

Blowers Green Primary School

Blowers Green Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY2 8UZ

Inspection dates

22–23 November 2016

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- Blowers Green has improved further since its last inspection and is now outstanding.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standards by the time they leave in Year 6 is well above national levels.
- The progress that pupils make, from often very low starting points, is exceptional. Staff know pupils' needs on an individual basis and provide support to help them flourish in their learning.
- Leadership is highly effective at all levels. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are exceptional leaders and have developed a high-performing team.
- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is strong throughout the school. Teachers are passionate about what they do and are committed to making a difference.
- Assessment and tracking systems are effective in ensuring that no pupils fall behind. Leaders recognise that these systems must continue to evolve so that the school's very high standards remain substantial and sustained.
- Governors are highly skilled and knowledgeable. Governors provide the school with an effective level of both challenge and support.
- Parents and pupils are highly satisfied with what the school offers.
- Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. Pupils are proud of their school and are keen to do their best.
- The school's mission statement, 'united in learning' and the mantra, 'every second counts' underpin all that staff do. They are committed to these aims and no time is wasted, ensuring that pupils aim to achieve at the highest possible levels.
- The school's curriculum is highly effective in supporting pupils academically and pastorally.
- The school environment is bright and attractive and has been improved considerably in recent years. New facilities now include areas which the school terms their museum and art gallery.
- The school pays close attention to developing pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. As a result, pupils are well-rounded future citizens by the time they leave at the end of key stage 2.
- Staff have worked hard to improve rates of attendance. Overall attendance is now in line with national levels. Rates of persistent absence, though also improving, are not yet in line with those found at a national level.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders and governors must ensure that:
 - assessment systems continue to evolve so that rates of strong progress and high standards are maintained
 - the school continues its successful work with the small group of families whose attendance is not yet in line with national levels.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The work of leaders and governors has had a striking impact on the overall effectiveness of Blowers Green. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are highly determined leaders and have instilled high expectations in staff and pupils. As a result of outstanding leadership, outcomes are exceptionally high at this school.
- Leaders and governors have devised highly successful staff training programmes. These programmes have brought about wide ranging improvements in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.
- Staff feel that they have a full stake in the school. Leaders make staff feel valued and cared for. Staff are therefore highly committed and strive to constantly improve all that they do.
- Leaders and governors demonstrate the capacity to build even further on outcomes. They have a track record of success but are not afraid to recognise any area that can be developed further. Any minor weaknesses are acknowledged quickly and tackled head on. For example, leaders realised that boys in the early years were not achieving as highly as girls and so focused attention on the early year's curriculum to ensure that it appealed to boys.
- Leaders and governors have a very accurate view of the school's effectiveness. Improvement plans are precise. Plans capitalise on improvements and sharply identify actions that may be required to address any underachievement.
- The leadership team has an impressive range of skills and experience. A large proportion of leaders' time is spent in class helping colleagues hone their practice and accelerate rates of progress.
- The curriculum is very well designed. Leaders have crafted a programme of learning where pupils are given opportunities to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding progressively as they move through the school. As a result of careful planning, pupils are keen learners and make rapid progress from their starting points so that the number of pupils attaining the expected standard by the end of Year 6 is well above the national average. Staff instil high aspirations in pupils. Pupils have a hunger to be challenged and excel.
- Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Inspectors observed pupils demonstrating a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning from the early years through to Year 6.
- Pupil premium funding has been used effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils progress well. Provisional results for 2016 show that disadvantaged pupils made rates of progress that were well above other pupils nationally in reading, writing and maths. The school's pupil premium strategy addresses the barriers that disadvantaged pupils face. For example, additional staff have been appointed to support families in ensuring that pupils attend school regularly. Pupils are also invited to attend additional sessions in the school's learning lounge before the start of the day. In these sessions, staff identify gaps in learning and provide tailored support to speed up rates of progress.

- The sport premium has been used to enhance the skills of staff. In the academic year 2015/2016, staff received support from sports specialists to improve the quality of their teaching. By the end of the training, every member of staff was successful in gaining accreditation in the teaching of gymnastics. A higher proportion of pupils are now participating in clubs and sporting activities. In the last academic year, leaders coordinated several whole-school competitions including tennis, archery and multi-skills tournaments which pupils enjoyed immensely.
- Special educational needs funding is used effectively. Pupils' needs are identified at the earliest opportunity. Staff devise 'passports' based on these needs which include targets for pupils to work towards. Appropriate systems of support and additional teaching ensure that progress is secured. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make rates of progress that are similar to their peers.

Governance of the school

- Governors are skilled and knowledgeable.
- Governors know the school very well. They identify areas for focus and visit regularly to monitor the impact that leaders are having.
- Governors use their backgrounds and expertise to ensure that the school improves in all aspects of its practice. This improvement has included drawing upon the experience of governors that work in education and serve the local community in the emergency services. Close attention is paid to ensuring that high standards are maintained and that pupils are safe.
- Governors are clear about their responsibilities. They are committed to building upon the success of the school. Governors have made several key appointments to the staff team over recent years. They recognise the importance of high-quality leadership and state that it is their ambition to 'surround children with excellence'.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have created a culture of safeguarding at this school. Staff receive training to ensure that they are clear about what they should do if they have a concern about any aspect of safeguarding.
- Inspectors spoke to staff who have recently joined the school and found that training has been effective in helping them understand risk factors identified with different forms of abuse such as child sexual exploitation. Staff have also received training in identifying the signs that may indicate a concern relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- Pupils are kept safe and are well cared for. The school's safeguarding is underpinned by exceptional relationships. Staff and pupils know each other well.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Teaching, learning and assessment have continued to improve since the last inspection and are now outstanding.
- Leaders monitor the impact that teaching is having carefully. Leaders' records show that any weaknesses are quickly identified and support systems are put in place to ensure rapid improvement.
- Teachers who are new to the profession speak highly of the support that they receive. Leaders teach alongside newly qualified teachers in class to help them hone their practice and reflect on the impact they are having on rates of progress.
- Teachers are encouraged to take risks and share what they do well. There is a democratic and collegiate approach to improving practice. Teachers feel supported and challenged in equal measure. As a result, teachers are keen to improve, and their strong practice results in rapid rates of progress for pupils.
- In meetings, staff are encouraged to 'share the flair'. Staff feel confident to share aspects of their work that they believe are particularly effective. This commitment to sharing has increased teachers' confidence and has resulted in a very happy and hardworking workforce.
- Teaching is effective across each key stage. There is little variation in practice due to high-quality coaching support from leaders and consistent shared expectations.
- Assessment systems have been developed to reflect the changes in the national curriculum. Teachers and leaders closely track the progress of individual pupils through ongoing assessment in class and regular meetings. If any pupils fall behind, teachers and leaders devise additional support to ensure that they catch up quickly. Much of this support comes from skilled teaching assistants. They liaise with teachers on a daily basis. As a result of effective assessment and regular monitoring, no pupils are left behind.
- Some aspects of the school's tracking systems have not yet been developed sufficiently to fully take account of the progress of different groups. However, the school's close attention to the progress that pupils make at an individual level has ensured that there are no gaps in achievement between different groups. For example, the most able pupils are carefully identified by staff and their progress is monitored through regular meetings. Teachers plan activities and pose questions that ensure the most able pupils make strong rates of progress.
- Teachers' planning is a strength of the school's overall provision. Leaders have worked alongside teachers to develop programmes of learning that engage pupils and offer high levels of challenge. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to be independent and make decisions about the activities they choose, based on what they already know. When pupils find a task easy to manage, they are presented with further challenges to move their learning on.
- Challenges extend to the wider curriculum where pupils are encouraged to win badges and pins that recognise their ability to recite poetry, read novels and complete 'Kite' spellings. The most able pupils grasp these opportunities with enthusiasm.
- Pupils' learning has recently been enhanced by the creation of a museum and art

gallery within the school's grounds. Classes borrow pieces of art from the gallery to study back in their lessons. Pupils' work, inspired by famous artists, adorns the corridors of the school. Pupils' are inspired to be creative and are immersed in a rich curriculum.

- The learning environment at Blowers Green is inspirational. Staff and pupils are rightly proud of the way in which displays celebrate the learning that takes place.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' are given a wide range of opportunities to develop personally at Blowers Green. They participate enthusiastically in school life and understand how to stay safe. Pupils told inspectors that they have recently learned about the dangers of fireworks, how to ride their bikes safely, and the importance of keeping water away from electricity.
- Pupils that inspectors spoke to fully understand what bullying is and the different forms it can take. They are clear that there is no bullying at their school and are confident that if it should arise, teachers would be quick to address any concerns.
- Pupils are aware of how to stay safe online. The school provides effective e-safety workshops for families and their children so that they can learn together and understand the potential risks of the internet.
- Pupils are very proud of their school. They are excellent ambassadors and are keen to talk about their artistic skills and the badges and pins they have collected for completing challenges. Enthusiasm for school permeates every year group.
- The school's work is effective in promoting healthy lifestyles. Pupils make sensible and healthy food choices at lunchtime. Older pupils in key stage 2 wear pedometers that track the miles they have walked since the start of the school year. Year 3 are currently leading the tally for the most number of steps taken. Year 3 pupils calculate that they have collectively walked the equivalent distance of Dudley to Lancaster since September (some 124 miles)!

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils' conduct around the school and with staff is exemplary. Pupils value their education and talk with pride about the opportunities they have at school. They come to school dressed smartly in their uniforms and take great care of the school environment.
- Incidents of any racist, homophobic or derogatory language are extremely rare. Similarly, behaviour logs show that incidents of poor behaviour of any kind are rare.
- Parents that spoke with inspectors are supportive of the school. Comment books for visitors and parents are full of praise for the rapid improvements that have been secured and sustained in recent years.

- Attendance is carefully tracked by leaders, staff and support staff. Overall attendance has improved over the last three years and is now broadly in line with national levels. Rates of persistent absence have also improved but are not yet in line with national figures. The school works with a small group of families to monitor pupils' welfare and attendance carefully. Where necessary, outside agencies are engaged to support families further to provide the extra help needed for attendance to improve.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Outcomes for pupils at the end of every key stage have improved year on year and high rates of progress have been sustained.
- In the early years, children make rapid progress from often very low starting points. Provisional results indicate that the proportion of children attaining a good level of development rose again in 2016. The school's own data shows that children's progress through the Nursery and Reception Years is rapid.
- Pupils maintain this rapid progress into key stage 1. As a result of high-quality teaching, the vast majority of pupils pass the phonics screening check in Year 1. The proportion passing the phonics check has been above the national average for the past three years. Pupils demonstrate secure phonics skills when reading, and make rapid progress from very low starting points. The most able pupils read with fluency and expression and are able to decode some very difficult words.
- In key stages 1 and 2, a high proportion of pupils secure at least expected standards as a result of high-quality teaching and rapid progress.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are very well supported. Those who are newly arrived in the country are immersed in language and attend up to three additional phonics sessions a day to support their early understanding of English. The programmes that the school uses to support pupils in this group are highly effective. The vast majority of them pass the phonics screening check in Year 1 and go on to make rapid progress and attain at levels beyond those found nationally.
- Disadvantaged pupils, including the most able, make rates of progress similar to other pupils in the school. The school's own assessment system shows that there are no differences in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and other pupils on roll. By the time disadvantaged pupils leave in Year 6, their rates of progress are significantly above other pupils nationally.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make strong rates of progress. This is a result of carefully planned teaching and additional sessions that help pupils develop quickly in specific areas that they are not yet secure in. A combination of carefully devised 'passports', regular opportunities to read, and the intervention of highly skilled support staff mean that this group of pupils are well supported.
- Though fewer pupils attain at greater depth in key stage 1 or at a higher level in key stage 2 than nationally, provisional data from 2016 indicates that pupils with high prior attainment do make strong rates of progress from their starting points. The school has prioritised a series of actions in its development plan to target the most able pupils further and increase the overall proportion of pupils that attain at a higher level.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children get off to a very strong start in the early years. Teaching is highly effective and encourages children to be immersed in what they are doing and make rapid gains in their learning.
- The environment has been greatly enhanced. Staff have worked hard to develop resources that support children in developing their early language skills.
- Any gaps between different groups are quickly identified and acted upon. For example, in the academic year 2015/2016 leaders identified that girls attained at a higher level than boys in some areas of the curriculum. Though rates of progress are similar for boys and girls, leaders are keen to diminish any differences and have developed planning tools, and the environment, to respond further to identified needs. The impact of this recent work is not yet fully known, but children's learning journeys indicate that rates of progress are rapid again this year and teaching is impacting on outcomes.
- Parents that inspectors spoke to are very happy with how their children settle at Blowers Green. The school devises a schedule of workshops for parents throughout the year that are well attended.
- Additional funding is used in the early years to secure the services of outside agencies. Leaders work with agencies to ensure that any specific needs that children may have are identified early and acted upon. As a result, children's welfare needs are addressed early and progress rates are strong for all groups.
- Assessment systems are well developed. Staff carefully observe children and make judgements about what they can do and what their next steps are to secure further progress. 'Next steps' are prominently displayed in the classroom so that all staff are aware of what they must do to help children move on.
- Children love being in the Nursery and Reception classes. Inspectors observed children searching for aliens during the inspection. Children moved silently around the classroom with their teacher, peering into dens and corners with torches. Children are immersed in all that they do and are keen explorers.
- The proportion of children achieving a good level of development is rising year on year but is not yet in line with national levels. However, rates of progress are rapid and close attention is paid to ensuring that children are confident and enthusiastic learners. Children are ready for the transition into Year 1, where the momentum of learning is capitalised upon further.

School details

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| Unique reference number | 103771 |
| Local authority | Dudley |
| Inspection number | 10025289 |

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.

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Maintained |
| Age range of pupils | 3 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 241 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Steve Raggett |
| Headteacher | Surinder Sehmbi |
| Telephone number | 01384 818490 |
| Website | www.blowers.dudley.sch.uk |
| Email address | info@blowers.dudley.sch.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 31 October–1 November 2012 |

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- Blowers Green is an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.
- Approximately half of the school's pupils are from Pakistani backgrounds. Other pupils are from a range of different ethnic backgrounds.

- The school meets the current government floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed pupils learning in 13 lessons or parts of lessons. The majority of lessons were observed jointly with members of the leadership team. Inspectors observed leaders meeting with staff to discuss the impact that teaching is having on pupils' progress.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's single central record and scrutinised a range of documentation relating to safeguarding including: risk assessments, child protection files, policies, referrals to the local authority, child protection plans, certificates of training, personnel files and minutes from meetings with outside agencies.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons, around school, in assembly, and at break and lunchtimes.
- Inspectors met with a group of pupils to hear them read.
- Inspectors reviewed the following school documentation: governing body minutes, self-evaluation, school development plans, assessment and tracking systems, monitoring records and plans for the use of additional funding.
- The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and two representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and reviewed the 18 responses to Parent View and the two free text responses received during the inspection. Inspectors reviewed the responses made by parents to the school's last parental questionnaire.
- Inspectors met with leaders and staff to discuss the impact of training both in relation to teaching and safeguarding.

Inspection team

| | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Jonathan Keay, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Mary Maybank | Ofsted Inspector |
| Alan Prince | 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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