

Blue Coat Church of England Aided Infant School

Hanch Place, Walsall, West Midlands WS1 3AF

Inspection dates

12–13 July 2017

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leadership has been improved and strengthened at all levels, including middle leadership, to ensure that the school has good capacity to improve further.
- Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and almost all spoken to, or who responded to surveys, said that the school was led well.
- The very strong ethos of the school, rooted in its core values, ensures that pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are outstanding.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength.
- Pupils attend regularly; instances of persistent absence in key stage 1 are exceptionally low.
- Provision in early years is outstanding. Children get off to a very rapid start in Nursery from their very low starting points.
- Teaching and learning are good and especially strong in early years and Year 1.
- Arrangements for safeguarding are rigorous. Pupils reported that they feel very safe and parents agreed.
- Pupils achieve overall outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2 which compare favourably with the national average.
- Leadership of special educational needs is good, ensuring that pupils' specific needs are identified very early so that appropriate support arrangements can be put in place.
- Those pupils who join the school with little or no English make very rapid progress as a result of the effective provision and support for their linguistic and communication needs.
- Governors are very supportive and involved in school life. They ask challenging questions to drive improvement.
- Too few disadvantaged pupils, especially those who achieved the expected standard at the end of early years, achieve higher standards or are working at greater depth by the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders' and governors' evaluation of the pupil premium is not rigorous enough.
- Teaching is not yet consistently good in Year 2 where middle-ability and most-able pupils are not sufficiently challenged in their learning, particularly in mathematics, despite recent staff training in mathematics.
- The school's very detailed tracking information does not give a clear indication of the in-year progress of different groups of pupils; consequently governors cannot easily identify any groups which may be falling behind in their progress.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve outcomes for middle-ability disadvantaged pupils in reading, writing and mathematics by ensuring that:
 - challenge for middle-ability and most-able pupils is as strong in Year 2 as it is in other year groups
 - the mathematics training Year 2 teachers have received on teaching mastery and greater depth makes a greater impact on pupils' outcomes
 - additional adults are deployed consistently well to provide additional support and challenge for pupils with the potential to achieve higher standards or work at greater depth.
- Improve tracking and evaluation of pupils' progress by ensuring that:
 - leaders provide detailed information throughout the year about the progress made by different groups of pupils, in order that leaders and governors can quickly identify any pupils that are not making the progress of which they are capable
 - governors follow up on the challenging questions they have asked to ensure that they get the full and detailed answers they are looking for
 - pupil premium funding has a greater impact on improving outcomes for middle-ability and higher attaining disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve leadership and governance by ensuring that:
 - pupil premium funding is having a greater impact on improving outcomes for middle-ability disadvantaged pupils
 - the evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding is more rigorous.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Leaders have maintained good outcomes for pupils since the school was last inspected. Pupils consistently make rapid progress from their very low starting points as a result of the highly effective provision in early years and good teaching in key stage 1.
- Leadership has been further improved by the addition of a new head of school role and more effective middle leadership. This has increased the school's capacity to improve further.
- Leaders know their school well. They are aware of the school's main strengths and areas that need to improve further. Monitoring of teaching is shared effectively by leaders and coordinators so that leaders at all levels know their areas of responsibility well.
- The ethos of the school is successfully built on its Christian and British values. This ensures that provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. Each week, a core value is displayed (it was 'humility' during the inspection) which encourages reflection on the meaning of the wording displayed. Pupils have had opportunities to reflect on recent national tragedies.
- British values are suitably promoted so that pupils gain an understanding of voting and the rule of law.
- Parents are involved in celebrating their children's achievement, for example through a Year 2 leavers' assembly. They are overwhelmingly positive about the leadership of the school.
- The curriculum is broad and creative to ensure that all key areas of learning are taught. It enables pupils to flourish, both academically and in their personal development, through a wide range of extra-curricular activities including art, computing and drama. Such activities enrich learning and they are enjoyed by the pupils. Curriculum briefings help parents understand how they can support their children's learning at home.
- Good leadership of special educational needs and English as an additional language ensures that these groups of pupils make good progress, given their original starting points. Leaders make effective use of additional funding to improve outcomes for these pupils.
- The physical education (PE) and sport premium is used effectively to fund expert sports coaches. This enables pupils to access a wide range of good-quality sporting opportunities, including cricket, athletics and swimming. Coaches also work alongside class teachers and mid-day supervisors to build up the sustainability of provision for the future.
- External support and challenge from the local authority and diocese are thorough. Strong partnerships with the federated junior school ensure a smooth transition from infant to junior school, especially for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

- Performance management arrangements, training and induction for new staff are effective in most respects; however, the training on teaching mastery and greater depth in mathematics has not yet had sufficient impact on teaching in Year 2. The level of challenge for middle- and higher ability pupils, especially those who are disadvantaged, is not sufficient to enable them to make the progress of which they are capable.
- The pupil premium has had an impact in ensuring that more of the disadvantaged pupils are achieving the expected standard by the end of key stage 1 and thus diminishing the difference in attainment with their peers and all pupils nationally. The proportion of most-able pupils achieving greater depth has improved. However, not enough middle-ability pupils are going on to reach greater depth from their expected starting points.
- The school has introduced a detailed performance-tracking system which clearly identifies pupils' attainment at different points in the year and how individual pupils are progressing. However, it does not make sufficiently explicit how well different groups are achieving throughout the year.
- A very small minority of parents spoken to said that communication with school leaders could be improved, but this view was not shared by the very large majority of other parents who spoke to inspectors.

Governance of the school

- Governors are very supportive of the school. They are keen for self-improvement, as evidenced by the recent external review of governance they commissioned. They are active in the life of the school, conducting focused visits, observing pupils at work and reviewing pupils' books. Consequently, they know the strengths of the school and many of the areas requiring improvement. They ask searching and challenging questions about outcomes for pupils, including those that are disadvantaged. They receive regular detailed information on the attainment of pupils and the impact of support on pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- The minutes of governing body and committee meetings indicate that:
 - they have not received sufficient information on the progress of pupils during the academic year
 - where leaders do not have the answer to a challenging question posed, governors are not robust enough at following it up further
 - evaluation of the impact of pupil premium funding has not been rigorous enough.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors ensure that there is a strong culture of promoting the safety and well-being of pupils. Designated child protection leaders make safety their top priority. They are well informed about their responsibilities and keep up to date with relevant training and national guidance.

- They also ensure that all staff are trained regularly and appropriately to ensure that they fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities effectively. All referrals are conducted promptly and detailed records of incidents are held securely. The school meets all its statutory safeguarding responsibilities.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Good teaching has ensured that from their low starting points, most pupils achieve expected outcomes by the time they leave the school at the end of Year 2.
- Teachers set high expectations for pupils' work, behaviour and conduct so that lessons are orderly and free from disruptive behaviour. They set high standards of presentation in handwriting from an early age and pupils rise to the challenges set.
- Teachers develop pupils' speaking skills effectively, including for those learning English as an additional language. As a result, pupils are articulate and are expected to use full sentences in answering teachers' open-ended questions.
- There are high expectations for most-able pupils in Year 1, including most-able disadvantaged pupils. There is clear focus on developing pupils' inference skills in literacy, for example. Teachers ask effective questions to elicit pupils' understanding of 'hidden meanings'.
- Most additional adults are deployed well and demonstrate good subject knowledge and ensure that those who need additional help in order to catch up are effectively supported. That said, there are pupils who could achieve higher standards if additional support was better deployed so that they could work at greater depth.
- Teachers use additional resources well, including in mathematics to ensure that pupils have visual prompts in order to solve problems.
- Phonics is taught well and has led to consistently high outcomes for pupils by the end of Year 1.
- Homework set for pupils coupled with guidance and workshops for parents ensure that pupils are able to consolidate and extend their learning at home.
- Written feedback to pupils is consistently in line with the school's policy and gives pupils the opportunity to improve their work or take on additional challenges.
- In some Year 2 mathematics teaching, pupils spend too long working on tasks that do not move learning on or wait unnecessarily while the teacher is explaining the task to the whole class to ensure that everyone understands. On these occasions, pupils are not doing challenging work so their learning is consolidated rather than being extended. There is not enough challenge for middle-attaining and most-able pupils in Year 2.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils consistently exhibit very positive attitudes to their learning and are enthusiastic when talking about their work. Many spoken to said that they enjoy all their lessons without exception. A board is prominently on display near the entrance to celebrate their achievements.
- Pupils are articulate and confident in expressing their views and ideas with each other or to adults. They thrive on taking responsibilities as members of the school council or as house captains. Pupils are trained as language ambassadors to speak to children who are at an early stage of learning English as an additional language. They can also speak to parents or visitors in a range of languages including Arabic, Bengali, Hungarian, Polish, Punjabi and Urdu. Pupils are very mature in their conduct during assembly.
- Parents who spoke to inspectors, or who responded to Parent View, were overwhelmingly positive about the school's ethos. They were especially pleased with the way the school looks after and cares for their children, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Pupils have a strong understanding of the difference between right and wrong. They understand the 'good to be green' system and are aware of the consequences of poor behaviour. Pupils are well informed about the similarities and differences between major world religions, including Christianity, Sikhism and Islam.
- The school prepares pupils well for living in a diverse community through themed multicultural days, for example, those focusing on south east Asia and eastern Europe. Pupils of different backgrounds get on very well together and show British values of tolerance and respect for those with different views.
- Pupils said that incidents of bullying or name-calling were very rare. They had full confidence in reporting incidents to a member of staff. They were confident that they would be listened to and that appropriate action would be taken to resolve their concerns.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe in potentially risky situations. They are aware that they should never use the internet at school or home without the knowledge and guidance of an adult.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. Pupils set themselves high standards for conduct and behaviour in lessons and around the school at breaktimes. They move well around the building even in confined spaces.
- Exclusions are very rare.
- Pupils continue to behave themselves well and maintain their enthusiasm and focus

even in those activities that they find less challenging or which go on for too long. Occasionally in Year 2 they get bored and distracted where they find the work too easy, but they quickly re-engage with their learning when told to do so.

- Pupils take pride in the presentation of their work and are keen to show others what they have achieved.
- Pupils and parents spoken to confirmed that behaviour is of a consistently high standard.
- The school has maintained the trend of above-average and improving levels of attendance. Rates of persistent absence are very low and when non-attendance occurs, it often relates to extended holidays taken by parents. Attendance is in line with the national average, including for pupils that are disadvantaged and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Pupils currently in Year 2 are set to achieve above-average outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of this academic year. They have made good progress from their low starting points when they first joined the school.
- The proportion of most-able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, who have achieved higher standards or are working at greater depth in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 2, is improving. There has also been an improvement in the proportion of middle-ability pupils achieving higher standards or working at greater depth in these subjects.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress as a result of effective early identification and effective additional support. Where they are not, the school has identified the ongoing barriers to learning and put in place additional measures to promote more rapid learning.
- Many pupils join the school as beginners in English. By the time they leave, the large majority have successfully caught up with their peers.
- Pupils are prepared well for the next stage of their education through very close links with the junior school in the federation. Where pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are working below the expected standard for their age at the end of Year 2, there is close liaison between the specialist teams in both schools so that catch-up programmes can be implemented quickly.
- Most disadvantaged pupils currently in school have made expected progress from their starting points at the end of Reception and gone on to achieve at least expected outcomes at the end of Year 2. Consequently, they are diminishing the difference in attainment with their peers nationally over time. However, none of those disadvantaged pupils who were already at the expected standard for their age at the end of Reception has gone on to achieve a higher standard or is working at greater depth by the end of Year 2 in reading and writing.
- In last year's assessments at the end of Year 2, outcomes for pupils reaching at least the expected standard for their age in reading, writing and mathematics were well

above average. However, the proportion of middle-ability or most-able pupils going on to work at greater depth or to achieve high standards in reading, writing and mathematics in 2016 was very low compared with national averages.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- As a result of highly effective leadership and teaching, outcomes for children have improved significantly over time, particularly in literacy and numeracy. There has been a continuous rising trend in recent years so that outcomes, although still below the national average, are improving at a faster rate than nationally. Children, including those that are disadvantaged, are making very rapid progress in their learning, especially in Nursery. Children are very well prepared to start Year 1.
- Children are articulate and have a well-developed technical vocabulary, using terms such as 'archaeologist' correctly despite their typically low linguistic starting points. In their work on the theme of dinosaurs, children were able to classify creatures as 'herbivores' or 'carnivores'. They also understood what the terms meant.
- There is a very good learning environment that ensures that children make excellent gains in their learning. Through the use of 'learning labs', children are able to develop independence and choice in their learning. The learning environment supports children effectively across all learning areas. That said, the outdoor area is not as well developed.
- Adults have high expectations for children's learning and ensure that there is an element of challenge in their work, for example in subtracting numbers in mathematical work. They model language and key vocabulary well and insist on full-sentence replies from children. Teachers know when to intervene and when to step back. They teach phonics very well to ensure that children develop the decoding skills they need for reading more challenging texts.
- Expectations for behaviour and routines are well established. Pupils behave very well and get on extremely well with each other.

School details

Unique reference number	104231
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10032651

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	Infant
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	321
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	John Pryce-Jones
Executive Headteacher	Anthony Orlik
Telephone number	01922 720740
Website	www.bluecoatfederation.co.uk
Email address	postbox@bluecoatfederation.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	19–20 June 2013

Information about this school

- Blue Coat Church of England Aided Infant School is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average. The level of social deprivation locally is high.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is growing and is currently about one in eight, which is about in line with the national average. The percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below average.
- The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well above average, and on a rising trend. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is above average but on a three-year falling trend.

- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school mid-way through a key stage is very low.
- The executive headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection. The head of school joined in April 2016, initially in an acting capacity and then as substantive head from September 2016.
- There have been two changes to the chair of the governing body since the last inspection.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 31 lessons or parts of lessons, of which 12 were jointly observed with the executive headteacher. In addition, inspectors made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities.
- Inspectors heard pupils read during lessons.
- Inspectors held meetings with the executive headteacher, head of school, other leaders and members of staff, and spoke to a group of pupils.
- Inspectors met five governors, including the chair of the governing body. The lead inspector spoke to representatives from the local authority and Lichfield Diocese.
- Inspectors spoke to 61 parents around the school. In addition, they evaluated seven free-text responses to Parent View. There was an insufficient number of responses to take account of the online questionnaire Parent View. There were no responses to the pupil or staff surveys.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, as well as governing body minutes, improvement plans, and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- Inspectors also considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to special educational needs, English as an additional language, pupil premium funding, PE and sport premium funding, safeguarding and child protection.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Tracy Stone	Ofsted Inspector
Chris Ogden	Ofsted Inspector
Devinder Riat	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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