

# Inspection of a good school: Birdwell Primary School

Hollis Close, Long Ashton, Bristol, Somerset BS41 9AZ

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Inspection dates: 20 and 21 October 2021

## **Outcome**

Birdwell Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils are happy, confident and safe. They attend well and enjoy school.

Pupils love listening to adults read to them. Pupils experience a wide range of subjects. They particularly look forward to their outdoor learning sessions. Pupils take turns and work well together. They speak to each other with respect. They listen carefully to adults and respond appropriately.

Pupils enjoy spending time with their friends at social times. They know the difference between falling out and bullying, and say that bullying is rare. Parents say staff 'go above and beyond' to create a 'happy, friendly and welcoming school'.

There are many opportunities for pupils to take on responsibilities. They are proud to represent their school as school councillors and sports leaders. Pupils know the importance of giving back to others. Pupils organise fundraising events for charity, and the school choir sings at the village Remembrance Day service. Pupils are inclusive. They know that people have varying needs and there are different ways of helping them.

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

Leaders have high expectations for pupils' reading. Teachers check that pupils keep up with these expectations. Staff have a secure knowledge of the letters and sounds pupils need to know and remember to begin to read. Appropriate support is quickly put in place to help pupils who need to catch up. Pupils read often to increase their speed, accuracy and comprehension. Pupils learn to read well.

Staff support pupils to develop their communication and language skills effectively. This begins in the Nursery Year and continues throughout their time at school. Teachers carefully plan sequences of learning that explore ideas and strengthen pupils' word choices. For example, Year 3 pupils meet live rainforest creatures in their classroom. They

talk about what the creatures look like, feel like and how they move. This helps pupils write exciting descriptions of the insects and reptiles.

Leaders' work to improve pupils' basic skills is proving successful. Teachers check for gaps in pupils' spelling and handwriting. They skilfully help pupils to revisit key knowledge. As a result, most pupils recall the basic skills of writing accurately. This means that pupils can concentrate more precisely on the content and complexity of their writing. Pupils write for a range of meaningful purposes.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) progress well. Leaders ensure that the correct help and support is in place for all pupils with SEND. Staff receive appropriate training. Leaders value the contributions of parents and carers, pupils and teachers to ensure that the right curriculum is in place. Pupils' support plans are precise and well thought out. Leaders monitor closely each pupils' support plan to check it meets their ongoing needs.

Leaders have designed a curriculum from Years 1 to 6 that identifies the knowledge and skills they want pupils to have. Early years leaders are developing a new curriculum, although this is still relatively new. In some subjects in key stages 1 and 2, leaders have not identified all the key knowledge and vocabulary pupils must know and remember over time. This makes it difficult for teachers to check if pupils have gaps in their essential knowledge or vocabulary. For example, some pupils in Year 6 do not remember what 'climate' means, despite studying India's climate previously. This hinders pupils' ability to secure new or more complex knowledge and slows pupils' progress through the wider curriculum.

Leaders ensure that the curriculum enriches pupils' broader development well. Outdoor learning develops pupils' life skills, such as teamwork and confidence. Pupils find out about how to look after their physical and mental health. Older pupils know about the dangers of drug misuse.

Staff create a calm and orderly environment in and around the school. There are clear routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils behave well. Some pupils found it difficult settling back into school life after the COVID-19 pandemic disruptions. These pupils are receiving extra help and the right support from trained staff.

Trustees 'challenge to empower' leaders to make positive change to improve the school's quality of education. They use information from a range of sources to check and question the impact of leaders' school improvement plans well.

Staff, including apprentices and early career teachers, feel well supported by leaders in their professional development and well-being. They appreciate the clear communication of expectations from leaders. It enables them to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Staff know how to report concerns about a pupils' safety and welfare. They are confident that leaders respond appropriately and quickly to support pupils. Leaders work with the correct external agencies to secure additional help for pupils and their families when needed. Pupils and parents say that pupils are safe and well cared for.

Appropriate checks are carried out by school leaders before staff begin working at the school. Safeguarding records are monitored by school leaders and trustees to assure themselves that information is up to date.

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

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Teachers do not have a fully secure understanding of what pupils need to know and remember in some subjects. This can make it difficult for teachers to assess gaps in pupils' knowledge from their prior learning. Subject leaders need to ensure the curriculum identifies the key knowledge they want pupils to know and remember over time in every subject.
- The early years curriculum is not yet fully embedded. This means some subject leaders in key stages 1 and 2 do not have a fully developed understanding of what children will learn in the early years. Leaders need to support subject leaders to enhance their understanding of the school's new early years curriculum and how knowledge gained in the early years can be built on over time.

## **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 a section 8 inspection of a good or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour, or the quality of education, we will deem the section 8 inspection as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2016.

## **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.

If you are the school and you are 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139471
<b>Local authority</b>	North Somerset
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199688
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	439
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Geoff Mountjoy
<b>Headteacher</b>	Paul Sainsbury
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://birdwellschool.co.uk">birdwellschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 March 2016

## Information about this school

- Birdwell Primary School is a single-academy trust.
- Eight teachers have joined the school since the last inspection in 2016, due to increased pupil numbers and the introduction of Nursery provision led by the school.
- A new special educational needs coordinator (SENCo) joined the school in September 2021.
- The school does not use alternative providers.

## Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation.
- The inspector met with the headteacher, assistant headteachers, the SENCo, staff, pupils and three trustees, including the chair of trustees.
- The inspector listened to pupils read from Years 1 and 2.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, English and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans,

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

- The inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding documentation, including records of safeguarding checks carried out on staff working at the school. They considered how well the designated safeguarding lead acts on concerns about pupils' welfare and safety. The inspector talked to pupils, staff, and trustees about safeguarding practices.
- The inspector considered 186 responses to the online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including 154 free-text responses, 45 responses to the staff survey and 56 responses to the pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Marie Thomas, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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