

# The Bliss Charity School

The Green, Nether Heyford, Northampton, NN7 3LE

**Inspection dates** 24–25 September 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Good	2
	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.

- Standards are above average at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2.
- Teachers have good subject knowledge and explain work clearly to pupils. Work is marked regularly; there are comments on how pupils can improve their work and opportunities for pupils to respond to the teachers.
- Teaching assistants work well with teachers and support pupils, particularly disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, very well in lessons.
- There are clear routines in lessons which support learning, and teachers regularly use praise to recognise good work from pupils.
- Pupils' behaviour is good in lessons and around the school. Pupils are polite and courteous to adults and to each other. Pupils feel safe in school.
- The school's links with schools in a wide range of countries have a strong impact on pupils' cultural development.
- Leaders, managers and governors have ensured that high standards in teaching and achievement have been maintained since the previous inspection.
- Governors visit the school regularly and use their professional expertise to support the work of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching and the best is not shared across the school.
- Occasionally, the pace of learning is not quick enough and teachers do not adjust activities to ensure the fastest progress.
- The system for checking on pupils' progress does not show how well different classes and groups of pupils are doing, and observations of teaching do not focus sufficiently on the progress of different groups of pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 15 lessons or part-lessons. Three of these lessons were observed jointly with the headteacher.
- Meetings took place with the Chair of the Governing Body and six other governors, two of whom are also trustees. Other meetings were held with staff, pupils and an officer from the local authority.
- The inspection team considered the 45 responses to the online Parent View survey and written correspondence from parents. They spoke to parents in the mornings before school. Eighteen staff questionnaires were also reviewed.
- Inspectors observed the school's work, reviewed records of pupils' recent attainment and progress, and looked at pupils' work in books. A range of documents was scrutinised including the school's plan for improvement, its evaluation of its performance, minutes of the meetings of the governing body, safeguarding procedures, and behaviour and attendance records.

## Inspection team

Susan Williams, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Christopher Webb

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium, additional funding from the government for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and other groups, is below average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported at school action is above average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- The headteacher works closely with the local authority supporting the induction of new headteachers. He is also a facilitator on the national professional qualification for middle leaders and is a local leader of education currently supporting Windmill Primary School.
- The school is part of the Fairfield's Teaching School Alliance.

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

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding and pupils make rapid progress throughout the school by:
  - ensuring lessons proceed at a brisk pace and teachers check on learning and adapt their teaching to maximise the progress of all pupils in lessons
  - sharing the outstanding teaching more widely across the school.
- Improve leadership and management by ensuring that:
  - the system for tracking pupils' progress helps leaders, managers and governors be clearer on how much progress classes and groups of pupils are making across the school
  - observations of teaching are more focused on the progress of different groups of pupils in lessons.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are above average. Provisional results in 2013 show a similarly strong performance at Key Stage 1 and 2 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage children achieve well. They join Reception with skills and knowledge that are, typically, similar to those expected for their age. In 2013, the large majority of pupils reached a good level of development for their age. Children are given good support to help them with their learning and this gives them a good start to their education in school.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Progress is strong across the school and pupils make particularly rapid progress in Year 6.
- Pupils enjoy their reading and read a wide variety of books. The school has introduced a new phonics (letters and their sounds) programme which has developed pupils' reading skills extremely well. In both 2012 and 2013, the large majority of pupils in Year 1 reached the standard for the phonics check. Younger children use strategies they have learnt to help them with their reading, and pupils in Key Stage 2 read with a great deal of fluency.
- Pupils for whom the school receives the pupil premium funding are given extra help in lessons and receive one-to-one tuition in English or mathematics. Support has also been provided to help fund trips or events so these pupils enjoy a wide range of activities. These pupils are making good progress across the school. It is not possible to compare the levels of attainment in national tests for this group of pupils and others in the school as the numbers were too small in Year 6 in 2012.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are supported extremely well in lessons. Teaching assistants work alongside these pupils making sure they understand activities, and they use questioning well to help pupils' develop their understanding. They also are very skilful at balancing direct help with opportunities for pupils to develop their independence in their learning so they do not become reliant on staff. This helps these pupils to make good progress and is narrowing the gap between these pupils and others in the school. The school is successful in promoting equality of opportunity for pupils' learning and giving pupils extra help so they can catch up with others.

### The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching of reading, writing and mathematics is good. Teachers display good subject knowledge. They present introductions to tasks well and make their explanations clear. They have a positive manner and use praise to encourage pupils. There are clear routines which support pupils' good attitudes to learning in lessons; for example, pupils move quickly between different activities.
- Teachers mark work regularly and give pupils comments on what they have done well and what they need to do next to improve. Pupils have the opportunity to respond to marking and have conversations with teachers about the work in their books. They also have targets stuck into the front of their books to remind them of what their main area of focus is in their work to help them to improve and this helps them to make good progress.

- Teaching assistants are deployed well in lessons. Teachers use their skills to work with disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs to support them with understanding the work and taking a full part in lessons. There are also occasions where they work with groups of more-able pupils to take their learning forward further. This helps pupils, including more-able pupils, make good progress.
- Teaching in the Early Years Foundation Stage is good. The new reading and literacy programme is helping pupils to learn how to read and write quickly. Well-planned teaching and imaginative resources are helping children achieve well.
- In lessons where the teaching is outstanding, pupils make particularly rapid progress. For example, in a literacy lesson in Year 6, the teacher's abundant enthusiasm and animated approach inspired pupils to share their ideas with each other and use imaginative words that the teacher wrote on the board for others to 'steal' later. The use of a clip with pictures and sound enthused the pupils and helped them to imagine the scene they were writing about. There was a fast pace, work was carefully pitched to support all pupils making the best progress in their learning which included independent activities for more-able pupils using tablet computers. The teacher made regular checks on pupils to ensure the pace of learning remained rapid throughout.
- Lessons do not always proceed at such a fast pace. On occasions, whole-class sessions are a little long and pupils' learning starts to slow. Sometimes, when pupils are working independently, teachers do not always check carefully enough how well pupils are doing or adjust resources or give pupils further suggestions to make sure all are progressing at the fastest rate. Although there is some outstanding practice in the school, there is not enough for pupils to make outstanding progress. The outstanding practice is also not shared more widely to help all staff teach at this standard.

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

- Pupils behave well in lessons, assemblies and around the school. They are courteous and polite with each other and adults. Parents, pupils and staff agree that behaviour is managed well in the school. School records show there are few incidents of poor behaviour. These are dealt with effectively and do not recur.
- Pupils say they learn about different types of bullying including cyber-bullying, and name calling. They say that bullying rarely happens and are confident they can go to a member of staff for help and it would be sorted out. Pupils say they feel safe in school. They like the gates which help them to feel safe. They are aware of 'stranger-danger' and understand the difference between strangers and visitors to the school who have been introduced to them by staff.
- Pupils take on a range of responsibilities in school including acting as representatives on the school council or as 'caring friends' who play with someone who is on their own on the friendship bench. Pupils also take on the role of buddies with younger pupils; for example, pupils in Year 4 work with children in the Reception and these links remain as the pupils move through the school. The buddies walk to the church with the younger ones and help them on school trips. The school is effective in promoting positive relationships and ensuring there is no discrimination.
- Behaviour and safety are not outstanding because pupils' attitudes to learning, although good, are not outstanding. Pupils do not consistently display a thirst for knowledge, or a desire to make very strong progress in lessons. Pupils' attitudes to learning are not of an equally high standard in all classes across the school.

- Attendance has remained above the national average since the previous inspection. Pupils are punctual to school and their lessons.

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

- Under the headteacher's leadership, the school has been successful in improving teaching and pupils' achievement since the previous inspection. All parents responding to the online survey, those who spoke with inspectors and those who sent in correspondence, were positive about the leadership of the school. All staff were equally positive and there were a number of comments about how proud and happy they are to work in the school. The school is popular in the local area and has grown in size in recent years.
- Development planning is thorough and has clear actions for improvement which are monitored regularly by leaders and governors. All teaching staff joined the school as newly qualified teachers and have been supported to teach well, and some have been developed effectively as leaders. The systems for checking on the performance of staff are strong and include targets linked to pupils' achievement. However, there is not always enough focus on the progress of different groups in observations of teaching so teachers can focus on all pupils making rapid progress throughout lessons.
- The curriculum gives an appropriate emphasis to the development of reading, writing and mathematics. A new reading programme, which has been developed since the last inspection, has resulted in pupils learning how to read quickly and well. There are now more opportunities to develop writing across a range of styles, and the use of practical resources has helped pupils learn mathematics in a fun way.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. This is promoted in lessons and assemblies as well as through special events such as the West Indian Carnival, Proms in the Playground and a Greek museum evening. Pupils also learn philosophy to encourage wider debates on important issues. The school has very strong international links with schools in different countries, including Greece, Romania, Sweden, Switzerland and Poland which give pupils a good understanding of life in different countries.
- The new sport funding is being used to provide pupils with a wider range of sporting activities with a sports apprentice. Pupils' participation in sport is high, and there are a wide range of sporting clubs and activities. Sports leaders are developed annually where pupils take a role in leading sporting activities. The school is also joining the local sports partnership to develop the teaching of sport in the school to ensure the long-term development of sport.
- The local authority has provided 'light-touch' support to the school. The headteacher works closely with them providing support to new headteachers. He has also worked successfully to support schools to improve in his role as a local leader of education. The school works closely with two special schools and regularly shares activities with one of them including music and sport.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors make effective use of professional expertise to support the work of the school; for example, an accountant leads on finance, a chartered engineer deals with building issues and a human resources professional and employment lawyer ensures pay policies are robust. Governors understand the published data on the school and how well pupils achieve compared with other schools. They receive updates on performance management and sign off pay awards for staff who teach to a high standard. They are also aware of where

underperformance was tackled in the past. They know that high standards of teaching have been maintained and have links with classes and staff leading subject areas, visiting regularly so they can see for themselves the improvements being made. They know how the pupil premium funding is being spent and have discussed what difference this is making. They also discuss data about the progress of individual pupils in meetings although this current system does not allow governors, senior leaders and staff to know how well classes and groups of pupils are progressing overall. Governors attend training regularly and ensure safeguarding meets statutory requirements.

## 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>	122048
<b>Local authority</b>	Northamptonshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	419849

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>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	181
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Graham Hotchkiss
<b>Headteacher</b>	Christopher Scanlan
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01327 340758
<b>Fax number</b>	01327 342341
<b>Email address</b>	head@blisscharity.northants-ecl.gov.uk

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