

# Birk Hill Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112543
<b>Local Authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	325627
<b>Inspection date</b>	12 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Ian Jones

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Infant
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	169
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	51
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr Ian Ringstead
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sue Birch
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 June 2006
<b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>	Not previously inspected
<b>School address</b>	Chestnut Avenue Eckington Derbyshire S21 4BE
<b>Telephone number</b>	01246 433 205
<b>Fax number</b>	01246 435 504

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<b>Age group</b>	3–7
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. Inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- the current picture of achievement and standards throughout the school;
- attendance and how effectively it is promoted;
- the impact of academic guidance on pupils' learning and achievement;
- the impact of leadership on school improvement.

Evidence was gathered from discussions with senior leaders, subject leaders, governors and pupils. In addition, inspectors observed lessons and scrutinised a range of school information, including details of the standards and progress achieved by pupils, the school's self-evaluation and parent questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified, and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

The school serves the village of Eckington. Almost all of the 169 pupils on roll live locally. The Early Years Foundation Stage comprises morning and afternoon Nursery classes and two mixed age Reception and Year 1 classes. Children enter the Nursery with skills, knowledge and understanding that is typical for their age. Almost all of the pupils are of White British backgrounds and come from homes where English is the first language. The proportion of pupils entitled to a free school meal is below average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, including those with statements, is below most schools. The school has achieved Healthy Schools, Basic Skills and Activemark awards.

## Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

This is a good school. Parents are correct in their view that it provides pupils with a secure start to their education and prepares them well for their future lives. Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides effective leadership and she is well supported by the other leaders and governors. Together, they have maintained high standards and made improvements, notably to the curriculum, since the last inspection.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good overall, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. They display very high levels of maturity when helping and supporting each other, and their behaviour is excellent. Pupils conduct themselves very well in lessons and around the school, demonstrating an excellent awareness of how to keep safe. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the interesting curriculum on offer. Several awards, including the Healthy Schools and Activemark awards, reflect some of the enhancements made. This year a skills-based curriculum was introduced which links learning between subjects. This is already quickening the rate of progress made by pupils and contributing effectively to their enjoyment of learning. Science lessons are frequently practical and provide solid experiences from which pupils' learning is developed. This helps to make their learning relevant and purposeful. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to live healthily, and enthusiastically participate in the daily physical education activities planned. A range of enrichment activities includes sport and art and craft. Attendance is satisfactory. It has improved since the last inspection and the school puts considerable effort into promoting regular attendance.

Good quality teaching ensures that activities are suitably matched to the individual needs of pupils. Teaching assistants support learners well in and out of lessons. Provision for information and communication technology has improved since the previous inspection and the interactive whiteboards in each classroom are used effectively to illustrate teaching points and support learning. These improvements are having a positive impact on standards. At times the use of questioning is limited and does not sufficiently challenge pupils to think deeply, especially the more able. Furthermore, independent learning skills are not as developed as they might be because pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan aspects of their own work and are not consistently challenged in their learning.

A strength of the good care, guidance and support provided by the school is the well developed tracking system. This provides important information on how well pupils are doing and is used to support those not making the expected progress. Regular discussions between teachers and the headteacher are held and this helps ensure that good progress is maintained. School leaders also scrutinise the information provided by tracking to monitor different groups of pupils to ensure the continuing effectiveness of the school's provision. Pupils have personal learning targets in literacy and know what they are aiming for. They are involved in assessing their own learning and good quality feedback from staff ensures that pupils and their parents know what they need to do to improve. As a result of the good teaching and curriculum, pupils are motivated to work hard and behave well. All pupils, including those who find learning difficult, make good progress from their starting points. By the time pupils leave the school, standards are consistently above average in their reading, writing and mathematics. A recent push on developing reading skills, with tailored extra support for those needing additional guidance, is having a good impact on improving standards. While girls continue to attain higher standards than boys, improvements are helping boys to make faster progress, thereby reducing the gap between them and girls, particularly in Year 2.

All staff work hard to maintain the caring and happy atmosphere that permeates the school and which parents greatly appreciate. One parent explained, 'This is a community school where children feel that they belong'. Staff show good care towards pupils and their families. In turn, pupils model this towards each other and this promotes a safe and secure environment in which they achieve well emotionally and academically.

Pupils make a good contribution to the school and wider community. The well-developed school council is given a real opportunity to influence decision making in the school. Recent decisions have resulted in improvements to playground equipment and to encourage others to eat healthily. Pupils develop good skills in information and communication technology. These advanced skills, together with good numeracy and literacy skills, ensure that they are well prepared for the next stage in their learning.

The school works closely and effectively with parents and other agencies to ensure that pupils make a smooth and happy transition into the school. Support for pupils with learning difficulties is good, hence the high standards achieved. There are effective procedures to ensure pupils are kept safe and for preventing and dealing with bullying. Appropriate checks are made on the suitability of staff and procedures for safeguarding pupils meet current requirements.

Systems for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and for assessing and tracking pupils' progress, are effective in promoting above average standards and good achievement. Staff use assessment information well to identify and support pupils who are at risk of underachieving. The school meets the targets it sets and revises these regularly to ensure they are suitably challenging. Professional development and performance management procedures are used effectively to promote improvement. School administration staff support leaders and governors effectively by ensuring financial and resource management are efficient. This, together with a good level of fund-raising from an active body of parents, has enabled the school to make good improvements to the school environment and buildings. These include a sensory garden, play equipment for the Key Stage 1 playground and improvements to the outside learning environment in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Governors play a full role in the life of the school. They provide the headteacher with a good level of support and work closely with staff. They have effective systems for holding the school to account.

Leaders ensure that the school promotes community cohesion by fostering positive relationships with outside agencies and the wider community. Much work is done to develop in pupils a respect for their own and for other cultures. For example, pupils regularly participate in local community events such as Eckington Christmas Fair. A good use of special themed days such as the recent India Day and China Day celebrate differing ways of life and contribute effectively to pupils' perceptions and understanding of other cultures. There are well-developed plans to link with a school in Australia and regularly organises fundraising events to support local, national and international charities.

The school has continued to make good progress since the last inspection. It therefore demonstrates good capacity to improve further and move the school to the next stage of its development.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Children make a good start to their education in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Home visits before children start school and flexible arrangements to meet the needs of each child ensure a smooth transition and establish a safe, secure environment where children thrive. The

curriculum is planned thoroughly, covering all six areas of learning, with an emphasis on personal, social and emotional development and language development. A mixture of teacher-directed and free choice activities are provided both indoors and out. Activities are appropriately play based and children enjoy taking part. However, children's experiences and interests are not yet fully utilized to promote their own learning and allow them more control over the direction it takes. Children work together happily and share the resources and equipment well. They are well behaved and attentive during whole group times such as when listening to a story. Independence is fostered through snack time arrangements, which children manage themselves, and they also take responsibility for such things as replacing overalls after painting. Formal and informal observations ensure that the staff know the children well and these observations are often shared with parents. Children's progress is tracked carefully ensuring early intervention where necessary. External agencies such as speech therapy are also well used. This means that most children meet or exceed the Early Learning Goals by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and effective liaison with Key Stage 1 staff means children make a seamless onward transition.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Increase opportunities for children to direct their own learning:
  - in the Early Years Foundation Stage, by initiating learning which stems from their own interests and experiences;
  - in Key Stage 1, by regularly providing open ended tasks which stimulate thinking and problem-solving skills.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

<sup>1</sup>Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.



## Personal development and well-being

<b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

## The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

## Leadership and management

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

13 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Birk Hill Infant School, Eckington, Derbyshire S21 4BE

Thank you for helping me to find out about your school. I enjoyed watching lessons and talking to some of you. You attend a happy and friendly school. The best things about your school include the following:

- your behaviour is excellent and you concentrate very well in lessons
- you make good progress in your work
- you thoroughly enjoy learning and all the activities your teachers plan for you
- you have an excellent understanding of how to be fit and healthy
- there is a good partnership in place between the school and your parents
- the school leaders have very good ideas about ways to improve the school
- staff care for you really well and listen to you thoughtfully
- teaching is good and the teachers work hard to make lessons interesting

I have asked the adults at your school to look at how they can make things even better. The most important thing they should do is to give you lots of opportunities to be more involved in planning your own learning. This means that in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children learn more from using their own ideas. For those of you in Key Stage 1, I have asked your teachers to regularly give you activities and tasks which really make you think and plan carefully.

You can help by always trying your best, listening carefully, and continuing to behave excellently.

Yours sincerely

Ian Jones

Lead inspector