

# Inspection of a good school: Birchfield Primary School

Birchfield Avenue, Gildersome, Leeds, West Yorkshire LS27 7HU

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Inspection dates:

24 and 25 October 2023

## **Outcome**

Birchfield Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Birchfield Primary is a small, friendly and welcoming school. Pupils thrive here. The school develops pupils' knowledge through a rich and exciting curriculum linked to memorable experiences. Pupils excel in their learning. Leaders have high expectations of what pupils can achieve. Pupils are well prepared for their next stage of their education, including children in the early years.

Pupils' behaviour is exceptional. They are polite and caring. Older pupils are buddies to younger children. They carry out their role diligently. Pupils feel happy and safe in school. They know that they can speak to a trusted adult if they have any concerns.

Pupils appreciate the many opportunities the school provides to broaden their horizons. Pupils learn how to take on leadership roles. These include being members of the school council, well-being ambassadors and librarians. Also, pupils experience a wide range of carefully planned visits to museums, places of worship and residential sites. Year 6 pupils, talk excitedly about their overnight residential visit.

Parents are overwhelming positive about the school. One parent, typical of many, said 'Birchfield is a fantastic school and we are lucky that our children get to attend such a fabulous school.'

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

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). New leaders have ensured that the curriculum is well structured and sequenced, from the time children start in Nursery to when pupils leave in Year 6. Pupils achieve well, including in mathematics and reading.

The school has a strong culture of reading. This can be seen in the displays around school, the high-quality books in classrooms and the well-stocked library. Pupils enjoy reading. They talk enthusiastically about their favourite books and authors. There is a

consistent approach to teaching phonics. Staff are experts at teaching the school's phonics scheme. Adults help pupils who struggle to keep up with the phonics programme. Pupils read books that are well matched to the sounds they know. Pupils read with confidence and increasing fluency.

Pupils love mathematics lessons. They say mathematics 'is challenging and fun'. Staff have received subject-specific training. They teach mathematics well. Staff follow Birchfield's mathematics lesson sequence. They check what pupils remember before moving on to new learning. For example, children in the early years, building on a deep understanding of numbers to 10, learn how larger numbers work. Older pupils use their growing knowledge to solve increasingly complex mathematical problems using multiplication and division facts.

The rest of the curriculum is ambitious and, at times, goes beyond the national curriculum. Leaders have considered the crucial knowledge that they want pupils to know. However, in a few subjects, the curriculum is not taught consistently well. This means that some pupils do not learn and remember the crucial knowledge leaders have identified.

The school has a well-developed understanding of the needs of pupils with SEND. Pupils with SEND are identified swiftly and supported well. Staff work well with external professionals and parents. Effective plans set out the precise support that pupils with SEND need. Teachers use these plans well to provide the right support. Pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. Consequently, pupils with SEND thrive at Birchfield Primary School.

The school has established a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal development. Pupils' personal development is carefully woven through the curriculum. The school's personal, social and health education (PSHE) curriculum and assemblies develop pupils' knowledge of how to keep safe and stay healthy. Pupils have a deep understanding of how to live healthy and active lives. Pupils learn about other faiths. They have a strong knowledge of different cultures and religions. They learn to be respectful, tolerant and fair with each other. Pupils have a rich set of opportunities to develop their interest and talents, including 'Birchfield's Got Talent'. Pupils attend many clubs, including those for sports, dance, music and computing.

Children in the Nursery provision receive high levels of care and support. Adults working with the youngest children skilfully use questions to develop children's communication and language. Nursery children enjoy hearing a range of stories, poems and rhymes.

The school has introduced new systems to improve pupils' attendance. These strategies have been highly effective. The majority of pupils attend school every day, and they are punctual.

Staff appreciate the many opportunities they receive to develop their practice. Leaders are considerate of staff workload and well-being. Staff feel extremely proud to work at the school. Governors have an accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. They make regular visits to check on what is happening. Their precise questioning provides important challenge and support to all leaders in the school.

## Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, the curriculum is not taught consistently well. This means that pupils do not learn and remember important knowledge as a matter of course. The school should ensure that teachers know what is expected in every subject so that they can implement the entire curriculum well.

## 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 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 2018.

## How can I feedback 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	107863
<b>Local authority</b>	Leeds
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297225
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	231
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Lee Dobson
<b>Headteacher</b>	Samantha Hirst
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birchfieldprimary.org.uk">www.birchfieldprimary.org.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	17 October 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, there have been several staffing changes, including a new headteacher who was appointed in January 2022.
- The school does not make use of any alternative providers.
- The school has a Nursery provision.
- The school runs its own breakfast and after-school provision.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken this into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector had several meetings with the headteacher and deputy headteacher during the inspection.

- The inspector met with other senior leaders, representatives of the local governing body, including the chair of governors, and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector also spoke to the curriculum leaders for art and design, geography and science.
- The inspector examined a range of documentation, including leaders' self-evaluation, improvement plans and documents related to pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour during lesson visits and around the school. The inspector held formal and informal discussions with pupils about what it is like to be a pupil at this school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record and the school's safeguarding policy; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leaders and the finance and operations manager.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and pupils.
- The inspector spoke to parents and carers at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Jean Watt, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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