



# BLACKTHORNS COMMUNITY PRIMARY ACADEMY



University of Brighton

Academies Trust



## PROSPECTUS





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High standards are an expectation, not an aspiration.”

Ofsted 2018

**Blackthorns received an Outstanding rating from Ofsted in 2018 – placing us in the top 19% of UK primary schools.**





## WELCOME

**Welcome to Blackthorns Community Primary Academy. Blackthorns is a vibrant primary academy in the beautiful village of Lindfield, near Haywards Heath in West Sussex.**

We currently have 210 pupils on-roll in our seven classes. As a Community Primary Academy, our role within our local and wider community is very important to us. Our strong relationships with parents and carers are crucial. It is when schools and parents work closely together that children progress best, both academically and as people. Working as we do with children every day is both a responsibility and a privilege.

We have a highly skilled, passionate and dedicated team of teachers and support staff who strive for the very best for the children at our Academy. This is very clear as soon as you come through our doors and see the wonderful and stimulating environment we have created for the children. It is always a joy to show visitors around and share in some of the things that make Blackthorns such a unique and special place to learn and work.

I look forward to meeting you soon.



*M Brand*

Marianne Brand  
Principal

### Achieving excellence together

Blackthorns Community Primary Academy is part of the University of Brighton Academies Trust's network of 15 infant, primary and secondary academies, located across Sussex.

We believe that education transforms lives. Enriched by the University of Brighton's education expertise and our experience working with academy schools for almost 10 years, we want to ensure that our 7,500 pupils are inspired to meet their potential and develop a passion for lifelong learning.

It is important to us that our Academies have a positive impact on their local communities and that parents and carers are actively engaged with their child's learning. We look forward to welcoming your family to Blackthorns Community Primary Academy as we support each other – and your child – to excel.



*[Signature]*

Dr John Smith  
Chief Executive  
University of Brighton  
Academies Trust





## OUR VISION

Blackthorns aims, in partnership with parents and carers, for our children to be happy, respectful and responsible citizens. We aim to provide an exciting and challenging curriculum in an environment which is both caring and safe.

The children and staff of Blackthorns have created the following to illustrate our vision for our Academy:

Brilliant pupils who are happy and enjoy learning  
 Loyal to one another  
 Aspire to embrace new challenges  
 Creative, considerate minds  
 Keen to develop independence  
 Thoughtful friends who respect each other's differences  
 Honest and trustworthy citizens  
 Outstanding attitude in everything we do  
 Responsible for our community and environment  
 Nurtured and valued  
 Safe and secure (even on the internet)



I like the fact that we have awesome lessons and teachers. We have the freedom to be good at different things and to have our own opinions."

Year 5 pupil

## OUR VALUES

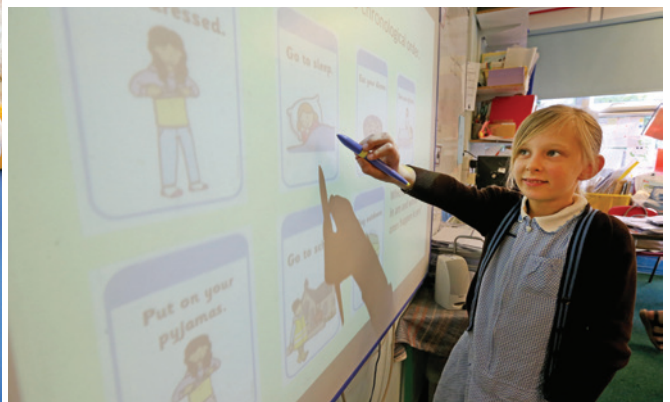
Our children have a good understanding of the rights and responsibilities of each and every member of our Academy community.

We have the right to:

- be happy
- be safe
- be treated fairly
- learn and to be heard.

We have the responsibility to:

- treat others the way we would like to be treated ourselves
- use equipment safely and move around the academy with care
- be a good friend and a good sport
- be active listeners, not disturb others and speak appropriately.



## LEARNING

### OUR CREATIVE CURRICULUM

The teachers at Blackthorns underpin the curriculum with a philosophy based on how children learn best. The curriculum is about the children themselves, their varied and personal questions, and developing their awareness and understanding of their world.

We aim to work with children, families and our local community to provide opportunities to learn, achieve and gain confidence by promoting children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We strive to ensure that the promotion of these skills helps to prepare the children for life in modern Britain and develop their understanding of fundamental British values.

Teachers plan a broad, balanced, creative and engaging curriculum which covers the National Curriculum. Our strong focus is on developing English, mathematics and computing skills through the children's topic-based cross-curricular learning. Each class covers a topic each term and all of the areas of the National Curriculum are covered within this topic. The children are involved in planning and directing the learning opportunities in school, resulting in a curriculum that is continually changing and responding to the needs and interests of our community.

Embedded in our curriculum are wonderful opportunities to learn through the delivery of the different arts subjects (art, craft and design, music, dance, drama and still and moving photography). This has a positive impact on academic achievement and the self-esteem of the children, providing breadth to their learning and depth to their development as individuals and young citizens.

We recognise that children learn best through memorable, first-hand experiences. We make our curriculum memorable by a range of visits and experiences, and relevant by understanding the links between subjects in engaging contexts.

We understand the need for pupils to experience a rich range of opportunities to excel, and therefore offer enriching provision such as specialist music teaching, sports coaching, and modern foreign language lessons for all pupils.

Learning and teaching take place inside and outside, engaging all children and inspiring meaningful, novel and relevant learning. The children build on their local history to learn more about their world and its geography.

We strongly believe that enjoyment and achievement go hand in hand; teachers provide opportunities for children to bring their interests and experiences to their learning. They encourage children to be reflective learners, build on success and achieve their ambitions.

Our children will take part in visits related to their learning throughout the school year. These visits are often at the start or end of a class topic. Children in Year 5 have taken part in a two-night residential trip to Sayers Croft and Year 6 pupils have spent a week at Little Canada on the Isle of Wight. Other trips have included Cuckmere Haven, Bodiam Castle, the Weald and Downland Living Museum, the Cabinet War Rooms, London Zoo, Hampton Court Palace, the Harry Potter Studios, the British Museum and a day at the seaside in Brighton, to name but a few.

We also often welcome visitors to our school to come and talk to the children about their areas of expertise. These range from magicians to members of the fire service.

Although our creative curriculum enables the children to make essential links between curriculum areas, we also have several whole-Academy themed weeks each year, focused on areas such as the arts, outdoor learning and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics).

We encourage independence through the development of different learning skills within the 'families' of Attitudes, Creativity, Relationships and Organisation (ACRO).

Parents, carers, grandparents and local Rotarians visit each week to read with children and support their learning in a range of ways. Our PTA (Friends Of Blackthorns) is an active and enthusiastic group of parents who raise money and organise social events for the families at Blackthorns. Their fundraising makes a significant difference for our children and has enabled us to purchase new playground equipment, iPads, sound system and computing equipment.

We provide opportunities for our children to perform regularly, both within our Academy and at events in our local community. Our children represent our Academy in sporting events at a local and county level.

Being part of our local and wider community is very important to us and we enjoy participating in events such as Lindfield Village Day, Lindfield Arts Festival, Remembrance Day commemorations and many other such occasions.

## READING AND WRITING

At Blackthorns we believe that being able to read and write are the vital skills that enable us to understand and express ourselves more effectively.

These skills open the door to learning. We passionately believe in helping children to develop not only the technical skills of reading and writing, but also in engendering a love for literature and the different genres of writing.

## PHONICS

All of our teaching and support staff have been trained in the phonics programme 'Sounds-Write'.

Our teaching of reading and writing is, therefore, based on the Sounds-Write, programme. This begins very early on when children join in Reception and continues until a child is a confident and competent reader and speller. Sounds-Write is used around the world and has been graded as 'Outstanding' by Ofsted.

The knowledge of sounds and symbols is an important starting point for understanding and using written language and we believe that a strong and consistent approach to the teaching of phonics is vital for our children to begin to access the rest of the curriculum. This is, however, used in conjunction with many other strategies to help children to begin to read and write.

## READING

Our classrooms are full of visual stimuli to help children begin to read and write. Children take part in individual and guided reading sessions, led by an adult. These sessions inevitably focus on the decoding of the words while children are learning to read. The focus shifts towards the children's understanding of the texts they are reading as they become fluent readers and they begin to develop the skills of inference and deduction.

Texts are shared with the whole class and children are read to by the teacher on a regular basis. This enables the children to listen and really understand the meaning of the texts. It is also an important opportunity for children to share their thoughts and ideas and to learn from one another.

Our home reading books incorporate several different schemes, such as Dandelion Readers, Oxford Reading Tree and Sounds-Write texts. Children are encouraged to read at home on a daily basis and to discuss what they are reading, ensuring that they have a very good understanding of the meaning as well as being able to decode the words.

To supplement our school reading scheme we have also subscribed to an online reading scheme called 'Bug Club', which our children can access at home. This scheme requires the children to read a text and then answer questions about it. Information is stored for the teacher to track the child's progress.





We also encourage our families to make the most of the many 'real' reading opportunities in the home and to understand that reading a recipe or the back of a cereal packet is as much of an opportunity to develop reading skills as reading the school reading scheme book.

We encourage and develop reading through using texts in other curriculum areas. Our cross-curricular creative approach to learning means that the children will be required to read and use what they have learnt in curriculum areas such as science, history and geography. Using tests and teacher assessments we track all children's progress in reading. We quickly identify children not on-track to achieve the 'expected' level for their age. These children may begin to read every day for a short time with an adult in school or they may be placed on our 'Rapid Reading' intervention.

## WRITING

One of the benefits of the Sounds-Write programme is that the children learn the link between sounds and symbols at a very early stage and begin to write the sounds learnt immediately.

Within school, we work explicitly on spelling, punctuation and grammar to ensure that these technical elements of writing develop as the children progress through the school, whilst always focussing on the quality and content of the children's writing.

Teachers plan stimulating and engaging experiences to encourage the children's writing, from finding giants' footprints in the classroom, to World War 2 spy missions. These are all designed to give a 'real' context to the children's writing and to bring the curriculum to life.

In school we provide detailed feedback to ensure that children gain a good understanding of the things they are doing well and what they need to improve. This is achieved through our 'Yippee Yellow and Green For Growth' highlighting process. The strengths of the writing are highlighted in yellow and the areas for development in green. The children are then given an opportunity to respond and improve their writing.

Children are encouraged to make links between reading and writing, using techniques and skills employed by authors of texts they have read within their own writing. They also make links between writing and speaking, working hard to understand the differences in the language used for each.

Teachers make detailed assessments of children's writing and, in conjunction with the child, identify individual targets for further improvement and development. Parents are encouraged to help with their child's writing development by helping their children to write for different purposes at home and by supporting them in written homework tasks.

## MATHS

As with reading and writing, we focus on teaching key skills within maths. We often link the acquisition of these skills to the children's current topic. This encourages them to develop the ability to reason mathematically and use and apply their skills within a range of contexts.

We encourage children to approach new learning with the aid of practical resources and follow a clear progression of skills and strategies as they move through the academy.

# LEARNING ENVIRONMENT



Our children benefit from a rich and stimulating learning environment, both inside the classroom and outside. Our classrooms strongly reflect the topic that the children are learning about, as well as providing the support required for the children to develop as independent learners, particularly through the use of highly interactive 'working walls.' All classrooms benefit from an outside learning space. Our Academy also has two large playgrounds, an Activity Zone, a field, a pond, a woodland area and an Early Years garden. Outdoor learning is central to our curriculum and we take every opportunity to move the children's learning outside wherever possible.

We have eight classrooms and a range of shared areas for small group learning. Our large hall is used for assemblies, music lessons, PE lessons and many other things. We also have a Computing and Programming Suite to aid the children's development of computing and researching skills. We use iPads across the Academy to support learning inside and outside the classroom.

## EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

We offer a range of before school, lunchtime and after school clubs to the different year groups in the Academy. These include sports clubs, art clubs, music clubs and more.

## PASTORAL SUPPORT

Blackthorns provides a high level of emotional and pastoral support. Our Learning Mentor works closely with

children with emotional barriers to their learning and our Peer Mediators ensure that children are supported during play times. Our Play Leaders organise structured games for the younger children during lunchtimes. Every year our new Reception children are linked with a Year 6 'buddy' and they spend time together on a range of projects throughout the year.

## SUPPORTING SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES

Our aim is for all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) to achieve their very best and become successful, well-rounded individuals.

We believe that all children should have high-quality teaching and access to the curriculum adjusted to meet their individual needs. We have an Inclusion Manager who has day-to-day responsibility for SEND policy in the Academy: providing advice and support for staff, and working in partnership with parents and carers.

Pupils are regularly assessed so that SEND can be identified as early as possible. We follow an 'assess, plan, do and review' cycle to ensure individual needs are met.

## THE ALPS: SPECIAL SUPPORT CENTRE

The Alps is an additional unit of eight places for Key Stage 2 children with specific learning needs and/or speech and language needs. The children placed in the Alps work with the teaching and support staff on their own specific needs. They are also integrated within the mainstream classes during the afternoons, with support where this is appropriate.



# GOVERNANCE AND OUR SPONSOR

Our governance arrangements are set by the University of Brighton Academies Trust.

## LOCAL BOARD

We have a Local Board that contributes to our Academy's vision and future strategy. It is responsible for ensuring that our Academy maintains strong community links and effective communication with all stakeholders including parents and carers. It is also responsible for monitoring student wellbeing, admissions, complaints and concerns.

Local Boards include individuals from the community, including parents and carers. They are accountable to the Trust's Board of Trustees.

Visit [www.brightonacademiestrust.org.uk/locallink](http://www.brightonacademiestrust.org.uk/locallink) for information on volunteering as a Local Board member.

## BOARD OF TRUSTEES

The Trustees are responsible for determining the Trust's strategic direction, including overarching responsibility for the three core functions: the Trust's vision, educational standards and financial performance.

Trustees are also responsible for ensuring the Trust complies with charity and company law, as well as its funding agreement with the Secretary of State. The Board of Trustees includes representatives from the Trust's sponsor and local people with a wide range of expertise.

## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON ACADEMIES TRUST

The University of Brighton Academies Trust is a network of 15 academies in Sussex all supporting each other – and their pupils – to excel. It is a multi-academy trust and a not-for-profit charitable company limited by guarantee.

The University of Brighton is the Trust's sponsor. The University's commitment to improving educational opportunities by supporting academies began in 2008 in Hastings and St Leonards, and has since developed to include academies in East and West Sussex.

Visit: [www.brightonacademiestrust.org.uk](http://www.brightonacademiestrust.org.uk)

## ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF BRIGHTON

The University of Brighton is a leading provider of higher education in the south east. It has 21,000 students, 2,600 staff on four campuses across Sussex and runs 500 undergraduate and postgraduate courses including teacher training, medicine, mathematics, computing, engineering and fashion.

Its School of Education has an 'Outstanding' rating from Ofsted for all of its early years, primary and secondary teacher training and it is ranked in the top ten universities for education courses in England in The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2019 and in the top 20 in the Guardian University League Tables 2020.

Partnership working is central to the University's mission and it has a deep commitment to helping to shape the futures and realise the potential of young people across the region.

Visit: [www.brighton.ac.uk](http://www.brighton.ac.uk)

## A WORD FROM THE TRUST

We work collaboratively to help everyone connected to our academies achieve excellence.

By working together and sharing, insights and best practice, our academies support each other to improve. We value our staff, investing in their training and development at all stages of their careers.

It is important to us that our academies have a positive impact on their communities and that pupils understand the role they can play in the wider world. We also work to ensure parents and carers are actively engaged in their child's learning.

## WE VALUE EXCELLENCE, INTEGRITY AND INNOVATION

We want **excellence** for our pupils and their families, our staff, and our academies' communities. We believe that education transforms lives, which is why each of our academies has a rich curriculum to ensure that pupils meet their potential and are inspired to continue learning.

We work with **integrity**. We recognise the unique character of each of our academies, and tailor the support we provide to suit the individual academy and its pupils. We respect all cultures and beliefs, and believe in honesty and openness.

**Innovation** is key. We constantly strive to improve. Our pupils' experience is enriched by the contribution of the University of Brighton and its School of Education. Our school improvement framework is informed by best practice and creative approaches.

# ADMISSIONS

**Blackthorns Community Primary Academy will consider all applications for places.**

Our admissions policy, which includes our admissions numbers and oversubscription criteria (which are applied when there are more applications than places) is available on our website:

[www.blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk/further/admissions](http://www.blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk/further/admissions)

## NORMAL ADMISSIONS ROUND

Most pupils join in Reception and applications for this year group will be made in accordance with West Sussex County Council's coordinated admissions arrangements and will be made on the Common Application Form provided and administered by West Sussex County Council's Admissions Team.

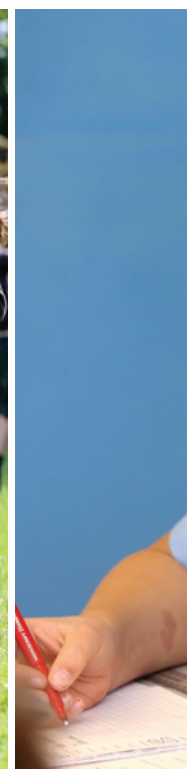
A leaflet describing the primary admissions procedure and application forms are available from West Sussex County Council or online at: [www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/admissions). You can make your application online or by returning the completed form to the Schools Admissions Team at the county council.

## IN-YEAR ADMISSIONS

The University of Brighton Academies Trust is responsible for the allocation of places outside the normal admissions round (including Years 1–6, and applications to join the Academy part way through the Reception Year). The administration of these places is carried out on behalf of the Trust by West Sussex County Council. Details of these arrangements are posted on the Academy's website.

## FURTHER INFORMATION

For further information please contact Pupil Admissions by email on [admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions.north@westsussex.gov.uk) or by phone on 033 301 42903.







## ENQUIRIES

If you require more details about our Academy please look at our website and make contact to arrange a visit.

### CONTACT DETAILS

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[www.blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk](http://www.blackthornsprimaryacademy.org.uk)





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