

# Birchfield Community School

Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham, West Midlands B6 6AJ

## Inspection dates

6–7 June 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Inadequate</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Inadequate</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Inadequate</b>
Early years provision	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is an inadequate school

- Leaders and governors have not taken sufficient action to address the weaknesses identified at the previous inspection. As a result, leaders' capacity to secure further improvements in the school is weak.
- Governors have not robustly challenged how the school has spent the additional pupil premium funding.
- The reports given by leaders to governors on the impact of pupil premium spending are inaccurate.
- Disadvantaged pupils across the school do not make enough progress from their starting points.
- Middle leaders do not effectively monitor learning and progress across their areas of responsibility. Leaders do not provide teachers with sufficient feedback to help them improve their practice.
- Pupils are not always aware of what they are learning or how to improve their own work. As a result, progress across the school is variable.
- The school does not provide a broad and balanced curriculum that meets the needs of pupils.
- The teaching does not always meet the needs of pupils. Teachers do not sufficiently stretch the most able pupils and this limits the progress that they make.
- Teachers' use of assessment is weak. They do not have a clear understanding of how to check on pupils' progress within a lesson and identify any misconceptions pupils may have.
- Teachers in most classes do not plan lessons that build on pupils' previous knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Attendance is too low, particularly for disadvantaged pupils.
- In the early years, some children do not make the progress they are capable of.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils understand British values such as respect and democracy.
- Pupils' personal development and well-being is good.
- Teaching in Year 6 is a strength of the school.
- Support staff work well with pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities to help them make progress in lessons.

## Full report

In accordance with section 44(1) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires special measures because it is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the persons responsible for leading, managing or governing the school are not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school.

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

- Improve leadership and management by:
  - improving the skills and knowledge of leaders at all levels, including governors, to bring about the improvement needed
  - making robust checks on teaching and providing clear guidance to teachers on how to improve pupils' learning in lessons
  - providing middle leaders with the skills they need to effectively monitor their subject areas
  - ensuring that the curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of all pupils
  - ensuring that governors have the skills to monitor how the school is spending additional pupil premium funding
  - ensuring that leaders provide accurate reports to governors about the school's performance, particularly in relation to the achievement of disadvantaged pupils.
- Improve outcomes for all pupils and the quality of teaching by ensuring that teachers:
  - use assessment information in lessons to identify and address pupils' misunderstandings
  - challenge the most able pupils and move their learning on at a faster pace
  - plan lessons which better cater for the needs of pupils and build on their prior learning across all areas of the curriculum
  - have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve.
- Improve personal development, behaviour and welfare by:
  - improving attendance for all pupils, particularly those who are disadvantaged
  - ensuring that pupils are aware of what they are learning and how they can improve their own work.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to ascertain how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

The school may not appoint newly qualified teachers.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Inadequate

- Leaders have not dealt with the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. All areas of the school's performance have declined and the school's overall effectiveness is now inadequate. The capacity of the leadership team to secure further improvement is poor.
- The school's self-evaluation is overgenerous. Leaders and governors do not evaluate the weaknesses in the school rigorously enough and, as a result, they have an inaccurate view of the school's performance.
- Leaders carry out checks on the quality of teaching. However, these do not identify specific targets for teachers to help them improve the quality of their teaching. As a result, the quality of teaching has declined since the last inspection.
- Reports given to governors about how the school is spending its additional pupil premium funding contain inaccurate information. This means that the analysis shared with the governors is incorrect. Therefore, the actions taken by the school to improve the rates of progress for disadvantaged pupils are having a limited impact. As a consequence, at least a quarter of disadvantaged pupils are making inadequate progress across the school in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The curriculum is poorly planned. This is because leaders have not implemented the new national curriculum with sufficient pace. Teachers have little knowledge and understanding of how the curriculum is used to support those pupils who are already confident and capable learners. As a result the curriculum does not fully meet the needs of the pupils in the school.
- In some areas of the national curriculum, knowledge, skills and understanding are not planned for across year groups. This means that by the time pupils leave the school they have not been taught the necessary skills and have gaps in their knowledge. As a result they are not prepared well enough for their next stage of education.
- Middle leaders are passionate and are keen to do well. However, they do not yet have the skills and confidence to take an active role in monitoring teaching and analysing assessment information. Therefore, middle leaders do not have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching or the extent to which pupils make progress.
- The primary physical education and sports premium funding is used well to provide a range of sporting activities. Pupils enjoy a wide range of extra-curricular activities and understand the importance of being fit and healthy. One pupil told inspectors, 'It is important to eat healthy food so that you can run faster.'
- The school's work to promote British values is effective. As a result, pupils speak confidently about respect and democracy.
- Pupils speak knowledgeably about the range of opportunities they have to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They have a mature

understanding and approach to equalities issues and show great respect towards each other.

- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and who receive additional funding to support their needs receive good-quality, specialised support to cater effectively for their needs.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors have not been effective in holding leaders to account. They do not challenge the school sufficiently to ensure that they have an accurate understanding of how well pupils are doing.
- Following the last inspection, governors carried out an external review of the school's use of pupil premium funding. However, the impact of this review has been very limited. Governors still do not monitor this spending effectively. Too often, governors assume the information they are given is correct without checking it. They have not provided sufficient challenge to school leaders about how well they are improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils.
- Governors receive information about the performance management of staff and know that this is linked to decisions about pay and progression for teaching staff. They use external support when setting objectives for the headteacher.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that all safeguarding policies and procedures are in place.
- Systems and procedures for ensuring the safer recruitment of staff are secure and the requirement for staff to be trained in safeguarding is met. However, there are some shortcomings in relation to the 'Prevent' duty. Leaders and governors have not fully disseminated information and training on the 'Prevent' duty to all staff, including lunchtime supervisors, to help them have a clear understanding of the risks and signs relating to radicalisation and extremism.
- Leaders work cooperatively with parents and other agencies to help support the needs of those pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable.
- Pupils are kept safe in school. The school site is secure, with a strong perimeter fence and gates that are closed when pupils are on-site. Pupils say they feel safe in school. Parents agree that their children are safe in school.

### **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

### **Inadequate**

- Teaching has failed to secure the outcomes of which many pupils are capable. Teaching is variable across the school. However, it is stronger in Year 6.

- Teaching is poorly planned. Although assessment information is in place, teachers do not use this information to plan learning that is linked well enough to what pupils already know and can do.
- Pupils rightly identified that there is insufficient challenge in some lessons and some say they are not learning anything new. As a result, pupils do not make as much progress as they could. Pupils' work scrutinised during the inspection indicates that too much learning is the same for all pupils. This results in pupils completing activities without extending their knowledge and understanding further.
- Teachers do not have high enough expectations of what pupils can achieve. Teaching does not consistently meet the needs of pupils, particularly the most able, and the most able disadvantaged pupils. Teachers do not challenge pupils well enough. This means they are not making the progress they are capable of.
- Teachers do not check pupils' understanding carefully enough and, on occasions, teachers do not correct pupils' misunderstandings during lessons. This results in pupils continuing to make errors in their work, which slows their rates of progress.
- Teachers do not provide opportunities for pupils to extend and apply their written and mathematical skills to more complicated challenges and tasks. For example, in mathematics, pupils are not expected to apply basic number skills to solve mathematical problems. This hinders pupils' progress, particularly for the most able.
- The teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they represent) is effective and helps pupils to make progress. Pupils have positive views about reading. They enjoy reading and told inspectors that they have frequent opportunities to read both in school and at home. Year 6 pupils are confident readers while the Year 2 readers use a range of decoding and phonic strategies when reading difficult words.
- There are pockets of effective teaching. For example, in Year 6 pupils work in smaller groups with a number of staff. The focused teaching they receive during these sessions has a good impact on pupils' learning. During these sessions pupils are fully engaged in their lessons and work is pitched at the right level to meet their individual needs.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by teaching assistants. As a result, they make similar rates of progress to other pupils with comparable starting points.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

**Requires improvement**

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are self-confident and are respectful of others' views and opinions. Relationships between pupils and staff are warm and caring. Pupils say they enjoy coming to school and speak with genuine pride about their school.
- Pupils have a good understanding of how to stay safe. They talk confidently about how to keep themselves safe when online.
- The school places a high emphasis on supporting pupils and ensuring that their personal development and well-being are carefully nurtured. Pupils with emotional or

behavioural needs benefit from effective support. This has enabled individual pupils to settle well and enjoy learning and playing with their classmates.

- The school provides a breakfast club and after-school club. These are safe and welcoming environments where pupils are happy and engage in a range of activities.

## Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils requires improvement.
- Attendance is still not high enough and too many pupils are repeatedly absent from school. School leaders and governors are not tracking attendance information effectively enough to ensure that different groups of pupils attend regularly, particularly disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils are well mannered and eager to please. Even when teachers plan work that is too easy or too hard, pupils sit patiently until the session has finished. However, pupils can become complacent and do not try hard enough with their work. This is because they are not always sure about what they are learning or what to do next.
- Behaviour records show that there are few instances of bullying or derogatory language. Pupils also confirmed that bullying was rare and that they were confident in leaders' responses to any concerns they had.
- Pupils are happy, friendly and caring. They behave well at break times and lunchtimes, playing together sensibly.

### Outcomes for pupils

### Inadequate

- Currently in school, too many disadvantaged pupils are making inadequate progress. This is because there are gaps in their learning due to their lower-than-average attendance.
- Disadvantaged pupils in Year 6 made the same rates of progress as other pupils nationally in 2016. However, the school's own assessment information shows that, across the school and in all subjects, disadvantaged pupils currently on roll are not making the same rates of progress as other pupils with similar starting points. The school has not used additional pupil premium funding well enough to help these pupils make better rates of progress. Therefore, the school is not ensuring that the differences in attainment between disadvantaged pupils and other pupils nationally who are not disadvantaged are diminishing quickly enough.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils that met the expected standard at the end of Year 6 in 2016 in reading and mathematics was below other pupils nationally. Current school assessment information for reading, writing and mathematics shows that disadvantaged pupils are attaining below other pupils in the school in most year groups.
- The most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged, do not make the progress they are capable of. This is because they are not challenged sufficiently.
- The proportion of pupils who met the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics check last year declined and was below the national average. The proportion of

disadvantaged pupils that met the expected standard was also below that of their peers. However, the teaching of phonics has improved and there are early signs of a rise in achievement in phonics.

- At the end of Year 6 in 2016, all pupils made similar rates of progress to other pupils nationally. However, too few pupils made good progress from their starting points, especially the most able and disadvantaged pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make the same rates of progress as other pupils.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children, generally enter the early years with lower starting points than those typical for their age. In 2015 and 2016, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development was below the national average. Current assessment information shows this picture is the same for this year. This means these children are not well prepared for their start in Year 1.
- Leaders have not ensured that provision in the early years is consistently good. Assessment is not used well enough by staff to ensure that children make good progress. Adults do not consistently capture what children say and do. As a result, adults do not have a clear picture of what children know and can do, and therefore do not plan activities which build on their prior learning.
- The early years leader has a secure understanding of appropriate areas for development. These include the nursery outdoor area, which currently does not provide sufficient activities to cover all the areas of learning in the early years curriculum.
- Teachers plan a wide range of interesting activities for the children. However, not all activities and tasks provide enough challenge for the most able children and, as a result, they do not make the progress they are capable of from their starting points.
- Relationships between adults and children are very positive. Adults act as good role models for children and high levels of behaviour support are provided for children. Children cooperate and work well together.
- The early years classes provide a safe, happy, spacious area in which children can grow and develop. There are effective procedures to ensure that children are protected and that any issues are identified and monitored by the early years leader.
- Disadvantaged children make similar progress to other children in the early years. This is because the leader is aware of the needs of these pupils and addresses them within the curriculum.

## School details

Unique reference number	103321
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10032593

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	759
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair	Mrs Shashi Verma
Headteacher	Ms Moira Foster-Brown
Telephone number	0121 464 5661
Website	<a href="http://www.birchfld.bham.sch.uk/">www.birchfld.bham.sch.uk/</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:enquiry@birchfld.bham.sch.uk">enquiry@birchfld.bham.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	10–11 March 2015

## Information about this school

- Birchfield Community School is larger than most primary schools.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The proportion of pupils who have an education, health and care plan is also below average.
- In 2016, the school met the government's floor standards (minimum standards for pupils' achievement at the end of key stage 2).
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school runs a breakfast and after-school club.



## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed lessons in all classes, spoke to pupils, looked at work in their exercise books and heard them read. Observations were conducted jointly with the headteacher and deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at assessment information provided by the school, and published assessment information from recent years. They looked at a range of evidence including behaviour and attendance reports, the school's own self-evaluation and governors' minutes and reports.
- Safeguarding documentation was scrutinised and inspectors considered how this related to daily practice, as well as speaking with staff and pupils.
- Inspectors held discussions with the school's senior and middle leaders, representatives of the governing body and representatives of the local authority.
- Inspectors heard pupils read and observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, at playtime and when pupils were moving around the school.
- The inspection team spoke to parents and took into account the 10 comments made by parents on Parent View, the online questionnaire.
- Inspectors considered the range and quality of information provided on the school's website.

## Inspection team

Kerry Rochester, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Justine Lomas	Ofsted Inspector
Emma Titchener	Ofsted Inspector
Mark Hinton	Ofsted Inspector

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