

Inspection of Birchfield Community Primary School

Birchfield Road, Yeovil, Somerset BA21 5RL

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy at this nurturing, inclusive school. They build positive relationships with staff and each other. Children learn to listen, share and take turns from the start of the early years. High expectations of behaviour continue throughout the school. Pupils feel safe. They trust adults to help them to resolve difficulties. Parents and carers appreciate how the school supports their children's learning and personal development. They praise the school's caring atmosphere and 'strong sense of community'.

Staff and governors want the very best for all pupils. The school continues to develop and refine the curriculum. The curriculum prepares pupils well for their next stage of learning. Pupils progress well through the curriculum, which is reflected in the school's positive published outcomes.

The school strives to enrich pupils' experiences beyond the classroom. Pupils look forward to exciting trips, like the forthcoming residential visit to London. They can attend a variety of extra-curricular clubs that develop their talents. For example, choir, coding and dance clubs. Pupils learn to be active citizens. They take leadership roles as school councillors and members of the eco-committee seriously. Pupils lead changes to school life. For example, they are proud of how they raised funds for new school equipment.

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

The school has carefully developed the curriculum. Since the previous inspection, the school has overhauled many curriculum subjects. There are high expectations for all pupils. From the early years, the knowledge and skills pupils need to know have been identified. The curriculum has a positive impact on pupils' achievement in English, mathematics and science. In a few foundation subjects, the school's work is more recent and is still being embedded. Pupils do not yet build on their prior learning as well as the school intends in those subjects.

Staff implement the curriculum well. Teachers check what pupils already know and remember. Pupils make links to earlier learning in the core subjects. This helps them to use what they know to complete challenging work. Pupils apply their knowledge to practical investigations in science. In mathematics, pupils use their knowledge of number facts to solve challenging problems.

Leaders prioritise reading as the bedrock of learning. Pupils read interesting and wide-ranging literature. They are enthusiastic readers. Older pupils recall the many books that teachers have read to them. Choosing books from the well-stocked library also inspires pupils to read for pleasure. The school has developed staff expertise in delivering the early reading curriculum. Most pupils learn the phonic code well. Staff identify those pupils who need extra support. However, this support

does not match all pupils' needs well enough. As a result, some pupils who are at the early stage of learning to read are not catching up rapidly.

Children get off to a strong start in the early years. Children are highly engaged in their activities, showing positive attitudes to learning. They build their knowledge of language and number from the start of pre-school. Children love story times. They enjoy using the language they have learned to begin writing stories of their own. Staff develop children's communication skilfully. This prepares children well for the next stage.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) have their needs identified with increasing precision. The school works with external agencies to plan extra support. High-quality pastoral care helps pupils to be ready to learn. In some subjects, staff adapt learning to help pupils build their knowledge well. However, in a few subjects, learning is not always considered well enough for pupils with SEND to meet their specific needs.

The school is a calm place to learn. Pupils behave well. They live up to the expectations set for them. Typically, pupils try their best in lessons. Low-level disruption is rare. In corridors and at social times, pupils conduct themselves well. In close collaboration with families, the school has improved attendance. Pupils attend well. The number of pupils who regularly miss out on learning has decreased.

Pupils benefit from a well-considered programme for their personal development. For example, the school arranges career education to raise pupils' aspirations. Pupils learn to play several musical instruments and take part in singing performances. They learn to discuss issues thoughtfully and to respect other pupils' views. They understand that people from all backgrounds should be treated with equal respect.

Governors know the school's strengths and areas to develop. They provide support and challenge to the school to continually improve. Staff appreciate the school's consideration of their well-being and workload.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve? (Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some pupils, including pupils with SEND, do not learn well in a few foundation subjects. Adaptations to learning do not always meet pupils' individual needs. The school must ensure that learning is adapted effectively so that all pupils, including those with SEND, learn the ambitious curriculum well in every subject.
- Pupils at the early stages of learning to read do not always receive the precise guidance and support they need. They struggle to apply their phonic knowledge

to read with fluency and confidence as a result. The school must make sure that all pupils who struggle with reading get the support they need to catch up quickly.

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	123730
Local authority	Somerset
Inspection number	10334680
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	418
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Gemma Ashfield
Headteacher	Judy Parker
Website	www.birchfieldprimaryschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	22 January 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher took up their post in September 2022.
- The school runs and manages an on-site nursery for two- and three-year-old children.
- The school does not use 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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the COVID-19 pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, school leaders and members of staff. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body and representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, art and science. For each deep dive, the inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The lead inspector heard pupils from key stage 1 and key stage 2 read to a member of staff.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the 36 staff surveys, Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, including 27 free-text replies. An inspector spoke with parents at the start of the school day.

Inspection team

Claire Mirams, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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His Majesty's Inspector

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Ofsted Inspector

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