

The Bluecoat School

Green Lane, Stamford, Lincolnshire PE9 1HE

Inspection dates

15–16 December 2015

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	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- The headteacher is an inspirational leader. She has worked closely with the highly effective deputy headteacher and a fully committed governing body to secure rapid improvements since the last inspection. As a result, outcomes for pupils have improved significantly.
- Leaders and governors have a very clear and accurate view of the school's strengths.
- Staff, pupils and parents are highly supportive of the work of the senior leaders.
- Leaders have put in place rigorous systems for checking the progress of pupils. This means that teachers can support individual pupils very effectively.
- Leaders have ensured that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress from their starting points.
- Attendance has improved rapidly and is now above national averages. Persistent absence has been eradicated.
- Senior leaders have put in place a curriculum that promotes pupils' enjoyment of learning and motivates them to apply themselves to their work.
- Pupils speak very highly about how much they like learning. They actively seek out ways to improve their work during lessons.
- Teachers skilfully deepen pupils' understanding by asking searching questions.
- The development of language is a key strength of the school. It is consistently well modelled by staff.
- Leaders take every opportunity to develop pupils' love of books and reading.
- Pupils are exceptionally well looked after. Staff know the pupils very well and keep a careful eye on their progress and welfare.
- Pupils' behaviour in school is outstanding. They have a very clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to fully develop their mathematical reasoning skills.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is outstanding

- The headteacher is an outstanding leader. She has worked very closely with the equally aspirational deputy headteacher to drive forward the many improvements that have taken place since the last inspection.
- Senior leaders have been highly effective in bringing about significant improvements to teaching, learning and assessment. As a result, outcomes for pupils are rising rapidly. The headteacher knows that there is capacity for even further improvement and she is determined to make sure this is secured.
- The headteacher has developed a highly ambitious culture in the school. She has shared this very clearly with staff and governors and, as a result, she has their full support. It is evident that the needs of the pupils, be they academic, social or emotional, are the first priority of everyone who works at the school.
- The headteacher has made sure that teachers have had the professional development they need in order to be highly effective in their roles. The ongoing process of coaching staff is an important and successful feature of leaders' work.
- Middle leaders play an important role in checking that pupils make the progress of which they are capable by supporting teachers to improve their teaching. Of particular note is the effective way they support teachers with their planning and in making sure that they have the skills they need to teach particular aspects of the curriculum. For example, the mathematics leader supported a teacher very well to teach an aspect of problem solving in mathematics.
- The broad and balanced curriculum is outstanding. The school's motto, 'Bringing Learning To Life', is certainly brought to life through the excellent learning opportunities that pupils enjoy. One pupil commented, 'We don't learn from pictures, we use real things' and another said, 'It's great because we get to find things out for ourselves instead of someone just telling us.'
- There is a wide range of opportunities for pupils to learn outside the classroom. Pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Some of the older children had the opportunity to play with the Halle Orchestra in Grantham. Pupils who enjoy singing took part in the Young Voices event in Birmingham. Year 6 pupils represented Jamaica in a mini-Olympics and won the prize for best representation of a country. There is an art club and pupils have visited the British Museum and attended a dance festival. Visitors to school, including a member of the British armed forces and a Paralympian athlete, provide an additional layer of inspiration for pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to complete their 'creative learning journals' by referring to the list of '50 things to do at Bluecoat School'. This list enhances the school's drive to provide real experiences through the curriculum with suggestions such as baking bread, joining the library and knitting or sewing. This is further developed with the lists of '50 people to meet and 50 places to visit while you are at Bluecoat School'.
- The gallery in the school's entrance is very well used to showcase pupils' work. It is vibrant and eye-catching. Pupils are very proud to be able to display their work for all to see.
- The development and promotion of language skills is a real strength of the school. Teachers take every opportunity to model correct English and to develop pupils' vocabulary and sentence structure. This is evident, not only in English lessons but in interactions between staff and pupils throughout the school day. Consequently, pupils speak eloquently and clearly. The quality of pupils' writing has also improved as a result.
- The caring and highly respectful ethos of the school is preparing pupils very well for life in modern Britain. Pupils' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development weaves its way into the day-to-day life of the school. Pupils have the chance to take responsibility, for example by being play leaders and librarians. They take part in mini-elections and they have written to the Prime Minister and to Her Majesty, The Queen.
- Pupils are confident that they are safe in school. They speak very knowledgeably about how to stay safe online. Pupils say they have learned and used these important skills when using the internet in school. This was echoed to inspectors when a parent expressed how useful the parents' e-safety workshop had been.
- Leaders and governors are meticulous in making sure that pupils are safe in school through clear policies and procedures that are precisely carried out.

- Leaders and governors monitor the impact of additional funding very well. Pupil premium funding has been thoughtfully used to improve outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. The progress they make is now broadly the same as, and in some cases it is faster than, that of other pupils.
- Sport premium funding has been very effectively used to provide useful training for teachers to improve their skills in teaching physical education. Older pupils have been trained as playground leaders. They effectively support other pupils to play games together in the playground.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school and how well informed they are about their children's progress. They have the highest regard for the headteacher. One parent said, 'She believes in these children.'
- The local authority only provides light-touch support for the school because it has confidence in the school leaders and it has seen the evidence of the rapid improvements that have taken place.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Governors know the school's strengths exceptionally well. This is because they spend time rigorously checking the work that takes place and asking challenging questions of the leadership team.
 - Governors are highly supportive of the school. They have the highest ambitions for the pupils and, just like the senior leaders, they want the pupils to succeed in all aspects of school life.
 - The Chair of the Governing Body has been very astute in making sure that the skills of the individual members of the governing body are appropriately drawn upon to support and challenge school leaders robustly.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. There is a very strong focus on keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding arrangements are robust and systematic. Staff understand their responsibilities because they have received the appropriate training. Leaders make sure that if a concern arises it is thoroughly followed up.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding

- Leaders visit classrooms frequently and offer insightful and detailed guidance to teachers and teaching assistants on how to improve their teaching. The open and honest culture of the school means that this is welcomed. Furthermore, teachers actively seek out ways to improve their teaching by sharing ideas and asking each other for support. As a result of this, the quality of teaching and learning across the school has improved since the previous inspection and is now typically outstanding.
- Teachers plan interesting lessons. Wherever possible, learning is based on real-life experiences for pupils, which promotes their love of learning. For example, when learning about Anglo-Saxon food, one class visited the market in Stamford to purchase vegetables ready to cook their own recipes. Pupils grasped the chance to interview stallholders in preparation for an English lesson when they would be writing about jobs.
- Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can do. Teachers check carefully that pupils are making progress during lessons, and quickly take action if pupils have not fully understood what is expected of them.
- Pupils say they know what they have to do to improve their work further. This is because their teachers give them very incisive feedback.
- Leaders have implemented a new system of assessment and tracking the progress of pupils. This is well understood by teachers and pupils, and leaders are making in-depth checks to identify which pupils need further support to make sure they don't fall behind.
- Teachers scrupulously model spoken English correctly to pupils. When pupils are writing, teachers regularly and skilfully encourage pupils to improve their sentences.
- Teachers have excellent subject knowledge. They make sure that pupils use mathematical vocabulary correctly.
- Teachers are highly skilled at asking questions that challenge pupils' understanding. They encourage pupils to work hard. Pupils say that the work challenges them to think and they enjoy their learning.
- The promotion of reading is a strength. Phonics (the sounds that letters make) is very effectively taught and pupils use their skills in this area well. Pupils of all ages are encouraged to have positive attitudes to reading. They say they enjoy reading at home. Books are given to pupils as prizes in the celebration assemblies.

- The school library is a very bright and welcoming environment. Older pupils are responsible librarians. A reading buddy system encourages older pupils to read with younger pupils at breaktimes. Pupils enjoy this tremendously. There is a school bookshop. The school librarian notes which sorts of books are popular and makes sure that they are available for pupils to buy. The bookshop is open to pupils and parents regularly so that as many pupils as possible can benefit from buying a book.
- Homework is well used for pupils to practise the basic skills they have been learning. Pupils say they also enjoy the chance to find out more about their subjects and to make things at home.
- Although pupils are given the opportunity to apply the skills they have been learning in mathematics to help them solve problems, they are not sufficiently well challenged to develop their mathematical reasoning skills.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are excellent. They work hard in class and they are proud of their achievements. Pupils enjoy their lessons and they cooperate very well together.
- Pupils like coming to school. Attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection so that it is now higher than the national average. Persistent absence has been eradicated.
- Pupils are very caring towards each other. They say that bullying is very rare. They firmly believe that if it does occur it will be dealt with by the adults in school.
- Pupils have a clear understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They say that they have been taught about road safety and e-safety. They are confident about what they should do if someone calls them names or is unkind to them.
- Pupils can accurately describe how to keep themselves healthy. They understand the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding. They are polite and courteous to their friends and to adults in school.
- Almost all parents who completed the online questionnaire, and all parents who spoke to inspectors, said they have no concerns about behaviour.
- Pupils behave very well in their lessons. This is because pupils are genuinely interested in their lessons, and teachers have extremely high expectations of them.

Outcomes for pupils are outstanding

- Outcomes for all groups of pupils have improved significantly over recent years.
- The majority of children join the school with skills that are well below those typical for a child of their age. From their starting points, pupils make sustained and rapid progress so that by the time they leave school their outcomes are at least in line with, or sometimes above, the national average.
- In 2014 and 2015, the proportion of children reaching a good level of development when they left the Reception Year was above the national average.
- Every pupil achieved the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check in 2015. This is a significant improvement over recent years. The impressive progress that pupils make in phonics over time shows that this is a real strength.
- By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are achieving outcomes that are in line with, and occasionally above, national expectations in all subjects. This has been a distinct improvement since the previous inspection.
- Outcomes for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 have also improved considerably since the last inspection. By the time they leave school, the proportions of pupils achieving the expected levels are broadly in line with national averages in writing and above national averages for reading, grammar, punctuation and spelling. The proportion of pupils reaching the highest level in mathematics is above national averages.
- By the time they leave school, the proportion of pupils who have made the expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics is higher than the national averages.

- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils who make expected progress by the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with national averages for writing, and above national averages for reading and mathematics.
- The proportion of girls making expected progress is higher than national averages in all subjects. For boys, it is broadly in line with national averages.
- Pupils with special educational needs or disabilities receive excellent support in class. As a result, they are currently making rapid and sustained progress, even though they are not achieving as highly as other pupils nationally.
- Current school assessment information indicates that all groups of pupils are making rapid progress in all subjects with outcomes that will be just as strong in 2016.
- Workbooks show that current pupils make impressive progress in their lessons and over time. Pupils' books and teachers' assessments show that pupils are making accelerated progress in writing.
- Most-able pupils are making strong progress across all areas of their learning. They enjoy the opportunities provided for them to think hard and work without depending on their teacher.

Early years provision

is outstanding

- Leadership and management of the early years is outstanding. The early years leader has an accurate view of the strengths of the provision. She is well supported by a dedicated staff team who spend a great deal of time getting to know the children very well.
- Many of the children enter the early years provision with skills that are much lower than would typically be expected for their age.
- The two-year-old children, based in the Sunbeam Room, are extremely well nurtured and supported. Adults model language very well. Teachers encourage the children to explore and play together very well.
- The early years leader and her staff team have created an environment which is bright and welcoming. The children enjoy learning through a very wide range of activities designed to stimulate their interests. There are opportunities to learn independently and with their friends. When they do so, they play and learn well together.
- Teachers take great care to match the activities to the abilities of the children so that they are all challenged to make progress. For example, in one activity led by a teacher, children were making snowmen out of dough. Some children were learning the language of 'big' and 'small', 'bigger' and 'smaller', while others were measuring the height of their 'dough-snowman' by stacking and counting blocks.
- Adults skilfully encourage children to do the right thing. They intervene quickly, but gently, if a child is not sharing or taking turns. As a result, children behave very well and they play together happily.
- Leaders are successful at building strong relationships with parents. Parents say that they feel welcome in school. Useful information is provided near the entrance so they know what their child is learning at any time. Parents are encouraged to share some of the key milestones that their children achieve at home, so they can be recognised and celebrated in school. One parent who spoke to inspectors said they had been taken by surprise by the depth of information they received about their child's progress and welfare during a recent parents' evening.
- The early years leader has forged strong links with external agencies. They work together very effectively to make sure that the needs of individual children can be met well.

School details

Unique reference number	120399
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10001829

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	187
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Kieran
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Carol Hines
Telephone number	01780 764202
Website	www.bluecoatprimaryschool.com
Email address	mailto:office@bluecoat.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 October 2013

Information about this school

- This school is slightly smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is low, as is the proportion who speak English as an additional language, compared with national averages.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (government funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, and children who are looked after) is much higher than the national average.
- There is a Nursery and provision for a small number of two-year-old children on site.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed learning in lessons, some jointly with senior leaders, and heard four pupils read.
- Inspectors spoke to two groups of pupils about school life and talked informally to other pupils in class and at lunchtime.
- Inspectors, alongside senior leaders, looked at pupils' work in books.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher and deputy headteacher, the Chair of the Governing Body, the English subject leader, and the member of staff with responsibility for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs.
- Discussions were held with a representative from the local authority and from a representative of 'Inspire+', which is a charity that supports the school in improving the provision for physical education.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the school and took account of their views through the school's own parental survey. Two parents expressed their views through the online survey, Parent View, during the inspection. These were considered.
- Inspectors also took account of the online staff and pupil questionnaires.
- Inspectors looked at the school's safeguarding records. Behaviour and incident logs were also checked.
- Inspectors took account of evidence from other sources, including a range of school documents, the school's website, displays, minutes of governors' meetings and observations of pupils during the school day outside the classroom.

Inspection team

Di Mullan, lead inspector

Caroline Evans

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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