

Inspection of Birk Hill Infant & Nursery School

Chestnut Avenue, Eckington, Derbyshire S21 4BE

Inspection dates: 13–14 November 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Good

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

The school's motto is 'Spending each day in learning, laughter and love'. Inspectors saw plenty of laughter and love. Pupils enjoy their school days. The care that staff have for their pupils is evident. At Birk Hill, everyone gets a warm welcome. However, the poor behaviour of some pupils limits the learning of others.

Most pupils work hard. Pupils get on well together and incidents of bullying are rare and quickly sorted. Parents and carers who shared their views agree that the school keeps their children safe.

Leaders want the pupils to be ready in every way for their next school, but do not teach them well enough how to read.

Staff are always looking for ways to build up pupils' self-confidence and self-esteem. Throughout the school year, pupils have lots of new experiences that widen their horizons. For example, on their 'passport days', they 'visit' countries such as India and China. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to contribute to the life of the school and to help others.

Many pupils join school clubs that help them to keep fit or to follow an activity that interests them.

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

Senior leaders have brought about important improvements since the previous inspection. The quality of education in the early years is now good. Pupils' personal development is positive. However, considerable weaknesses remain elsewhere.

Children get off to a good start in the early years. Adults know every child well. They make sure that the tasks they set are right for each one. Parents value the kindness adults show their children in the early years. This helps the children to grow in confidence. Children behave very well. They play and learn happily. They concentrate hard, for example when they learn to write their names, sort shapes or investigate the mud outside.

Leaders have not ensured that all pupils in the school become confident readers. The books pupils read to practise their phonics do not match the sounds they learn in their lessons. Too often, pupils have to guess words by looking at the pictures in their book. The independent work they do in lessons does not meet their needs well enough. The tasks teachers set for some pupils are too difficult. Other pupils work on activities that keep them busy but do not build their skills sufficiently. Their daily storytime sessions do not foster a strong love of reading. Pupils struggle to remember stories and poems they have enjoyed at school. Teachers do not show parents well enough how they can help their child read at home.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive sensitive

support and care. However, their support plans are not of good quality. Leaders do not check well enough that teaching meets their individual needs.

Not all pupils behave as well as they should. Learning in lessons is sometimes interrupted by pupils who do not follow instructions. Pupils' absence rates are also too high. This means that they miss important learning.

Leaders have had success in improving the curriculum in other subjects. They have put in place plans for each one. These show what teachers want pupils to learn, and when. At the end of each term, teachers check how well pupils have understood their work. Learning is well planned to build their understanding step by step. This helps them to master important skills and achieve well in this subject. They are confident when set challenging work. Physical education lessons are fun. Pupils enjoy the activities that develop their agility, balance and coordination. They also love the visits they make to local places of interest and the many visitors who come to Birk Hill. These visits and visitors add much to the pupils' enjoyment of the curriculum.

Pupils enjoy helping their teachers. They are keen to take on jobs such as 'sound engineers' and do their best to ensure that the school is eco-friendly. Their lessons in art and design and music allow them to be creative. Pupils learn about other faiths and cultures. They enjoy the many clubs and activities open to them. Leaders make sure that disadvantaged pupils have full access to these activities.

Leaders put the interests of the pupils at the heart of every decision. Staff value the thought leaders give to their well-being. The governing body is now more effective. Governors are challenging leaders when there are signs of underachievement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to spot the signs that a pupil's welfare may be at risk. They value the regular updates they receive on safeguarding issues and the monthly 'safeguarding scenarios' they have to consider. Staff follow the school's policies and leaders keep accurate records of all concerns. Leaders are quick to involve other agencies, when necessary, to make sure that pupils get the help they need.

Pupils have a good understanding of the potential dangers they face when online. Visits to the school by organisations such as the fire service and National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) also help pupils stay safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not ensuring that all pupils are fluent, confident readers. Teachers should make sure that when pupils are learning to read, they use synthetic phonics to decode words. Teachers should make sure that pupils have

learned the grapheme-phoneme correspondences and exception words in a book before giving it them to read.

- Professional development for teachers has not enabled them to improve the effectiveness of the reading curriculum. Leaders should improve the effectiveness of the reading curriculum so that it more effectively enables pupils to read with understanding. Teachers need to use their assessments of pupils' reading abilities more effectively to ensure that no learning time is wasted by giving pupils tasks they cannot access or by setting them activities that do not improve their reading skills sufficiently.
- To foster a love of books and so encourage pupils to read more frequently, teachers should introduce to them to stories and poems that they judge to be especially valuable for pupils to hear. Teachers need to receive support and guidance so they can read these to pupils in ways that build real excitement and enthusiasm for books.
- Parents should receive effective support to help their child learn to read at home. This should include useful advice, informing them about the specific sounds their child is currently learning rather than long, unhelpful lists of sounds they sometimes currently receive. This will reduce the chances of pupils and parents being 'swamped' by too much information.
- The support plans for pupils with SEND have very broad targets and so teachers have difficulty identifying the gains these pupils make. Pupils with SEND do not always get the help they need to achieve well. Leaders should improve the quality of support plans and ensure that teaching is planned and delivered to help pupils with SEND to achieve their targets.
- Low-level disruption limits pupils' learning in some lessons. Leaders need to ensure that the school behaviour management policy is applied effectively and consistently, with all staff having the necessary skills to manage pupils' behaviour in lessons. This will mean that lessons can flow without interruption.
- Strategies to reduce persistent absence are having a positive impact. However, too many pupils miss days at school. Leaders need to reduce further the rate of absence by ensuring that all parents are shown the importance of good attendance for their child, with action taken to support and challenge them if absence happens without good reason.

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 Ofsted Parent View information 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.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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	112543
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10110034
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	117
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Jones
Headteacher	Sue Birch
Website	www.birkhill.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	9–10 May 2017

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- We met with senior leaders, subject leaders and three governors. We also met with an officer from the local authority.
- We considered the quality of education on the first day of the inspection by doing deep dives in reading, mathematics, physical education and history. To do this, we conducted interviews with staff and pupils, visited lessons and looked at pupils' work. We considered a wider range of subjects on day two.
- We reviewed the arrangements for safeguarding by scrutinising safeguarding records, discussing safeguarding with staff, meeting with pupils.
- We considered the views of staff, pupils and parents shared through the Ofsted surveys.

Inspection team

Anthony O'Malley, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Karen Slack	Ofsted Inspector

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