

Inspection of a good school: Birklands Primary School

Appleton Street, Warsop, Mansfield, Nottinghamshire NG20 0QF

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 July 2022

Outcome

Birklands Primary School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at Birklands. The motto 'work hard, be kind' is evident throughout the school. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. There is an ethos of everyone being valued, and no one is left out. Pupils describe the school as 'an amazing place with supportive friends.'

Pupils behave well. Staff encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions. Pupils know what is expected of them and they concentrate during lessons. Pupils aspire to be on the 'recognition board' and are proud when they achieve it. Pupils say that they feel safe. They say that bullying is infrequent, but that teachers deal with it well if it occurs. Pupils say that they are '100% confident' that teachers will sort out bullying if pupils report it.

Leaders prioritise pupils' broader development beyond the academic curriculum. Pupils learn about the different jobs they could do in the future. Pupils are positive about the wide range of visitors that came to speak to them during the 'careers week'. Pupils know that it is important to work hard. One pupil said: 'I work hard because school has showed me lots of different jobs I could do.'

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

Leaders ensure that reading is a high priority. The '100 book challenge' motivates pupils to read a wide range of texts. Leaders have chosen books carefully to support the curriculum and to teach pupils about a diverse range of cultures. The school's phonics programme is well organised and planned. The books that pupils read closely match the sounds that they know. Staff provide prompt support if pupils begin to fall behind. Teachers encourage pupils to read independently five times a week. This ensures that pupils get the practice they need. Regular workshops provide parents with the information they need to support their children to read at home. Pupils develop well as confident and fluent readers.

Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well planned and sequenced in most subjects. Teachers have received training to deliver the planned curriculum. Teachers systematically revisit previous learning. For example, in mathematics, the key knowledge pupils need to know and remember is explicit. This means that teachers can accurately check how well pupils are learning. Pupils receive the appropriate level of help when they need it. However, in some subjects, the curriculum does not make clear the precise knowledge and skills that pupils should know and remember. This means that leaders and teachers cannot accurately check how well pupils' knowledge builds over time.

Birklands is an inclusive school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), and those who are disadvantaged, are supported well in their learning. Staff and leaders know these pupils well. Staff provide effective support that enables pupils with SEND to access the full curriculum.

Leaders provide a wide range of experiences to enhance pupils' wider development. For example, there is an association with a school in China, and pupils work with the Royal Ballet. These experiences help to broaden pupils' knowledge of the world. Pupils learn about potential hazards beyond the school gate. For example, they know how to keep themselves safe around water and how to help others in danger. Pupils are encouraged to be responsible citizens. Their contributions to the community are recognised and celebrated. Pupils learn to understand and respect a range of faiths and cultures. However, some pupils do not have a secure understanding of the values of equality, democracy and individual liberty. This means that they are not as well prepared for life in modern Britain as they could be.

Children in the early years get off to a good start. One parent said: 'My child loves coming to school and has really blossomed.' Comments like this are typical. Children work well together. Teachers plan activities that help children to develop independence. They check carefully how well children know and remember what they have been taught. Children in the early years develop well as confident learners.

Leaders provide staff with the time they need to carry out their roles. Teachers say that they appreciate leaders' concern for their workload and well-being.

Governors know the school well. They provide an effective level of support and challenge.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding underpins everything at Birklands. Well-trained staff know how to keep pupils safe. Safeguarding records are detailed and fit for purpose. Leaders work well with external agencies to ensure that pupils receive the support that they need. Leaders make appropriate checks on all adults working in the school.

Pupils feel safe. They are taught how to stay safe. They know how to stay safe online and understand different kinds of abuse.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The curriculum is not yet sufficiently well planned and sequenced in every subject. In some subjects, the curriculum does not set out the precise content that pupils are expected to know and remember. This means that leaders and teachers do not check that pupils retain the most important knowledge for future learning. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum sets out precisely what pupils should know, and when, in all subjects.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not as well promoted as it should be, in some areas. Pupils do not understand the meaning of some key British values such as democracy and individual liberty. As a result, some pupils do not develop a sufficiently well-informed view of contemporary society. Leaders should ensure that pupils develop well as young citizens who are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 28 February and 1 March 2017.

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

Unique reference number	140659
Local authority	Nottinghamshire County Council
Inspection number	10227773
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	311
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trustees	Richard Flewitt
Executive headteacher	Celia Smith
Website	www.birklandsschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28 February and 1 March 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector carried out this inspection under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.
- 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 his evaluation.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive headteacher, acting headteacher, curriculum leaders and the special educational needs coordinator.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and art. To do this, he met with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of lessons, looked at samples of pupils' work, listened to pupils read and met with teachers and pupils.
- The inspector also looked at curriculum documentation for some other subjects.
- The inspector met with the chair of the governing body and the chair of the board of trustees. He also met with the chief executive officer of Nova Education Trust.

- The inspector took account of the responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, pupil survey and staff surveys, along with written comments from parents. Inspectors spoke informally to parents on arrival at the school.
- The inspector met with safeguarding leaders. The inspector reviewed school documents, including those relating to safeguarding, governance, recruitment, behaviour, exclusions, the use of pupil premium and attendance.

Inspection team

Mark Anderson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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