

Inspection of Lincoln Birchwood Junior School

Larchwood Crescent, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 0NL

Inspection dates: 6 and 7 June 2023

Overall effectiveness **Good**

The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Previous inspection grade Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils like being at Birchwood Juniors. They are keen to attend and are proud of their school. Staff make pupils feel safe and valued. As one pupil, typical of many, told inspectors, 'They really do care for you here.'

Relationships between staff and pupils are warm and respectful. Staff treat pupils with kindness and courtesy. Pupils are thoughtful and considerate in return.

Pupils enjoy learning. They have positive attitudes towards their work. Pupils try their best. They are keen to impress their teachers. Pupils strive to wear one of Birchwood's special golden jumpers for showing one of the school's 'dream big powers', such as empathy or resilience.

Pupils experience a broad and balanced curriculum. There is also a range of extra-curricular activities to develop their talents and interests. Pupils love the Hive Project. It gives them a chance to try new things.

Aspiration is a key word at Birchwood. Leaders are very ambitious for pupils. They have thought very carefully about what pupils need to be successful learners and well-rounded, happy citizens. Everything leaders do contributes towards the achievement of the school's '5 golden threads'.

Parents are very positive about the school and the changes that have taken place.

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

Leaders have made significant improvements to the school's curriculum and the provision for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). In doing so, they have addressed the concerns raised at the previous inspection.

Leaders have thought very carefully about the design of their curriculum. The knowledge and skills that pupils must learn have been set out in a precise order. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum meets the needs of disadvantaged pupils. In every subject, there is a focus on widening pupils' vocabularies and providing rich experiences to enhance their learning.

Staff are knowledgeable and passionate about reading. Pupils love listening while staff read to them at the end of the day. They also enjoy spending time in the school's beautiful library and choosing from the wide selection of books on offer. Any pupil who struggles to read gets the help they need straight away. Leaders have made sure that all staff have the expertise they need to teach pupils how to read. Phonics is taught well. Pupils in the early stages of reading take home books that are matched to the letter sounds they know. The curriculum for reading comprehension is ambitious. Through the school's '6 Ps of fluency', pupils learn to read with pitch, pace, pause, power, punctuation and passion.

Teachers have good subject knowledge. They go over technical terms at the start of every lesson so that pupils can access the learning and express themselves precisely. Teachers break complex ideas down so that pupils can understand them. They model what to do so that pupils can learn by example. In Year 5, for instance, teachers skilfully demonstrate how to write sentences with relative clauses. Pupils are then able to add relative clauses to their sentences about Oliver Twist.

However, in some subjects, pupils do not remember what they have learned previously in sufficient detail. They recall the activities that they have done rather than the important knowledge that they can use again.

Leaders are quick to identify pupils with SEND. Staff ensure that lessons are adapted to meet the needs of pupils with SEND. Support plans are precisely matched to pupils' individual needs.

Personal development is at the core of leaders' aspirations for pupils. They have ensured that pupils understand the importance of respect and consent. Pupils know why equality is important. They value difference and diversity. However, pupils sometimes confuse different faiths and beliefs.

Senior leaders are dedicated. They live and breathe the school. They ensure that staff have the training they need to teach the curriculum well. Leaders are considerate of teachers' workloads. Staff enjoy working at Birchwood Juniors. They feel appreciated and supported.

Governors and representatives of the local authority know the school well. They have helped leaders drive the school forward.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Safeguarding is at the heart of the nurturing environment leaders have created. Staff look out for pupils' well-being and report any concerns straight away. Leaders work well with other agencies to get the right support for pupils. Leaders review safeguarding cases regularly to make sure things are improving. Governors check that safeguarding procedures are working as they should.

Leaders have made sure that the curriculum at Birchwood Juniors teaches pupils how to stay safe. Pupils are taught to recognise how they are feeling and what to do if they feel worried. Pupils have trusted adults they can go to.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, pupils do not remember what has been taught previously in sufficient detail. Sometimes, pupils remember activities from the past rather than the underpinning knowledge that they need to retain. This prevents pupils from building on what they have already covered and deepening their understanding over time. Leaders should review their approach to the recall of prior learning so that teachers routinely revisit the key content that pupils need to use again, helping them to remember it over the long term.

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

Unique reference number	120508
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10240981
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	254
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing	Brian Main
Headteacher	Matthew Davies
Website	www.birchwood.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 December 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is federated with Woodlands Infant and Nursery School and The Lancaster School. The governing body oversees the work of all three schools.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.

Information about this inspection

The inspector(s) carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- This was the first routine inspection of the school since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, science, geography, and art and design. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils, and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- The lead inspector also visited lessons in English, music and history.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and a sample of teaching and support staff. Inspectors met with the leaders with responsibility for pupils with SEND, behaviour and personal development.
- The lead inspector met with the designated leaders for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep pupils safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors examined a range of school documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, school improvement plans, records of governance, and documentation relating to pupils' behaviour.
- The lead inspector listened to a sample of pupils in Year 3 read to a familiar adult. Inspectors met with groups of pupils from across the school.
- The lead inspector met with governors, including the chair of the governing body. He also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, and the results of the Ofsted staff survey.

Inspection team

Shaun Carter, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
John Craig	Ofsted Inspector
Ben Waldram	Ofsted Inspector

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