

Bexton Primary School

Blackhill Lane, Knutsford, Cheshire, WA16 9DB

Inspection dates 1–2 May 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | This inspection: | Good | 2 |
| Achievement of pupils | | Good | 2 |
| Quality of teaching | | Good | 2 |
| Behaviour and safety of pupils | | Outstanding | 1 |
| Leadership and management | | Good | 2 |

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and attain consistently high standards by the end of Year 6. Progress is consistently good in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.
- Teaching is consistently good and a small proportion is outstanding. Lessons are interesting and make good use of improved outdoor resources and technology.
- Behaviour is outstanding because pupils' attitudes are exemplary and their manners and conduct around school are consistently strong. Pupils are confident, articulate and mature, and describe feeling happy and safe at school.
- The provision to support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong. Pupils have access to a wide range of additional activities and technologies which extend and support their learning.
- Leadership and management of the school have improved since the last inspection. Senior leaders have high expectations and use well-designed plans to support improvements in teaching and pupils' achievement.
- Governance has changed since the last inspection. The new structures and processes are supporting the school well and are effectively holding the school's leaders to account for its performance.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- In Key Stage 2 the work set for more-able pupils, especially in mathematics, can be too easy.
- Senior leaders' understanding of data and systems is not yet sophisticated enough to ensure that this information is used to assist pupils to make outstanding progress.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 22 lessons, an assembly and the before- and after-school provision that is managed by the school. Joint lesson observations were undertaken with the headteacher.
- The inspectors held meetings with pupils, members of the governing body, senior leaders and teaching staff with responsibility for leading curriculum subjects.
- A telephone conversation took place with a representative from the local authority on the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including minutes of governing body and senior leadership meetings, school plans and self-evaluation, data to track assessments and pupils' progress, and documents that monitor behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in books, on displays and in folders across all years and in a range of subjects.
- A staff questionnaire and the views of the 84 parents who responded to the online questionnaire (Parent View) were also taken into consideration.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------------|
| Rebecca Lawton, Lead inspector | Additional Inspector |
| Elaine Maloney | Additional Inspector |
| Elaine Murray | Additional Inspector |

Full report

Information about this school

- Bexton is a larger-than-average-sized primary school with before- and after-school provision on the school site.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium is lower than average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from service families and those children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The vast majority of pupils are from White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils with special educational needs has recently declined.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is also below average.
- There has been a very high number of staff on maternity leave recently, which the school was able to cover successfully with its own personnel.
- The school meets the government's current floor targets, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the overall quality of teaching to outstanding to ensure that pupils in Key Stage 2 are always challenged to make the best possible progress, especially in mathematics.
- Improve senior leaders' understanding of assessment data to a more sophisticated level to ensure that assessment levels are accurate and consistently used at appropriate times to make certain that all pupils make at least good progress in Key Stage 2, especially in mathematics.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with good skills in all areas and with starting points that are higher than those typically expected. They are supported well and make good progress, which means they leave the Early Years Foundation Stage well above average in all areas of learning.
- In Key Stage 1 pupils continue to make good progress and are given experiences and opportunities to explore and learn across the curriculum. The outdoor areas are used well to support the pupils' exploration of topics, such as science and art, and the imaginative investigation of themed projects.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make good early progress. They have access to a good range of books and read regularly. Reading diaries in Key Stage 2 promote good communication between home and school and are regularly used to monitor pupils' progress in reading.
- In Key Stage 2 pupils make good overall progress, consistently so in English but less so in mathematics in one or two year groups. Their attainment by the time they leave Year 6 is high in English and well above average in mathematics.
- Those pupils supported by the pupil premium make good progress, and the funding is partially used to provide one-to-one support which is having a positive impact on the progress of these pupils, particularly in English.
- Pupils who are identified as having special educational needs or who have a statement of special educational needs are supported well and make good progress from their starting points. They have dedicated resources and time which are used flexibly to adapt to their changing needs.
- There does in some cases remain a gap between the attainment of the small number of those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other pupils; this gap is closing for many due to well-targeted support, particularly in English and mathematics.

The quality of teaching is good

- The lessons seen by inspectors showed consistently good teaching, with a few examples of outstanding practice. The school's records also show consistently good teaching, which reflects the strengths in staffing. The recent, flexible deployment of staff across the year groups has strengthened relationships between pupils and staff and has enabled better planning for progress between classes and year groups.
- Pupils' books show that pupils write well across all topics and subjects. They have good opportunities to explore and write long pieces of text which build their confidence and show rapid progress in many different subjects. Teachers promote pupils' marking of each other's and their own work against agreed level descriptors to ensure that pupils understand well the components of good writing and can identify these aspects in their work.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children have access to indoor and outdoor resources which are stimulating and exciting. The ducklings that the children had recently hatched in the classroom sparked a lively debate and the children were keen to write about and draw their new friends. Teachers skilfully support early investigation of numbers and science, and the children gain high levels of speaking and listening skills for their age.
- In Key Stage 1 teachers use the new outdoor provision to add excitement and curiosity to pupils' work on reading and writing. Pupils respond well to lessons that are interesting and are keen to learn. Reading skills are developed effectively and are supported across all topics by teachers and teaching assistants equally well. Pupils retain their good skills in speaking and listening gained in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Teachers skilfully use questions to explore topics fully at this high level of understanding and knowledge, beyond the ability at which pupils can yet read or write.
- In Key Stage 2, in the most successful lessons, teachers consistently plan lessons that challenge

pupils to achieve high levels of knowledge and understanding. However, in the few less successful lessons teachers do not always challenge the more able pupils as much as they could, especially in mathematics. In outstanding lessons teachers used questions effectively to find out quickly where there were gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding, identifying those who needed support and creating challenge for those who could extend their learning even further. The tasks teachers planned matched these differing needs well, so that all pupils made equally rapid progress.

- Teachers increasingly use technology to support learning; and pupils access information quickly in a range of media. Pupils enjoy the freedom of independent exploration of topics using the latest technology and make swift progress in their knowledge and research skills.
- Teaching assistants in all key stages support learning well. Teachers and teaching assistants work well together and have a common goal to ensure that pupils have the maximum involvement in lessons through skilful negotiation and flexible management of available support.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding

- Pupils' outstanding behaviour has been maintained since the previous inspection. Attitudes are exemplary, with all pupils keen to learn and willing to push themselves to the highest level of which they are capable.
- Pupils' behaviour around school and in lessons shows impressive levels of manners, respect and maturity. Pupils are confident and articulate and their relationships with adults and with each other reflect their high levels of social and moral development.
- Attendance is average due to a high number of parents requesting holidays during term time. The school rightly feels that attendance should be higher and is currently reviewing procedures. Punctuality is not an issue, with pupils arriving at school on time in the mornings and getting themselves to lessons efficiently.
- There are very few incidents of bullying, and both the school's own records and the pupils' responses show that these are tackled quickly and with care.
- The pupils' voice is a particular strength of the school, and the 'press packers' are regularly used to report on exciting developments, pupils' views of the school and on topics raised by the pupils themselves.
- Pupils report feeling safe in school and can describe in detail how to stay safe online. The school's focus on e-safety reflects an increasing use of technology within lessons, and pupils' knowledge and confidence in staying safe online are impressive.
- The school has a continual focus on well-being and personal development, and uses a range of approaches in assemblies and lessons to ensure pupils maintain a high level of understanding of their own conduct.
- The before- and after-school provision managed by the school provides a good environment for pupils, who enjoy the good-quality care they receive there.

The leadership and management are good

- There has been a significant increase in the training and qualifications of leaders at all levels, which has had a direct, positive impact on the quality of leadership and management within the school.
- The school's planning documents that organise improvement are effective and show clear direction and high expectations at all levels. Leaders of learning in all areas, including outdoor learning and e-safety as well as more traditional areas such as English and mathematics, take responsibility for whole-school improvement.
- Joint observations and the school's own tracking of teaching over time showed that inspectors and leaders agree on the quality of teaching and areas for further development. Performance

management systems are robust and are linked to pay, and are useful tools for personal as well as whole-school development.

- Senior leaders have recognised that the systems to assess and check pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 do not consistently provide an accurate picture, particularly in mathematics.
 - The local authority deems the school to be one which requires minimal, 'light touch' support.
 - All safeguarding requirements are met, and the school has a strong relationship with parents. The school's website is a particular strength and includes pupils' blogs, regular updates for parents and a large bank of policies and documents relating to the school.
 - The curriculum is good, and pupils have access to a good range of exciting resources in lessons and to extra-curricular opportunities. The school's outdoor environment is a particular strength, and the school has its own artificially grassed area which adds to provision for sports particularly well. Learning outside the classroom and access to the latest technology are both increasing the range of activities the school offers to pupils.
 - The school is looking into a range of alternative ways of extending pupils' progress in Key Stage 2, including the addition of level 6 assessments for this academic year. Leaders have researched the use of additional mathematical projects for pupils to investigate and have started strengthening links with local secondary schools, but a confirmed strategy is not yet in place.
 - The provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is strong and encompasses a wide range of activities within lessons and as extra-curricular trips and visits. A high focus on values is reflected throughout all year groups and classes.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The new governing body structures have yet to complete a full cycle of the school year, but these are already showing a positive impact in some key areas.
 - Sub-groups of governors support the financial management of the school and the overview of the impact of pupil premium funding, the leadership of teaching and the management of resources. Finances have recently been a particular challenge, and governors are seeking support and advice from good sources. The current consultations regarding academy status are being managed well.
 - Governors have a range of skills and are receiving good training and direction from well-informed experts. Governors responsible for data and tracking are gaining skills and are able to challenge the school's results using the Ofsted data dashboard and using local and national comparisons. Governors are yet to understand fully pupils' progress information and are currently investigating areas of underperformance in collaboration with senior leaders.
 - Governors have undertaken a recent audit highlighting areas for improvement within the role of the governing body which are accurate and based on solid evidence. They are tackling the areas systematically and making good progress but have not yet completed all planned improvements. They are fully committed to ensuring the school provides equality of opportunity throughout its daily work.
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What inspection judgements mean

| School | | |
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| 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

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| Unique reference number | 111232 |
| Local authority | Cheshire East |
| Inspection number | 413122 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Community |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 410 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | John Squires |
| Headteacher | Paul Dolan |
| Date of previous school inspection | 16 November 2009 |
| Telephone number | 01565 632816 |
| Fax number | 01565 634412 |
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