

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Birchwood Primary School

Valiant Road, Martlesham Heath, Ipswich, Suffolk IP5 3SP

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Inspection dates:

13 and 14 December 2022

## **Outcome**

Birchwood Primary School continues to be an outstanding school.

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

Pupils, parents and staff are extremely positive about Birchwood Primary School. Pupils are kind to one another. They care about the environment and their community. Pupils value their positions of responsibility. The values that make up the 'Birchwood Bolts' unite the community. For example, many pupils care for the school chickens and bees. They grow vegetables in the garden and tend to them. Others run the recycling alley, which is used by the whole community. Junior safety officers give out high-visibility jackets to keep villagers safe.

Pupils live up to the high expectations staff have for them. They are excited by their lessons and want to do well, and they do. They are pleased to achieve highly and display great pride in their work. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements. They want their peers to excel, and they help them to succeed. Pupils behave extremely well in class, which allows everyone to learn. Pupils are safe and happy. They say there is no bullying. Pupils are confident that their teacher would intervene if there were any fall outs with their peers.

Children in early years benefit from a high-quality education. Their behaviour is excellent. They are happy, safe and well cared for.

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

Leaders have implemented an ambitious curriculum. This meets and exceeds the requirements of the national curriculum. High-quality staff training ensures that teachers are well equipped to deliver the curriculum. Teachers are responsive to pupils' needs. For example, they plan useful retrieval quizzes at the start of lessons. They use this information to help pupils remember what they have previously learned or to see if pupils need further help. Well-planned questioning corrects any misconceptions pupils have and further extends learning. Independent tasks then allow pupils to practise what they have been taught.

Teachers use assessment skilfully to check what pupils know and can do. Pupils learn how to get better. If there are areas where they struggle, staff are quick to intervene. Pupils also learn how to correct their own mistakes. This ensures that all pupils are supported to access the challenging curriculum.

A strong reading culture exists within the school. Leaders have ensured that there is a sharp focus on teaching pupils to read, from Reception Year onwards. Excellent training has ensured that staff have the skills to teach pupils to read fluently. Pupils who fall behind are quickly identified. Staff give them expert support to rapidly catch up. Pupils are extremely positive about reading. They love the welcoming environment of the well-stocked school library. They like reading at home and when their teacher reads to them.

Children in early years flourish. They are very happy. They interact positively with their peers. The learning environment is inviting and well designed to support their development. There is a rich variety of activities available. For example, adults supported some children with letter formation. Other children were learning about measurement. They filled containers with different amounts of liquid. Children were excited to share what they had learned. Adults consistently model excellent communication and language skills. This helps the children communicate very well for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are quickly identified. Leaders provide targeted plans that meet pupils' needs. These plans are followed by staff, who are well trained to guide pupils. Small-group work and one-to-one support are used effectively to help all pupils achieve well. Pupils with SEND are fully included in the wider life of the school.

Leaders have ensured that their high expectations for behaviour are met. Pupils are able to learn effectively because there is no low-level disruption. Respectful and warm relationships ensure that pupils feel safe to give activities a go. This means that pupils are confident and learn to be resilient.

Leaders' ethos that all pupils are 'passionate about learning' extends beyond the classroom. Pupils take up the many opportunities that they are given to develop their interests. Many pupils are involved in sport. They love street dance club or attending masterclasses in tennis, dance or rugby. Pupils are excited by the forest school curriculum. They value the chance to build teamwork and be adventurous.

Leaders ensure that pupils' best interests are at the centre of their decisions. Governors play a keen role in supporting leaders to fulfil their roles effectively. All staff are proud to work at the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the provision for their children.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that there is a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Appropriate vetting checks are completed for adults working with pupils. Adults receive regular training that equips them to identify any risks pupils may face. All staff are confident in how to raise a concern. Leaders liaise appropriately with external agencies when needed. An on-site family support worker provides additional help to individuals who may benefit from it. Pupils say they feel very safe in school. They learn about important topics such as online safety and staying safe and healthy.

## Background

When we have judged outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding on 13 and 14 October 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.

## 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>	124681
<b>Local authority</b>	Suffolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	10229070
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	208
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Paul Hesketh and Penny Longford
<b>Headteacher</b>	Steve Cloke (executive headteacher) and Mel Davies (head of school)
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birchwoodprimary.co.uk">www.birchwoodprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	13 and 14 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the headteacher has become executive headteacher and a head of school has been appointed.
- There is before- and after-school childcare for pupils attending the school. It is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- School leaders do not currently use alternative provision for pupils.

## 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 leaders and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspector met with senior leaders, including the executive headteacher, head of school, four governors, and a local authority school advisor.
- Deep dives were carried out in early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector spoke with curriculum leaders, visited a sample of

lessons, spoke to teachers, and spoke to some pupils as well as looking at a sample of some pupils' work. The inspector also listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.

- To further inspect the curriculum, the inspector spoke with leaders and reviewed curriculum documentation and pupils' work in science, history and art.
- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and looked at safeguarding records, as well as discussing staff training and how the school creates a culture that supports the safety of all pupils. She also examined the single central record and spoke with staff and pupils about safeguarding.
- The inspector considered 69 responses to Ofsted Parent View, Ofsted's online survey, including 68 free-text comments. The inspector also considered the 25 responses to Ofsted's online staff survey.
- There were no responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.

### **Inspection team**

Bessie Owen, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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