

Birdham CE Primary School

Crooked Lane, Birdham, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 7HB

Inspection dates

12–13 March 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Leaders, including governors, have not ensured that assessments of pupils' learning are sufficiently accurate. Consequently, leaders cannot be sure how well pupils are doing, or how effective their actions to improve the school are.
- New middle leaders need further support to help them fulfil their role in raising standards.
- Teaching is not consistently effective. Information about what pupils know and can do is not used well to plan activities that meet different pupils' needs and help them to learn. Consequently, some pupils become bored and inattentive.
- Pupils' progress, over time and currently, is variable, particularly in writing. Too few pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Leaders provide a broad curriculum. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to deepen their knowledge and skills across the wide range of subjects.
- A minority of parents and carers do not feel that they are listened to. As a result, some parents and staff are not working closely together to help their children learn.

The school has the following strengths

- Governors and leaders have a shared ambition for pupils to succeed. They are reflective, and have the capacity to help the school improve further.
- In key stage 1, phonics teaching is strong. Pupils learn their letters and sounds rapidly.
- Funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is used effectively to help these pupils make strong progress.
- Leaders, including governors, have made sure additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is mostly improving progress for these pupils.
- Safeguarding is effective.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Relationships are good.
- Children make a good start in early years.
- Pupils appreciate the wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Additional government sports funding is used effectively.
- Pupils are prepared well for life in modern Britain. Leaders provide for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.
- Leaders monitor attendance closely and attendance is currently in line with the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management by ensuring that:
 - governors have accurate information to hold leaders to account for the quality of teaching and pupils' progress
 - middle leaders' actions positively influence the quality of teaching, and progress pupils make, across the school.
- Improve pupils' progress across the school by ensuring that:
 - teachers can make accurate assessments of pupils' learning in reading, writing and mathematics
 - learning builds on pupils' prior knowledge so that pupils' skills as readers, writers and mathematicians strengthen quickly
 - teaching challenges pupils, especially the most able, to think deeply across the wider curriculum.
- Strengthen partnerships with parents to engage more in supporting their children's learning.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Requires improvement

- Leaders have not ensured that records of pupils' progress are consistently accurate or that teachers use this information routinely to plan lessons. Recent changes in staff have made it difficult for leaders to ensure robust procedures. Leaders have organised training and meetings with other schools to ensure that assessment is accurate, but there is more to be done. As yet, planned activities do not routinely match pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils' attention sometimes wanders and they make limited progress.
- Leaders are aware that teaching is not yet consistently strong. Where teaching and learning are stronger, leaders are providing opportunities for this practice to be shared. Staff have the opportunity to observe each other teaching and have meetings to discuss new approaches.
- The curriculum is broad; however, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to deepen their knowledge and skills across the wider curriculum. For example, scientific skills such as hypothesising, analysing and summarising are not developed progressively. As a result, pupils are not making as much progress as they could in the wider range of subjects.
- Staff and parents do not always work together closely to help pupils make progress in their learning. Parents' views on communication are variable. A minority of parents say that leaders do not listen or take appropriate action when they raise concerns about pupils' behaviour. Leaders are aware of the issue and are taking action to improve communication between parents and staff.
- Most middle leaders are new to their posts. These leaders bring a wealth of new ideas and have attended additional training for their roles. Together, senior and middle leaders have identified appropriate next steps for the school. Recent changes are beginning to improve pupils' learning, but these have not yet ensured that all pupils achieve as well as they should.
- Leaders check the progress of pupils with SEND carefully. They use additional funding effectively and work closely with a range of external agencies to support pupils' specific needs. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress. Parents welcome the support their children are given to help them catch up and develop their self-belief. As one parent commented, 'My child has become more confident.'
- Leaders use the extra funding for disadvantaged pupils thoughtfully, and achievements are reviewed carefully. A range of activities are provided, such as extra adult support, additional computer games and work to complete at home. Consequently, most disadvantaged pupils make strong progress.
- Leaders use sports premium funding successfully to provide a range of extra opportunities for pupils, such as competitive events with other schools. Leaders review these activities regularly, and as a result, make further improvements. Pupils participate in a range of sporting activities, such as archery, judo, hockey and cricket. Pupils swim regularly in the school swimming pool during the warmer months. These activities contribute to the development of pupils' skills and talents effectively.

- Leaders provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which are appreciated by the pupils, such as computer clubs, science and technology club, art and origami. The school has received a number of awards for environmental work. Pupils have taken part in beach clearances and promote Fairtrade. These activities support pupils to be responsible young citizens in modern Britain. Leaders are promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development successfully.

Governance of the school

- Governors' oversight of pupils' progress has not been sufficiently rigorous in the past. Their ability to make robust decisions on the use of resources to improve learning has been compromised, because they have had an overly positive view of pupils' progress.
- Governors are reflective. They monitor the school development plan regularly. Governors meet systematically with leaders, look at pupils' work and visit classrooms. They undertake an annual audit of their skills and have completed training to improve their effectiveness further. As a result, they are well placed to challenge leaders to improve.
- Governors have ensured that additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used effectively. Expenditure for the small number of pupils is recorded carefully to ensure that extra activities, such as after-school clubs and catch-up tasks, are successful.
- Governors check the impact of additional sports funding on pupils' progress and involvement. Their checks ensure that additional funding is spent effectively to enhance pupils' healthy lifestyles and participation in sports.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Staff complete regular training and understand safety procedures. Staff act quickly when there are concerns. Governors check that leaders keep detailed records that are fit for purpose. Clear procedures are in place for use when staff are recruited. Risk assessments are undertaken to ensure that the learning environment is safe. Consequently, the majority of parents are confident that their children are safe.
- Pupils are taught how to be safe, including how to stay safe online and how to use their bicycles safely. Pupils care for, and respect, one another. They speak articulately about how to promote their physical and mental health. Pupils know that there is always someone to talk to about any concerns. The majority of pupils are confident that any issues raised will be taken seriously by staff, and dealt with appropriately.
- Pupils are cared for, and known, as individuals. Leaders work closely with external agencies when necessary, to provide targeted support for pupils and their families. As a result, pupils are safe and feel secure.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- Teaching is not consistently good across the school. Assessments of pupils' learning are not always accurate. Some staff do not plan work routinely to match pupils' needs or to

help them reach higher standards. At times, pupils are asked to complete work that is too simple and other pupils struggle when work is overcomplicated. Accordingly, these pupils lose interest in learning and do not make enough progress.

- Conversely, pupils respond well and with enthusiasm when learning is carefully structured to build on previously learned skills and knowledge. High expectations and clear guidance enable pupils to improve their work and increase their understanding. Leaders are rightly keen to share these approaches more widely.
- Where teaching is strongest, pupils are confident and work hard to complete their tasks. For example, Year 2 pupils answered multiple-choice questions about a story they had read together and justified their answers. Staff used probing questions to enable pupils to think deeply about the text.
- Phonics is taught well in key stage 1. Pupils' progress is evaluated carefully and staff organise a range of activities matched to pupils' needs. Pupils are able to apply their skills independently in their reading and writing.
- Leaders use additional adults successfully to support pupils with SEND. These staff move activities forward in small steps and repeat activities, if necessary, to help pupils learn. Practical equipment is used by teachers to help build confidence and deepen pupils' understanding.
- Homework is set regularly and linked with work completed in the classroom. Activities such as multiplication games and a 'one million words' reading challenge make homework fun. As a result, homework is helping pupils to make progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Relationships are good and staff know pupils well. The nine core values agreed collectively by the school community are woven through all aspects of school life. Pupils are respectful of one another and cooperate well. Pupils support those who are less fortunate, raising funds by organising cake sales and collecting donations for local charities. Pupils learn about caring for the environment and wider world through the work of the school's eco council.
- Pupils are known individually by staff; a fact appreciated by most parents. Staff work closely with pupils and families to provide support when it is needed. Plans for pupils with individual needs, including medical needs, are updated regularly. Consequently, these pupils take an active part in the life of the school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. The majority of parents who completed Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, are confident that their children are safe. Most parents are happy that any issues they might raise are addressed promptly.
- Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. Most parents are confident that any unkind behaviour is dealt with effectively by staff.
- Pupils speak happily and confidently about their school. They appreciate how they learn from taking part in the various activities on offer, including singing in the school

choir, growing vegetables in the school garden and visiting the D-Day museum in Portsmouth. Pupils learn how to be independent and take responsibility, for example when serving on the school council, helping with recycling or as a representative on the e-safety team. Parents value the wide range of activities provided by staff.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- The majority of pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. When lessons are too easy or too hard a small number of pupils become fidgety and disruptive. Pupils cooperate in the playground and move around the school calmly. Pupils appreciate having equipment to play with, such as balls and bats that are organised by Year 6 pupils. Pupils enjoy scrambling on the trim trail and others take turns sensibly while playing 'four square'. There are quiet areas where pupils sit and talk and, in the summer, pupils enjoy using the spacious field.
- The vast majority of pupils enjoy coming to school and are keen to attend school regularly. Pupils arrive punctually. One parent commented, 'My children skip into school.' Leaders follow up any absence routinely. They work closely with families to provide a range of support. This helps to ensure that pupils' attendance is similar to that of other pupils nationally.
- The vast majority of pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Pupils are able to make improvements to their own work when given guidance by staff. Pupils work together well and listen to each other's points of view. They are keen to volunteer answers and read their work aloud. Pupils take pride in themselves, their work, and their school.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- In 2018, too few pupils secured the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1. This meant that pupils began the next key stage with significant gaps in their learning.
- In 2018, progress across key stage 2 improved in reading and mathematics from well below average to average. However, progress in writing remained well below that of other pupils nationally.
- Work in pupils' books over time indicates that pupils make steady progress, at best, from a variety of starting points. Pupils' progress is especially variable in writing. This does not align with the school's own assessment information, which indicates a much stronger picture of progress across year groups.
- Leaders have put in place a range of strategies to improve the progress made by the most able pupils in reading, writing and mathematics. Strategies include buying new resources and introducing 'journeys' in mathematics and writing to help pupils build their skills progressively. These actions are beginning to improve progress, but are at an early stage of development.
- Pupils make consistently strong progress in phonics at key stage 1, due to effective teaching. Pupils use their strong knowledge of letters and sounds to decode unknown

words when reading and apply these skills in their writing.

- Most disadvantaged pupils make good progress because the strategies selected to support them are effective. However, too few disadvantaged pupils secure the higher standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils with SEND are known well by leaders and their progress is tracked routinely. A range of focused activities, targeted staff support and work with outside agencies are matched closely to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils with SEND make strong progress.

Early years provision

Good

- Leadership of Reception is strong. Leaders are reflective and have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses in early years. Changes have been made to the environment and assessment systems to improve children's learning further.
- Although there is some variation, pupils begin Reception with skills that are broadly typical for their age. High expectations and consistency throughout the provision ensure that children experience a wide range of interesting activities that match their needs and interests. This helps children to make good progress across the areas of learning. Despite this, few children exceed the early learning goals.
- Phonics is taught effectively, and children make good progress when learning to read and write their sounds. They are able to use their phonic knowledge when writing sentences, and when reading aloud. For example, during 'free choice', inspectors saw children practising using letters and sounds independently when making lists of minibeasts found in the role play area, 'Birdham Park', and when labelling their models made from bricks.
- Children at the end of Reception achieve similarly to children nationally and, as a result, they are prepared well for key stage 1. Additional funding, both for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND, is used effectively to ensure that children make good progress.
- The early years environment is attractive and organised well to promote learning. There is a wide range of indoor and outdoor activities, including opportunities for numeracy and literacy. Children enjoyed using junk materials to make an ark, sharing traditional tales in the book corner and dressing up. All of these activities supported their learning successfully.
- Relationships are strong, and staff know the children well. Staff have completed safeguarding training and know how to keep the children safe. Children are taught how to be safe, for example when using scissors during junk modelling. The majority of parents are confident that their children are safe.
- Children enjoy taking part in the fun activities organised for them. They enjoy learning, and behaviour is good. They are encouraged not to give up too easily, for example when writing their letters and numbers correctly. Children were seen cooperating and taking turns to share the sticky tape and glue sticks during model making, and while playing a game on the computer.
- There is a close partnership with parents, which supports children's learning effectively.

Parents are kept well informed. Staff work closely with the on-site nursery, using home visits to ensure that children are known as individuals prior to starting school. Parents are welcomed into the classroom and are able to add information to their children's online achievement records. This ensures that children settle into school quickly.

School details

Unique reference number	125972
Local authority	West Sussex
Inspection number	10058135

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	145
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev J Mould
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Mr M McCadden
Telephone number	01243 512 399
Website	www.birdhamprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@birdhamprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	1–2 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Pupils are taught in mixed-age classes.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- A much smaller proportion of pupils than the national average are eligible for the pupil premium.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is slightly above the national average.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching, learning and assessment in all classes, some jointly with senior leaders.
- Inspectors talked to pupils, looked at their work and listened to pupils read.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the chair of the governing body and three other governors, and the school's senior and middle leaders.
- Inspectors spoke on the telephone to a representative from the local authority and a representative of the diocese.
- Inspectors took account of the 33 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, and considered the 20 free-text responses provided.
- Inspectors took account of the 10 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for staff and nine responses to the online questionnaire for pupils.
- Inspectors also spoke to parents and carers during the inspection.
- The inspectors observed the wider work of the school, including an assembly, playtimes and lunchtime.
- Inspectors scrutinised a range of documents including: minutes of the governing body; leaders' and external evaluations of the school's effectiveness; records of moderation; the school development plan; information about leaders' monitoring of teaching and pupils' progress; school policies; behaviour and safety records; safeguarding policies and procedures; and the single central record of recruitment checks made on staff.

Inspection team

Rosemary Addison, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Douglas Brawley	Ofsted Inspector

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