

Inspection of Birk Hill Infant & Nursery School

Chestnut Avenue, Eckington, Derbyshire S21 4BE

Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2023

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	Requires improvement
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Being a good friend is important to the pupils at Birk Hill. They told inspectors that everyone 'looks after each other'. Most pupils learn to live out these values. They learn to manage their emotions and behaviour in a safe and positive manner. Pupils know that there is always a trusted adult to speak to about any worries they may have. They feel that staff get to know them well.

Pupils are proud to carry out their positions of responsibility. For example, the sound technicians help to coordinate the music during assemblies. The school councillors make important decisions about how to improve the school. However, some pupils do not attend school regularly enough to fully benefit from the opportunities on offer.

Meeting the needs of every pupil is a key focus for the school. Most families of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) feel well supported. They appreciate being well informed of the small steps in place for their child to learn. They recognise the additional help their child receives as they move to a new school. However, some of the school's curriculum, including in the early years, does not precisely identify what pupils should know.

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

The school has taken steps to review the curriculum. Leaders want to ensure that it reflects the needs of the pupils and of the community it serves. They have thought carefully about the improvements that they want to make and when they will make them.

Many staff are new to the school. Staff appreciate the time they receive to carry out their roles and responsibilities. This helps to manage their workload. The school provides training for all staff to develop their knowledge and expertise to teach the school's curriculum. In some subjects, such as mathematics, this is helping to improve outcomes for pupils.

Pupils enjoy learning about the topics and themes they encounter. For example, they learn songs to help them remember the seven continents of the world. They talk about events from the Great Fire of London. However, the order of learning, including in the early years, does not clearly set out the important information pupils must remember. It does not consider how pupils will get better at subject-specific knowledge. This means that some pupils cannot recall the key knowledge that will help them to know more of a subject.

The early years has been through a period of rapid change. Leaders have worked hard to improve the environment both indoors and outdoors. Children in the Nursery live out the school's motto of 'Spend each day in learning, laughter and love'. They learn to look after their toys with 'kind and happy hands'. Staff in the early years encourage children to join in activities. However, opportunities to enhance and

extend children's communication and language through child-led activities are not fully developed.

Leaders want all pupils to be able to read well and to enjoy literature. They have considered which books pupils will share and read during their time at the school. These help pupils to understand themselves and the wider world. Pupils learn poems, which they recite during weekly assemblies. The school continues to ensure that the teaching of phonics is consistent throughout the school. This includes how well reading books are matched to pupils' reading development. Leaders regularly check how well pupils are remembering the sounds and words that will help them to read. They use this information to ensure pupils, including those with SEND, receive the right help to keep up with the reading programme.

Most pupils listen to, and follow, adult instructions well. They are keen to uphold the 'Birk Hill way'. While persistent absence remains high, particularly for disadvantaged pupils, the school has been successful in improving the attendance of some pupils.

Pupils enjoy learning about different traditions, faiths and cultures. They enjoy learning about their local community. For example, pupils enjoyed a visit to a local World War Two satellite station in Eckington Woods. They learn songs to help them to understand words such as 'respect' and 'responsibility'. This helps them to understand the values of the school community and wider British society.

Governors support and challenge school leaders to ensure their vision for the school is realised.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe around school. They can explain how to keep themselves safe online. They know to tell a trusted adult if something concerns them.

Staff receive regular training to help them to identify pupils who may be at risk of harm. However, sometimes records or incidents for safeguarding are not logged as carefully as they could be. A few aspects of the school's safeguarding procedures are not checked thoroughly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some aspects of the school's safeguarding systems need further refinement. This does not help leaders to have a complete oversight of safeguarding in school. The school must ensure that all records of safeguarding concerns are precise and contain sufficient detail.

- In some subjects, the small steps of knowledge that all pupils, including those in the early years, are required to know and remember are not precise. Therefore, pupils do not know and remember more in a meaningful way. The school must continue to refine the school's curriculum to ensure that the important knowledge is clearly identified so that pupils remember more as they progress through school.
- In the early years, adult interactions during child-led activities do not fully support children's communication and language development. This does not help children to close gaps in early child development. The school must ensure that all staff in the early years have the knowledge and expertise to support communication and language development through child-led activities.

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](#)' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	112543
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10288301
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	110
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Steve Jones
Headteacher	Sue Birch
Website	www.birkhill.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 June 2021, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been significant changes in staffing. The early years leader was appointed in April 2023. The special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo) took up position in September 2022.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgment about the quality of a school's education provision.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other senior leaders, including the school's SENDCo and the early years leader. The lead inspector met with representatives of the local governing body and the local authority.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives into these subjects: early reading, mathematics, physical education and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met with the curriculum leaders to consider planning documents. They visited lessons and spoke with pupils and teachers. Inspectors also sampled curriculum plans for other subjects.
- Inspectors met with the designated lead for safeguarding and considered documentation relating to how the school keeps pupils safe. They sampled information for pupil attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors spoke with parents and pupils. They considered the responses to the staff survey and comments made by parents on Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Shaheen Hussain, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
George Huthart	Ofsted Inspector

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