

Inspection of a good school: Blackwater Community Primary School

North Hill, Blackwater, Truro, Cornwall TR4 8ES

Inspection dates:

18 July 2023

Outcome

Blackwater Community Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Blackwater Community Primary School is a happy place to be. All pupils enjoy their learning. They take pride in everything that they do. Pupils try to do their best and follow the school's vision, 'We are a small school with huge aspirations.'

Leaders and staff have high expectations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are determined for all pupils to succeed. This starts in the early years, where children thrive.

Staff know pupils well. Strong relationships ensure that pupils learn in a calm, nurturing and inclusive environment. Leaders provide high-quality pastoral support. This includes 'Ziggy', the dog who is a well-loved member of the school community.

Parents speak highly about the school. They are overwhelmingly supportive of the staff team. Parents value the many opportunities available to pupils that promote their wider development. This is a strength of the school. Pupils enjoy the range of clubs and trips on offer, including residential. One pupil shared, 'Trips help me to have an insight into new places and to enjoy the nature around me.'

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders have created a broad and ambitious curriculum. They have considered the essential knowledge they want pupils to learn. This prepares pupils well for their next stage. Teachers understand this securely. They are supported by subject experts to ensure that they have the subject knowledge they need to teach the curriculum successfully.

Leaders want all pupils to do their best. They identify pupils with SEND accurately. Pupils' needs are well known and understood. Teachers think carefully about how to adapt learning to enable all pupils to be successful.

Teachers use a variety of strategies to help pupils learn. For example, at the start of every lesson, pupils revisit prior learning to support new learning. This helps them to build their knowledge. Teachers use assessment to check how well pupils are learning the curriculum. However, staff do not always use assessment precisely enough to determine what pupils know and remember. As a result, some pupils develop gaps in their knowledge. This makes it difficult for them to deepen their understanding as well as they could.

Children get off to a flying start in the early years. They learn with confidence and show curiosity about the world around them. Staff maintain a sharp focus on a language-rich environment. They design learning opportunities that help children to build their knowledge. For example, children enjoy singing nursery rhymes to develop their listening skills. The curriculum supports all children to be successful.

There is a strong culture of reading at Blackwater. This is promoted by leaders and staff. Leaders select high-quality books that they want pupils to know well. As a result, pupils develop a love of reading and enjoy sharing their favourite books and authors. While learning to read, pupils are taught the important knowledge they need to read successfully. They read books that match the sounds they know. This helps pupils to practise reading and build their fluency. Staff identify pupils who fall behind and support them to catch up quickly.

All staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well. They embrace the school's 'high five' values, namely 'achieving, determined, responsible, respectful, safe.' Pupils value the rewards they receive, such as citizen of the week. Bullying is rare and not a concern for pupils. They know adults will quickly resolve any issues.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. This is at the heart of the curriculum. Opportunities are deliberately planned to support pupils' understanding of the world around them. For example, pupils learn about protecting the planet and read 'A Planet Full of Plastic' to deepen their understanding of recycling. They enjoy exploring the 'wild time' area. Pupils follow a well-sequenced outdoor learning curriculum that builds their knowledge successfully. Pupils know that equality is important. They have a strong understanding of protected characteristics.

All staff are proud to work at the school. They feel their workload and well-being are well supported by leaders. Leaders prioritise training for staff, including working with the local mathematics and English 'hubs'. This training, alongside support from the trust, is highly valued by staff. Governors show commitment to the continued development of the school. They fulfil their statutory responsibilities effectively. As a result, they know the school well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know pupils and their families well. They have created a strong safeguarding culture of 'it could happen here'. Leaders provide regular training that helps staff to identify pupils

who may be at risk of harm. Staff are clear about how to report any concerns. Leaders follow these up quickly. They take appropriate action where necessary, providing support for pupils and families when they need it. Leaders make the right recruitment checks on all adults working at the school.

Pupils feel safe. They are taught how to keep themselves safe in the wider world, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not use assessment well enough to check that pupils are secure in their understanding of new knowledge. Subsequent learning does not always build on what pupils know and can do. This can stall progress for some pupils. Leaders need to ensure that teachers know where pupils have gaps in their knowledge. This will help them to adapt learning based on pupils' prior knowledge.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Blackwater Community Primary School, to be good in October 2014.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	142305
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10284072
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	123
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Anita Firth
Headteacher	Evey Evison
Website	www.blackwater.cornwall.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Blackwater Community Primary School converted to become an academy school in September 2015. When its predecessor school, Blackwater Community Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- Blackwater Community Primary School is part of the Truro and Penwith Academy Trust.
- This school is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- Leaders provide a before- and after-school club.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with

subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The inspectors spoke with school leaders, subject leaders, parents, pupils, governors and representatives from the trust.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a trusted adult.
- To evaluate safeguarding, the inspectors spoke to the designated safeguarding leaders, staff, governors and pupils, and evaluated record-keeping and staff training.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site. Additionally, the inspectors spoke to pupils to discuss their views about the school.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey for parents, and met with some parents at the start of the first day. The inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Esther Best, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Lizzie Lethbridge

Ofsted Inspector

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