time. This is the result of leaders' sharply focused action to address underachievement and improving teaching.
- Parents and carers, and pupils themselves, say that pupils' progress is good. Inspectors found no significant variations in the progress rates of boys and girls. The large number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals also achieve well. There is no gap between their achievement and that of others based on their average points scores. This is because the school uses the extra funding available through the pupil premium very effectively to provide extra support and to ensure that their achievement is good.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs achieve well. Their needs are carefully identified and they receive intensive support in lessons or in one-to-one activities with a teaching assistant or other adult nearby. The small number from minority ethnic heritages and those who speak English as an additional language also make good progress.
- Standards of reading are average. Pupils' scores in the phonics screening test (which checks whether pupils' understanding of letters and the sounds they make are at the expected level at the end of Year 1) were below average in 2012, but this was good progress from their very low starting points. The most able pupils in Years 2 and 6 read fluently and with very good expression. They show skills beyond those expected for their age. Less-able pupils in these years are more hesitant, but they show a very sound grasp of the principles of reading. They cope with unfamiliar words using the 'sounding out' and 'blending' techniques which they have been taught. Pupils say they read often, and they talk with enthusiasm about the kind of books they enjoy reading and why they enjoy them.
- Achievement in mathematics is good. Pupils concentrate well on the tasks they are given in lessons because these are well matched to their abilities. They enjoy learning through 'hands-on' activities, for example, weighing sand or water in a lesson on measurements. They eagerly discuss problems in pairs and respond to teachers' questions which are carefully designed to help deepen and broaden their understanding.
- Although achievement in writing is good, inspectors saw few examples of pupils' extended writing in subjects other than English. Unclear handwriting and untidy presentation, and, in some cases, the 'overlooking' of careless spelling or grammatical mistakes, stopped achievement in writing being better.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers plan work very carefully to make sure that it builds on what each pupil already knows, understands and can do. As a result, lesson activities motivate both boys and girls and challenge pupils of all abilities at the right level. The school uses mixed-age groups very imaginatively and flexibly to ensure that all pupils can make progress at a good rate.
- Teachers carefully track the progress made by disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to make sure that they are not disadvantaged in any way. Teachers provide good support for these pupils as was seen during a literacy session for all classes where the school was a hive of activity. Every corner of the building was buzzing with pupils eagerly practising their reading and comprehension skills in small groups or one-to-one with a teaching assistant or other adult.
- Teachers make good use of visual aids, computer technology, 'hands-on' tasks, and activities against the clock to ensure that lessons move at a good pace. Pupils do not have to sit and listen inactively for long periods. They do not become bored. In an outstanding mathematics lesson on understanding the links between different units of measurement, not a moment was wasted as pupils moved swiftly from one activity to another. In these activities they covered the same ground but in a variety of ways, so that their understanding grew markedly.
- Teachers expect pupils to work hard. They mark work conscientiously, showing pupils clearly how well they are doing and pointing out what they need to do to improve. Pupils say they find these comments helpful. Sometimes, however, mistakes are left unchecked or, if they are picked up, teachers do not check that pupils act on the advice they are given. As a result, the same mistakes sometimes occur repeatedly in a pupil's work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, adults interact constantly with children, taking every opportunity to develop their language, observational and social skills. Their perseverance and encouragement give children the confidence to try out the activities on offer. These activities, both indoors and out, are purposeful and varied, carefully planned to promote different aspects of children's learning.
- Teachers make sure that pupils practise and extend their mathematical and computer skills regularly across different subjects, and they encourage pupils to read widely. However, they do not provide enough opportunities for pupils to practise their writing skills in subjects beyond English.

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

- Pupils' behaviour is good and is well managed. Pupils show respect for others and are eager to learn. The school is calm and orderly. This ensures that teachers are able to teach, and that pupils' energies are channelled so that they can learn in a purposeful and effective way.
  - Pupils are proud to take on jobs and responsibilities within school. They develop confidence and self-esteem as they serve, for example, as classroom monitors, reading champions, or in the influential school parliament.
  - Pupils and their parents and carers express confidence that pupils are safe in school and free from harassment. Pupils show a good awareness of different types of bullying, including internet-based bullying. They have confidence that the school will effectively handle any such instances if they should arise.
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- Bullying and safety issues are well covered in lessons and assemblies. A lesson on resisting peer pressure, based on pressure to take up smoking, was very effective in promoting discussion and thoughtful responses from pupils.
- The school gives high levels of support to pupils whose circumstances may make them particularly vulnerable. The inspectors saw telling examples of how such support has improved the attendance, attitudes and progress of specific pupils facing particularly difficult circumstances.
- From the start of the Early Years Foundation Stage, teachers ensure that they promote the school's agreed routines. They refer explicitly to 'Learning Power' (the school's policy for promoting positive behaviour and attitudes), and apply this consistently so that pupils are fully aware of what is expected of them. The school's recently introduced use of alternative provision off-site, together with consistent use of the behaviour management strategies, is having a good impact on behaviour and has reduced the number of exclusions.
- Attendance rates have been below average although they rose to average last year. They are no higher than this because of a small number of pupils whose families do not see the value of their child's regular attendance at school.
- Pupils respond thoughtfully when given opportunities to reflect on life's deeper issues. Through links with other schools, including a school in Africa, and, more recently, in Indonesia, their horizons are broadened and they show a good awareness of different people's backgrounds and cultures. They are well prepared to take their places in modern society.

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

- Leaders and managers keep every aspect of the school's work under close scrutiny. They have an accurate awareness of its strengths and weaknesses. They communicate ambition and high expectations to all staff. The school improvement plan sets out ambitious but realistic targets for improvement. Staff cooperate well together as they strive for further improvement.
  - The performance of all staff is overseen closely. At the time of the inspection four class teachers had only recently qualified. They were receiving high quality support to ensure that their teaching promoted good progress in pupils. Teachers' salary progression is carefully monitored and promotion is only given when teachers' impact on pupils' achievement indicates that this is fully deserved.
  - Staff training, most of it arranged by the school, but also some with the local authority support, has led to significant improvement since the last inspection. Key improvements include: ensuring that pupils' individual learning needs are more closely met; keeping a sharp focus on what pupils' are actually learning, rather than merely on the activity they are doing; using questioning more effectively to deepen pupils' understanding.
  - Staff have opportunities to share ideas and sharpen their classroom skills by learning from the school's most skilled and experienced teachers. This has had a good impact, although leaders have not yet ensured that outstanding practice is more widely spread throughout the school.
  - The local authority has confirmed that the standards teachers apply when they mark pupils' work in reading, writing and mathematics are in line with the standards agreed nationally. As a result, teachers can tell pupils confidently how well they are doing in relation to other pupils nationally.
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- Pupils learn a broad and balanced range of subjects. The school offers a range of out-of-school activities. These are popular and well attended. They include music and a range of sports. Visitors, visits and 'theme days' such as Victorian Day or Explorer Day provide memorable experiences. Pupils enjoy residential visits, on which younger ones are encouraged to develop a love of nature and the outdoors, and older ones enjoy adventurous activities to develop their confidence and self-esteem.
  - The school engages well with most families. Opportunities for parents and carers to come into school and learn alongside their children in a wide range of activities are popular and well attended.
  - Leaders ensure that there is no discrimination, so all pupils, regardless of background or need, have full access to everything the school has to offer. Child protection and safeguarding have a high priority. Leaders keep these areas under meticulous review. They ensure that all legal requirements are met and that the school's practice in this respect is good.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body is well organised and well informed about the school. Governors know of the school's strengths and areas for improvement, and how well it performs against schools nationally. They provide valuable support for the headteacher and contribute well to shaping the school's direction in the quest for further improvement. Governors are closely involved with the day-to-day work of the school. Some make informal visits during the school day. Some make formal visits where they hold discussions with staff, produce written reports and agree targets for further development. They have an accurate view of the quality of teaching and a good grasp of the way finances, including the pupil premium, are used to good effect to promote pupils' achievement. Governors know where the strengths and weaknesses of teaching lie. They ensure that, when staff move up the salary scales, this reflects their impact on pupils' achievement. They make sure that all requirements for safeguarding and child protection are met, and that these areas are reviewed regularly. They undergo training to keep their skills up to date, and play a full part in ensuring that all adults who have access to pupils are vetted, and that pupils are kept safe.
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## 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>	131560
<b>Local authority</b>	Nottinghamshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	406441

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	253
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Susie Bergenroth
<b>Headteacher</b>	Celia Lassetter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01623 792348
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