

# Inspection of Birch Copse Primary School

Wittenham Avenue, Tilehurst, Reading, Berkshire RG31 5LN

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Inspection dates: 9 and 10 July 2024

## **Overall effectiveness**

**Outstanding**

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The quality of education

**Outstanding**

Behaviour and attitudes

**Outstanding**

Personal development

**Outstanding**

Leadership and management

**Outstanding**

Early years provision

**Outstanding**

Previous inspection grade

Outstanding

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

Pupils are proud to be a part of their inclusive and ambitious school community. They embody the school's values consistently by being kind, respectful and polite. They meet the high expectations set for them through trying their best, challenging themselves and persevering. Pupils share the school's ambitions for what they can achieve. From Reception onwards, pupils grow to become highly motivated, confident and independent learners. Beyond this, they become highly valued members of their community. Across the school, pupils speak about the importance of showing support and encouragement to each other.

All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve highly across the curriculum. Published outcomes from the end of key stage tests in 2023 show that pupils attain above national averages. This is reflected in the high-quality work that pupils complete in school in these subjects and across the wider curriculum. Pupils talk about their learning with interest and make links between the knowledge they gain easily.

Pupils benefit from an exceptionally wide range of character-building opportunities. This offer is diverse, including 'Glee', drama, gymnastics, gardening, art and various sports clubs. Beyond this, as school and eco-councillors, subject ambassadors, 'Birch Copse Buddies' or mini-masters, pupils learn how to harness their talents and skills to contribute to school life.

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

The school has a highly ambitious curriculum which supports all pupils to achieve exceptionally well. The school has mapped out precisely the knowledge that pupils need to develop. This starts from Reception onwards and is designed so that pupils revisit and build on prior learning systematically and as needed. Subsequently, pupils are able to master and apply knowledge to problems independently.

Teaching is very effective. Subject leaders, teachers and support staff are experts not just in the knowledge they teach, but also in how best to teach it so that all pupils, including those with SEND, achieve extremely well over time. Teachers check what pupils know through the entire curriculum. Where needed, they make well-considered changes to lesson activities to help pupils build knowledge well. The provision for pupils with SEND is successful due to the precise knowledge of what pupils' needs are and clarity on how best to meet them. Therefore, the support put in place in lessons is seamless and highly impactful.

A love of reading pervades the school. All pupils access a wide range of texts which builds their vocabulary and inspires them to read. Staff expertly teach pupils phonics. They use information from assessments well to spot when a pupil has fallen behind. Extra reading activities are used to close any gaps quickly. This means that all pupils are learning to read exceptionally well.

In the Reception class, the foundations for learning in Year 1 are set superbly. As one parent commented, 'The early years learning offer is wizardry!' There is a palpable buzz of learning and enthusiasm among children and staff in this area. Children model the school's values consistently well and are motivated learners. The school is focused on developing children's communication and language. Every opportunity is taken by well-trained staff to develop children's vocabulary to a high standard. Consequently, children are articulate and ready for learning in Year 1.

Conduct through the school is calm and purposeful. In lessons, behaviour is superb. Teachers show consistency and fairness in how they support pupils with their behaviour. They model the expectations of conduct they have for pupils well. Because of this, pupils are highly focused, and learning is rarely disrupted. The school playground during social times is harmonious. Pupils play extremely well together and the warmth and trust between pupils and staff is clear to see.

The school's work on pupils' personal development is exemplary. Regular discussion in assemblies about protected characteristics and fundamental British values build pupils' capacity to show skills and attitudes that will enable them to contribute positively to their wider community. Pupils learn to not only understand but appreciate a range of religions and cultural influences. They show clearly how they recognise and value the commonalities and differences between us all. They celebrate these through personal, social, health and economics education-themed days throughout the school year. These are truly inclusive pupils who respect the views, feelings and beliefs of others.

Governors work collaboratively with all staff so that all pupils get the best education possible to achieve the best possible personal and academic outcomes. Teachers appreciate the extensive work that has been done to make workload manageable. All staff show commitment to the school, the pupils and the community they serve. Staff are valued and listened to and are inspired by the vision that school leaders have.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

## **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>	109844
<b>Local authority</b>	West Berkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10296141
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	418
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Jane Hardie
<b>Headteacher</b>	John Micklewhite
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birchcopse.co.uk">www.birchcopse.co.uk</a>
<b>Dates of previous inspection</b>	28 and 29 November 2011, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

## Information about this school

- The school does not currently 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 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 lead inspector met with the headteacher and other members of the leadership team. They also met with the chair and five other members of the governing body.
- The lead inspector also met with a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in the following subjects: early reading,

mathematics, art, science and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors 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 inspectors observed pupils' behaviour around the school and in lessons. They also spoke to pupils in lessons and during play and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors considered a range of documents, including leaders' evaluations of the school, their school improvement plan and minutes from governors' meetings.
- The inspectors spoke to parents and carers and considered their responses to Ofsted Parent View.
- The inspectors took account of the views of staff through conversations and the responses to the online staff survey.
- 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.

### **Inspection team**

Nina Marabese, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Sarah Brinkley	Ofsted Inspector
Louise Walker	His Majesty's Inspector

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