

# Inspection of Bleakhouse Primary School

Bleakhouse Road, Oldbury, West Midlands B68 9DS

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Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2023

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders have worked successfully to create a whole-school team following amalgamation with the infant school in September 2020. Bleakhouse Primary School is a friendly, inclusive community. Staff care for pupils well. Everyone is valued, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

Leaders are ambitious for all pupils. They want everyone to meet with success. Pupils enjoy coming to school and feel safe. Pupils say that there are always adults they can talk to. They understand what bullying is. Pupils say that it happens sometimes but not very often. Adults work with them to sort it out.

Pupils show pride in their school. They move around school calmly and greet others politely. They show respect and friendship. In lessons, pupils work hard, showing determination and enthusiasm.

Pupils enjoy a wide range of in-school and extra-curricular activities that enrich learning. They learn about equality and fairness. Pupils like the adventure and residential experiences on offer.

Pupils proudly take on leadership roles, including being 'Bleakhouse bookworms', learning league and school councillors. They enjoy fundraising for charities and events. For example, the film night held during the inspection was to raise funds for Year 6 celebrations.

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

Leaders have worked closely with governors to build a whole-school culture following the amalgamation of the previous infant and junior schools. There has been a drive and focus on developing a curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. Leaders want the best for every pupil. Everyone shares this clear vision for the school and pupils live up to leaders' high expectations.

Leaders have identified what pupils will learn in each subject from Nursery through to Year 6. This work is now almost fully complete across each subject of the national curriculum. Teachers use this to inform what they will teach in lessons. Leaders also plan visits, and other opportunities and experiences, that enrich pupils' learning in the curriculum. However, there is more work to be done to identify the subject-specific vocabulary that teachers need to teach so that pupils can talk about their learning.

Leaders prioritise reading. Staff receive regular training on the teaching of early reading. As a result, reading is a strength in the school. Pupils read the right books to help them practise their early reading skills. If pupils need extra help, skilled staff provide timely support for them. This helps pupils to get off to a flying start as young readers. Across the school, pupils enjoy reading. Story time is a lovely time

where books are shared with pupils. Pupils recommend books and authors to others. Book areas around school are well maintained. Leaders have thought carefully about the books they would like pupils to read to learn about different cultures, equality and diversity. Pupils develop into confident and fluent readers.

Assessment strategies in reading are highly effective. However, assessment strategies in other subjects are not consistent or fully embedded. These do not always identify gaps in what pupils know or help pupils to recall key knowledge.

Children in the early years quickly learn to follow routines. Children play well together. The learning environment is calm and purposeful. Children enjoy developing their imaginative play. For example, in Nursery, children take turns to play in the seaside area. They carefully lay out their towels and put on armbands as they pretend to swim. Staff encourage children to respond in sentences. Relationships between staff and children are warm and positive. Children are keen to share their learning.

Strong leadership for pupils with SEND means that there is early identification of pupils' needs. Staff skilfully support these pupils. Good links with external agencies help pupils and their families to access the right help. Pupils with SEND thrive at Bleakhouse Primary.

Pupils show positive attitudes to learning and take pride in their work. They understand the school's values and know how important these values are in their everyday life. Pupils show respect for others. They enjoy participating in sport with local schools. Enterprise events help pupils to think about others. There is a wide range of clubs on offer to help develop pupils' interests.

Staff say that leaders listen to them. They say that leaders take account of their workload and well-being. Leaders develop the talents of staff and pupils. Staff are proud of their school.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Effective systems are in place for staff to report and record concerns. All staff have access to regular safeguarding training. For example, staff regularly discuss safeguarding scenarios.

Leaders respond in a timely manner to concerns raised by staff. Leaders follow up with external agencies to help make sure pupils and their families access the right support.

Leaders ensure that pupils learn about a wide range of safety issues to help keep themselves safe in school, online and in the community.

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

### (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not fully embedded strategies to assess pupils' learning. As a result, teachers do not always use assessment strategies well to inform teaching. Some pupils struggle to recall important knowledge that they have previously learned. Leaders should make sure that there is effective use of assessment that is consistent across all subjects.
- In some subjects, leaders do not identify the specific vocabulary they want pupils to learn. This means that pupils do not always confidently use subject-specific language related to what they are learning. Leaders should continue to refine curriculum planning, identifying the subject-specific language that pupils need to understand and use.

## 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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	103934
<b>Local authority</b>	Sandwell
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268168
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	421
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Sarah Wilton
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Bates
<b>Website</b>	<a href="https://www.bleakhouseprimary.school">https://www.bleakhouseprimary.school</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	2 and 3 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- In September 2020, Warley Infant School amalgamated with Bleakhouse Junior School. The school is now known as Bleakhouse Primary School.
- Leaders manage a breakfast and after-school club.
- Leaders use one registered alternative provision.

## Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, one of whom is the special educational needs coordinator, and the assistant headteacher. In addition, inspectors met with subject leaders, staff and governors.

- During the inspection, inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: reading, English, mathematics, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors looked at a range of school documents, including information about the school's curriculum, behaviour, attendance and governors' meetings. Inspectors also observed some pupils reading to familiar adults.
- To check the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors reviewed the school's policies, procedures and records. Inspectors met with the designated safeguarding leads and also gathered the views of pupils, staff, parents and governors.
- Inspectors reviewed information published on the school's website.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around school, in classes and at social times.
- Inspectors reviewed and discussed records of pupils' attendance.
- Inspectors took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys for parents, staff and pupils. Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers at the school gate.

### **Inspection team**

Pamela Matty, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Tim Bassett	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Yates	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Gater	His Majesty's Inspector

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