

# Inspection of Birchfield Primary School

Trinity Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 6AJ

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Inspection dates: 13 and 14 September 2022

**Overall effectiveness** **Good**

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The quality of education **Good**

Behaviour and attitudes **Good**

Personal development **Good**

Leadership and management **Good**

Early years provision **Good**

Previous inspection grade Not previously inspected

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

Pupils are happy and confident individuals. They readily speak to visitors and wave to them. The school site and classrooms are safe environments. Pupils learn to keep themselves safe and know they can talk to a trusted adult if they have any worries.

Leaders want the best for all pupils. Staff build caring and positive relationships with children as soon as children join early years. This enables children to settle in quickly and feel valued. Adults have high expectations and pupils live up to these.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They know and adhere fully to both the school's and British values. Pupils can articulate what different forms of bullying exist. Staff and leaders deal with any incidents quickly and firmly.

Leaders seek and act on the views of parents and carers regularly. They host workshops and curriculum exhibitions for parents to help involve them in their child's learning.

Pupils have lots of opportunities to take part in clubs, visits and events. These activities add greatly to what they learn in lessons.

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

Leaders have devised an ambitious and well-sequenced curriculum so that pupils gain a broad and balanced education. Pupils build their knowledge over time. Teachers carry out regular checks to see how well pupils are doing and what they remember. They use this information to revisit work or move on to new learning. Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics and science because these subjects are structured and taught well.

Staff development is a priority. Helpful resources support teachers with their planning. An enquiry question underpins the work that pupils learn. However, some questions lack a clear subject focus and are ambiguous. As a result, in a small number of subjects, curriculum content lacks clarity. Leaders have not identified the precise knowledge, skills and key vocabulary they want pupils to learn.

Pupils learn all subjects. However, the time given to swimming tuition in physical education (PE) is minimal. As a result, a large number of pupils do not learn to swim.

The teaching of early reading and writing is effective. Leaders have successfully introduced a systematic and rigorous approach to phonics. There is a strong link between reading and forming letters. Leaders understand the importance of reading. They have invested in high-quality books that are phonic based. This allows pupils to practise what they learn in lessons. There is an intentional focus on pupils with the weakest reading skills across the school. Staff provide them with extra help and

extra lessons. Consequently, these pupils make impressive progress and learn to read well.

Children joining early years settle quickly due to the calm, welcoming environment and attentive staff. Routines and expectations are high on the agenda in the early weeks. Communication and language skills, together with personal, social, emotional and physical development, are prioritised. A range of activities ensure that children enjoy school, make friends, and explore and play safely.

Pupils with complex special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well cared for in the nurture unit. Skilled staff provide effective support for these pupils. Other pupils receive appropriate work in daily lessons in classrooms. However, leaders do not ensure that the targets set for pupils who need additional intervention beyond lessons are suitable or measurable. This reduces the progress pupils make.

Pupils work hard in lessons and most concentrate well. They respond to adult instructions and show respect towards others. Leaders record all incidents that happen. Staff feel well supported with behaviour management. Leaders are quick to act and deal with any incidents that occur.

Attendance continues to be a priority for the school. Leaders track and follow up all absences. Penalty notices are issued, but some parents remain reluctant to bring their children to school. As a result, too many pupils continue to be persistently absent, and they miss essential lessons.

Staff value the approachability and aid of the senior leadership team. Early career teachers are well supported and receive helpful induction training. Leaders take account of staff workload. They have made arrangements to reduce this.

The trust and local academy committee provide good levels of challenge and support. Roles and responsibilities are clear, and each tier of leadership is held fully to account. Trust leaders continue to provide additional support in the school as they know that some areas require further development.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders, governors and trustees ensure that safeguarding is taken seriously. Staff receive regular training and updates to keep their knowledge up to date. They know the importance of reporting concerns quickly and accurately. Leaders act promptly on the information they receive, so that pupils and families get the support needed. Leaders carry out stringent vetting checks when employing staff. The record of these checks is maintained well.

Pupils are taught to keep themselves safe through the curriculum. They understand about e-safety, road safety and the importance of reporting any worries they have. They are confident to speak to school staff.

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

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

- In a small number of subjects, leaders have not identified the precise knowledge, skills and subject vocabulary they want pupils to know, use and remember. This means that important content can be missed. Leaders should ensure that they apply the same strong models seen in other subjects to all subjects.
- The amount of PE curriculum time dedicated to swimming is not effective. As a result, many pupils do not learn to swim competently, confidently and proficiently. Leaders should consider how well their planned curricular goals for swimming are achieved by pupils in the light of the time allocated.
- Targets set for pupils with SEND, who receive intervention support, are often too imprecise. This means that staff cannot measure or assess the progress of these pupils. Leaders should ensure that targets are achievable, measurable and precise.
- Too many pupils continue to be persistently absent. As a result, these pupils miss important lessons and learning. Leaders should continue to work with those parents who do not yet recognise the importance of regular school attendance for their child to improve their attendance.

## **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 Ofsted Parent View information 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](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	146075
<b>Local authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	10241494
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	652
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Herminder Channa
<b>Head of school</b>	Zoe Thewlis
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birchfld.bham.sch.uk">www.birchfld.bham.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school joined Prince Albert Community Trust in July 2018.
- The head of school was appointed in September 2018.
- The numbers of pupils on roll have fallen in recent years. As a result, the school will change from three-form to two-form entry from September 2023.
- 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.

- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the head of school and other members of the senior leadership team. Meetings were also held with three members of the local

academy committee, including the chair, and three members of the trust board, including the chair and chief executive officer.

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, English, mathematics, science, history and PE. Inspection activities in these subjects included lesson visits, discussions with staff and pupils, meeting with subject leaders, and work scrutiny. The lead inspector also observed pupils reading.
- The inspectors reviewed a range of documentation provided by the school. This included leaders' own self-evaluation and school development plan. Minutes of local academy committee meetings, together with trust and external reviews of the school, were also examined.
- The inspectors reviewed safeguarding arrangements. The lead inspector met with the school's and trust safeguarding leaders and looked at documentation provided, including the single central record. Discussions with staff and pupils were held about the school's approach to safeguarding.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school and talked to them informally about behaviour, bullying and welfare. Behaviour and attendance records were also checked.
- Responses from staff questionnaires were considered, together with the views of parents on Ofsted Parent View.

### **Inspection team**

Heather Simpson, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Lindsay Nash	Ofsted Inspector
John Rowe	Ofsted Inspector
Graeme Rudland	Ofsted Inspector

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