

# Inspection of a good school: Birstall Primary Academy

Chapel Lane, Birstall, Batley, West Yorkshire WF17 9EE

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Inspection dates:

8 and 9 November 2023

## Outcome

Birstall Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

The principal of this school is Nadia Sweryt-Hannam. This school is part of Focus Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Helen Rowland, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Paul Spencer.

## What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy here. They are proud to belong to the school community. Pupils value the learning experiences that they receive. They are eager to showcase their knowledge and skills.

The school is ambitious for all pupils. Pupils respond well to the high expectations that are set for them. They say that teachers encourage them to try their best. Pupils enjoy receiving certificates, stickers and prizes during assemblies to celebrate their achievements. They appreciate the recognition that they receive for living up to the school values. These include 'being caring' and 'being fair'. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), learn well.

Pupils are polite. They understand that differences between themselves and others should be respected. Typically, pupils say that 'everybody is equal' in their school. The pupil 'kindness crew' keeps this value central to school life.

There is a rich range of experiences for pupils to have before they leave Year 6. These include first-aid training and organising charity events. Pupils relish activities such as art, gymnastics, science, boxing and media clubs. They enjoy visits, including to the theatre and to the church. Pupils benefit from a variety of sports competitions, events and outdoor pursuits.

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

Pupils receive a broad and ambitious curriculum. The school has made deliberate and careful choices regarding subject content. Pupils are inspired and enthused to learn. This enables most pupils, including children in the early years, to achieve well.

Staff benefit from a wealth of training from the school and from the trust. Overall, this supports them to deliver the curriculum well. Teachers have strong subject knowledge and typically choose the most effective activities to help pupils to learn. The school has an appropriate approach to checking what pupils know and can remember. Mostly, this allows teachers to adapt future learning to help prevent pupils from falling behind. In some lessons, teachers do not check quickly enough how well all pupils are learning. As a result, some pupils make errors and have some misunderstandings that go unchecked.

Pupils with SEND follow the same curriculum as their classmates. Staff identify any additional needs quickly and accurately. They work well with external professionals, and with parents and carers, to provide appropriate and effective support. Pupils with SEND achieve well. The school checks that these pupils benefit from all that the school offers.

High-quality texts are central to the school's curriculum. Exciting initiatives such as virtual author visits, book weeks and links with the local library foster pupils' love of reading. Parents attend reading workshops and come into school regularly for a 'reading café'. Pupils read from a wide variety of texts. Older pupils enjoy completing well-designed quizzes about the books that they have read.

The school has recently introduced a new phonics programme to boost pupils' achievement in phonics. It has made sure that staff have the expertise to deliver phonics well and with fidelity to the school's approach to teaching phonics. Pupils receive extra support if they struggle or develop gaps in their phonics knowledge. Most pupils become fluent and accurate readers in readiness for key stage 2.

Children settle quickly into school life in the early years. They learn the school expectations and follow agreed routines well. Pupils conduct themselves well around the school. During lessons, they focus strongly and do not disrupt the learning of others. Pupils play well together during breaktimes while they engage in physical activities.

The school provides an extensive programme which enriches pupils' wider development. Pupils undertake a plethora of roles to develop their leadership skills, including school councillors, pupil parliamentarians, reading ambassadors and sports leaders. They learn that their voices matter and that they can make a positive difference in school and in the wider community. For example, they engage positively in recycling, fundraising and work with governors to improve all pupils' time at school. These experiences help pupils to become responsible and active citizens.

Trustees and the local governing body work closely together and with the school. This enables them to provide targeted support and to challenge the quality of education that pupils receive. The school utilises and shares best practice across the trust. Staff appreciate this support as it helps them to fulfil their roles effectively. The school and the

trust ensure that staff morale and well-being is high. Staff feel included in the close-knit team and feel that it is like a family.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some lessons, teachers are not quick enough to identify and address pupils' errors and misunderstandings as they arise. At times, this means that some pupils make mistakes that go unchecked. The school should support teachers to use assessment in lessons consistently well to help pupils to learn as effectively as they should.

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

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139356
<b>Local authority</b>	Kirklees
<b>Inspection number</b>	10297386
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy converter
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Paul Spencer
<b>CEO of the trust</b>	Helen Rowland
<b>Principal</b>	Nadia Sweryt-Hannam
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birstallprimaryacademy.co.uk">www.birstallprimaryacademy.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 October 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school is part of Focus Academy Trust.
- Since the previous inspection, a new chair of governors has been appointed.
- The school does not make use of alternative provision.
- The school provides a before- and after-school club for pupils.

## 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 that the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and has taken this into account in his evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics and physical education. For each deep dive, the inspector held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons and spoke with teachers. He spoke with some

pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke with pupils about their learning in some other subjects.

- The inspector observed some pupils from Years 1 to 3 read with a familiar adult. He discussed reading with a group of older pupils.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. He also took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey.
- The inspector observed how pupils behaved around the school, including at breakfast club and during lunchtime.
- The inspector met with the principal and other leaders of the school. He also met with the chief executive officer of the trust. The inspector held meetings with members of the local governing body and trustees, including the chair of the trust and the chair of governors.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; 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 took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff. He spoke with staff about their workload and their well-being.
- The inspector took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. He spoke with some parents at the start of the school day.

## **Inspection team**

David Lobodzinski, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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