

# Little Bloxwich CofE VC Primary

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	104222
<b>Local Authority</b>	Walsall
<b>Inspection number</b>	336259
<b>Inspection dates</b>	4–5 February 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Linda Rockey HMI

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	180
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Dr Adrian Ball
<b>Headteacher</b>	Ellen Taylor
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	15 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Grenfell Road Little Bloxwich Walsall WS3 3DL
<b>Telephone number</b>	01922 684301
<b>Fax number</b>	01922 683627
<b>Email address</b>	postbox@lit-bloxwich.walsall.sch.uk

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Royal Exchange Buildings  
St Ann's Square  
Manchester M2 7LA

T: 08456 404045

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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The majority of time was spent looking at learning and all teachers were observed at least once. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, held meetings with governors, staff, groups of pupils and parents, and held telephone conversations with representatives from two partnerships. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at school policies related to the safeguarding of pupils; documents to support the school's self-evaluation and the school's assessment data. Inspectors analysed questionnaires from 85 parents and carers, and looked at responses from five staff and 98 pupils.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- recent progress made by all pupils across the school
- what the school is doing to improve the quality of teaching particularly in mathematics
- the effectiveness of new leaders and managers in driving and securing improvement.

## Information about the school

This is a smaller than average size primary school. It serves an area of varying social and economic backgrounds. Most pupils are of a White British heritage with a few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is average. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed. Two teachers have left the school and two newly qualified teachers joined the school during the autumn term. The school has been awarded the Healthy Schools Standard and the Activemark for sport.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This is an improving school. In 2009, Key Stage 2 statutory assessments demonstrated that attainment is low. The school's own data for the autumn term 2009 shows that pupils are making accelerated progress and this is confirmed by work seen in pupils' books. Parents and pupils recognise these recent and rapid improvements and were keen to talk to inspectors about how the school has improved. Standards are beginning to rise from a legacy of low attainment in recent years. They are now close to the national average in English at the end of Key Stage 2. The school is rightly working to raise attainment in mathematics and science where the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in national assessments remains low.

Teachers have worked hard to improve the consistency of classroom practice. For example, all make good use of the literacy and numeracy 'working walls' to support learning. However, this highly structured approach to teaching limits the opportunities for pupils to develop their creativity and problem-solving skills. Basic skills have been the focus to raise standards and the school is aware of the need to broaden the curriculum and develop more cross-curricular links as well as to focus more on the richness and diversity of the world.

Teaching is good in some year groups, but not consistently across the school. As a result, pupils do not always make as much progress as they are capable of in lessons. In mathematics, inspectors observed detailed planning taking account of the range of abilities. Assessment has improved and information is used satisfactorily to match teaching to the majority of pupils' individual needs. However, teaching does not always provide sufficient challenge to more able pupils, or is too hard for those who find learning more difficult. Teaching assistants are not always used effectively and pupils rely too heavily on the adults working with them. As a result, pupils' ability to work independently is underdeveloped.

Most parents speak very highly of the new headteacher and expressed their appreciation about some of the changes she has introduced over the past five terms. School self-evaluation is accurate and the senior leadership team has a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It has accurately identified the most urgent priorities for improvement and put in place effective action to address the school's needs. As a result, the school's capacity for sustained improvement is sound.

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

- Improve the quality of teaching to raise standards in English, mathematics and science so they match the national average by 2010 and exceed it by 2012 through:

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- ensuring that the majority of teaching is good by July 2010
- providing an appropriate match of task for the range of ability in each class
- making sure that teaching assistants are well used in every session
- developing pupils' independent learning skills and helping them to apply these routinely in lessons.
- Develop a broader, exciting curriculum by September 2010 by:
  - providing more active, investigative learning and opportunities for pupils' creative development
  - augmenting the curriculum to include wider multicultural aspects
  - creating cross-curricular links and providing opportunities to develop artistic talent.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils enjoy school and work and play together well. Attitudes in lessons are usually good, although a few pupils choose to behave inappropriately at times. Progress is accelerating, as pupils move through the school. The school recognises that the legacy of underachievement requires urgent action to improve outcomes for all pupils and has worked hard to address this.

Past assessment data indicate that boys did not make as much progress as girls, particularly in English. The recent focus on writing has had a positive impact on boys' writing, and in particular, the use of visual literacy. Observations in lessons and a review of pupils' work show that boys and girls are now making similar, satisfactory progress. The progress pupils make in mathematics lessons is slower than that made in English and this mirrors the lower national assessment results in mathematics. When pupils are engaged in purposeful and relevant learning, progress is evident and pupils clearly enjoy and achieve. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar progress to other pupils. This is because they receive regular good quality support in small groups from a teacher or teaching assistant.

The school council provides a good opportunity for some pupils to influence the life of the school. The council has been effective in supporting pupils, for example, through the introduction of 'worry boxes' in each classroom. They have made an important contribution through an anti-bullying campaign and helped pupils to understand about the danger of cyber-bullying. Although pupils have raised money for various charities, links with the wider community are at an early stage of development. This is also true of cultural development where pupils have a limited grasp of the richness and diversity of our world.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

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<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	4
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>3</b>

### How effective is the provision?

The school has put into practice a structured approach to the way that lessons are taught. Consequently, most lessons follow a similar pattern. Assessment information is usually used satisfactorily to plan lessons and the learning expectations of pupils are generally matched to their individual needs. Inspectors saw a good example of this in an effective mathematics lesson. Well chosen questions matched to pupils' different levels of ability allowed pupils to use their previous knowledge of tables to quickly respond using their number fans. However, in a few lessons, teachers do not apply such an approach. As a result, learning slows for many pupils because the task set is either too difficult for some or too easy for others and pupils are too reliant on the direction of an adult. In addition, progress slows because pupils' independent learning skills are underdeveloped.

Marking is used well in most classes to guide pupils about how to improve their work. This guidance relates well to the planned learning, and is usually related to pupils' individual targets. Leaders and managers have a good understanding about how best to support individual pupils with specific needs and suitable plans are in place for these pupils. However, these plans are not always used effectively and planned provision is not monitored adequately. Some exciting, cross-curricular work is evident around the school. For example, in Year 6, a stimulating Crime Scene Investigation day was planned and resulted in some good written work. The school accepts that because their focus has been on basic skills, the curriculum is underdeveloped. The school has identified this is an area for future development.

Pupils appreciate and talk enthusiastically about the opportunities to attend

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extra-curricular activities. Many pupils benefit from the range of after-school clubs available. They particularly enjoy the range of sporting activities and the opportunity to learn to play a musical instrument in Year 5.

Care, guidance and support are strong features of the school. All pupils, including the most vulnerable, are well supported during their time in school. Transition arrangements from the Early Years Foundation Stage into Year 1 run smoothly and pupils in Year 6 are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage in their education. Parents are positive about the care that staff provide for their children. One parent wrote to the inspectors, 'I can't praise the school enough for what they do for my children.'

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The senior leaders work well together and fully understand what the school needs to do to improve. Priorities have been identified accurately and actions to address shortcomings have been effective. For example, the recent focus on tracking the progress of individual pupils and the holding of staff to account for outcomes has led to a significant and speedy rise in attainment. Regular pupil progress meetings help to identify those pupils who are not making the rate of progress expected. School leaders monitor the quality of teaching and underperformance is quickly identified and carefully addressed.

Safeguarding procedures are sound and all statutory requirements were in place at the time of the inspection. All staff, including those newly appointed, are suitably trained in child protection. The school has relevant information about the groups of pupils it serves. The actions to address the underperformance of boys in English has begun to show improvement and demonstrate the school's satisfactory promotion of equality of opportunity.

The school has a sound understanding about its own religious, ethnic and socio-economic context but acknowledges that its responsibility to promote community cohesion is still at an early stage of development. The headteacher has been proactive in developing profitable links with a local school and pupils talk positively about new friends they have made during the visits to each other's different contexts. Pupils showed inspectors photographs of them clearly enjoying some Diwali celebrations. The new headteacher provides good leadership. She has made a start at developing a more shared leadership style. However, newer leaders are not yet providing suitable

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strategic action plans to ensure improvement in provision or the monitoring of impact. The new chair of the governing body is providing an appropriate blend of challenge and support and encourages governors to make themselves available to talk to parents about any concerns. Inspectors met with a group of parents who were very positive about some recent changes. For example, one reported, 'Parents can engage with the school about any current issue now.'

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children in the Reception class are happy, well behaved and cooperative. They understand the daily routines, settle well and are beginning to work independently. Children enter the Reception class with skills that are below those levels typically expected for their age and make satisfactory progress in their learning. The staff work hard to develop their language skills as this is an area of relative weakness. Children are well cared for, known individually and this is a strength of the setting.

The school acknowledges that there is work to do to develop the Early Years Foundation Stage. Daily planning and assessment are areas for improvement. The curriculum is formal and lacks sufficient child-initiated activity. That said, the very experienced teacher is held in high regard by the parents and ensures teaching is appropriately matched to the children's different abilities. Adults guide and support the children's learning well by modelling language and using questioning effectively to challenge their thinking.

The day before the inspection, a new canopy was fitted to provide a covered outside



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area. The children were clearly excited about learning outside but planned outdoor activities are at an early stage of development. In addition, opportunities for learning and development outdoors are restricted by the limited space available.

The Early Years Foundation Stage is managed satisfactorily. Nearly all the children have pre-school experience and links with various playgroups are well established. The Early Years Foundation Stage team works hard and successfully supports a smooth transition into school by making home visits prior to children starting school. Several parents told the inspectors they appreciated the care and support given to them and their children.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Bloxwich C of E VA Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. The inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires. The majority of parents, who responded to the questionnaire, were positive about the school. However, a minority expressed some negative views. The inspection team investigated their concerns about unacceptable behaviour, bullying and a lack of communication to parents from the school. Inspectors did not find any evidence to substantiate these concerns.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Little Bloxwich C of E VC Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 85 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 180 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	39	46	34	40	6	7	5	6
The school keeps my child safe	45	53	38	45	1	1	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	37	44	41	48	7	8	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	32	38	44	52	7	8	2	2
The teaching is good at this school	36	42	43	51	4	5	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	46	39	46	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	39	48	39	46	3	4	1	1
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	43	35	43	51	5	6	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	46	36	46	54	6	7	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	43	34	43	51	6	7	6	7
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	41	36	41	48	5	6	4	5
The school is led and managed effectively	41	42	41	48	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	37	45	37	44	3	4	5	6

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

# Glossary

## What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

## Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



8 February 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Little Bloxwich C of E VA Primary School, Grenfell Road, WS3 3DL

Thank you for being so helpful when we visited you recently. We enjoyed meeting you! We thought you were all friendly and eager to talk about your school. Thank you for showing us your work. We thought your school was satisfactory. Here are a few highlights.

- We saw how much you have improved your work, especially in writing.
- The adults make sure you are safe and get all the support you need.
- You are working hard to make better progress in English, mathematics and science.
- Your school council and those of you who take on extra responsibilities are doing a good job.
- The adults really care about you and work together well with parents and carers.

In order to make your school better, we have asked your headteacher and all the adults to:

- provide work that suits your needs and which helps you to become more independent learners
- make sure you all make even better progress and reach higher standards in English, mathematics and science
- develop a more active, investigative and exciting programme of work
- develop your understanding of the richness and diversity in our world.

Your headteacher has lots of ideas about how to improve your school and help you to do better in English, mathematics and science. You can do your part by continuing to work towards the targets in your books and responding to your teachers' careful and detailed marking.

Yours sincerely

Linda Rockey

Her Majesty's Inspector

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