

Inspection of Bells Farm Primary School

Bells Farm Close, Druids Heath, Birmingham, West Midlands B14 5QP

Inspection dates: 20 and 21 February 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 12 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Bells Farm Primary School is a successful, friendly and welcoming school. The school has created an atmosphere where everyone is valued and nurtured. It has high aspirations for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This is reflected in its vision that pupils should 'enjoy learning and aim for excellence'. Pupils rise to meet the high expectations that the school sets for them.

The curriculum is wide and interesting, enriched with visits and experiences. These include visits to local theatres, farms and museums. As a result, pupils are keen to learn and achieve well in most subject areas.

Pupils behave well in classrooms and around school. They focus on their learning and have good attitudes to school life. This starts with children in the early years, who listen well and show high levels of self-control. Pupils feel safe. They know they have adults who will help them when they need it.

The school provides opportunities for pupils to develop leadership such as being digital ambassadors, play leaders or members of the school council. Pupils also benefit from a range of clubs, including karate, chess, computing and a variety of sports, which they enjoy.

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

The school's curriculum is ambitious for all pupils. It is carefully planned from the early years through to Year 6. At each stage, the curriculum sets out the essential knowledge and key vocabulary pupils should learn.

Overall, pupils achieve well. This prepares pupils at all stages for the next steps in their education. Teachers deliver the curriculum skilfully. They have strong subject knowledge because they receive effective training and support. In some subjects, including mathematics and computing, the school has identified the exact knowledge and skills that pupils need to know and remember. In these subjects, pupils routinely revisit and apply the skills that they have learned so they can do increasingly more complex tasks. However, this is not always the case in other subjects where teachers' subject knowledge is less secure.

Pupils benefit from a well-designed, expertly taught phonics curriculum. They are supported well with books that are carefully matched to their phonics knowledge. Pupils quickly learn the letters and sounds that they need to become accurate and fluent readers. A love of reading is evident across the school and pupils read widely and often. They enjoy 'relax and read' sessions and 'book breakfasts'. Pupils at all stages of their reading achieve extremely well.

The teaching of mathematics supports pupils to develop numerical confidence and fluency quickly. Carefully structured activities deepen their understanding of

numbers and shapes. Staff check pupils' understanding effectively. They ask probing questions and pick up on misconceptions quickly so that they can be addressed.

Pupils with SEND are well supported to work alongside their peers. The school makes appropriate adaptations so that pupils with SEND can access the full curriculum. The school ensures that timely advice is sought to meet pupils' needs. This is then quickly put into practice across the school.

The early years curriculum is well designed to prepare children for their future learning. They benefit from an exciting and well-equipped learning environment. Children follow familiar routines calmly, making the most of the activities provided to promote their development. While the children show high levels of concentration and curiosity, they tend to work individually so opportunities to develop socially are more limited. Some staff do not always model effectively and promote discussion beyond phonics and mathematics lessons.

Pupils learn about the importance of keeping healthy and staying safe, including when online. Pupils embrace and celebrate the uniqueness of individuals. They learn to resolve any conflicts through the school's 'peacemakers' approach. They demonstrate their understanding through warm relationships with staff and each other. Staff use assemblies as opportunities for pupils to reflect on the school's values. This enables pupils and staff to celebrate together the many achievements from the week. The care provided by staff and the pastoral team supports pupils and their families extremely well. This helps pupils to feel safe and happy in school and, as a result, pupils attend well. The school takes swift and effective action to support pupils if attendance becomes a concern.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the support that they receive from the school. They typically say, 'Staff give everything, every day, to get the best out of each and every pupil.'

Governance is a strength. There is a shared understanding of how best to check, challenge and celebrate the work of 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)

- There is variation in teachers' subject knowledge in relation to the teaching of disciplinary skills in some subjects. Staff do not always plan learning that builds on pupils' prior skills to enable them to apply and make links with their learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers' subject knowledge is consistently strong so they can better support pupils to apply their learning more successfully.

- In early years, the school has not ensured that children's social skills are as well developed as they could be. While they learn and play nicely alongside each other, some children lack the skills to interact and engage with each other during their independent play. Adults should model and support discussions to support children to work collaboratively and communicate effectively with each other.

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	103383
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10290524
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	205
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Wendy McClelland
Headteacher	Tammy Williams
Website	www.bellsfarm.org
Dates of previous inspection	11 and 12 October 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- At the previous inspection, the school had a children's centre and offered nursery provision for children aged three to four years. Because of financial constraints, the children's centre closed in 2013 and the nursery closed in 2020.
- There has been a new leadership team since September 2023.
- There is before- and after-school provision for pupils who attend the school. It is run by school staff and managed by school leaders.
- The school does not make use of 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 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the

school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspectors met with the headteacher and senior leaders.
- The lead inspector talked to a representative from the local authority.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the governing body.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- The inspector also talked to pupils and examined their work in art and design.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans. Minutes of governing body meetings were also scrutinised.
- Inspectors looked at records of pupils' attendance and behaviour. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them about behaviour, bullying and welfare.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors 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 inspectors talked to parents at the start of the school day and considered the Ofsted Parent View survey and free-text comments. Inspectors also reviewed the responses to the staff survey and gathered the views of staff and pupils through discussion.

Inspection team

Cathy Young, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Bates

Ofsted Inspector

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