

# Birch Hill Primary School

Birch Hill, Leppington, Bracknell Forest RG12 7WW

<b>Inspection dates</b>	2–3 March 2016
<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Good</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school

- The recently appointed headteacher provides strong leadership. He is absolutely clear about what the school needs to do next and has prioritised appropriately. He has quickly gained the confidence of all his staff.
- The governing body effectively challenges and supports the school to enable the pupils to achieve well.
- Teaching, learning and assessment are good or better in nearly all of the classes.
- The majority of pupils make good progress in their learning and are well prepared for the next steps in their education.
- A rich learning environment and a dedicated early years team ensure that all children in Nursery and Reception make at least good progress in their learning.
- Pupils with disability, those with special educational needs, disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language make good progress. This is because the school knows its pupils well and most teaching is planned to support their needs.
- Pupils feel safe at school. They have a good understanding about how to keep safe and are well supported by the school's meticulous safeguarding systems.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They work and play happily together, appreciating and celebrating one another's differences. British values are a strong feature in the curriculum and every opportunity is taken to develop learning in this area.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Some leaders do not routinely check the impact of improvements on the quality of teaching and the outcomes for all pupils.
- Teaching is not yet outstanding across the school.
- The quality of teachers' marking and feedback to pupils sometimes falls short of the school's policy standards.

## Full report

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

- Strengthen the role of all leaders so that they are systematically asking what difference improvements are making to the quality of teaching and the outcomes for all pupils and are ready to challenge underperformance.
- Develop senior leaders' knowledge of the early years curriculum so that they can effectively hold staff to account and ensure that children achieve the best they can.
- Ensure that teachers' marking and feedback comply with the school's policy and are of a consistently high standard to ensure that all pupils understand what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve their work.
- Raise the quality of teaching and learning to outstanding by making sure that:
  - all lessons are consistently challenging for all groups of pupils
  - all teachers take every opportunity to help pupils to learn more quickly, especially the most-able pupils.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher provides strong leadership. Since arriving at the school in September, he has accurately assessed the school's strengths and weaknesses and has put a plan in place to address issues quickly. He is determined to make sure that every child has an equal opportunity to do their best.
- There is a strong sense of vision and purpose in the school and a keen commitment from all staff to work as a team to achieve the best possible outcomes for all pupils. All staff who returned the Ofsted questionnaire were very positive about the headteacher's leadership. One member of staff commented, 'the new headteacher is innovative and is involving all staff and children in the learning journey'.
- The curriculum has been completely reviewed since the last inspection. It provides a wide range of learning and opportunities for enrichment. For example, pupils visited the Houses of Parliament to learn more about 'debate' and 'democracy' and consequently British values were promoted in a relevant, lively and meaningful way.
- The school also offers a range of extra-curricular activities, from singing in the choir to football. These types of activities all help pupils to develop healthy minds and bodies. Leaders make good use of the additional funding for looked after children and the primary physical education and sport funding to promote these opportunities.
- The vast majority of parents are very positive about the school and would recommend the school to other parents. They talk positively about the new headteacher and the staff and know that their children are safe and well cared for. One parent said, 'Mr Dillon is spot-on'.
- Good support for leaders from the local authority has been welcomed by the school.
- The work of the newly established leadership team is beginning to produce improvements in the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes, particularly at upper Key Stage 2. All senior leaders must be diligent in holding teachers to account and challenge underperformance swiftly. They must be clear about what is working well and develop that practice across the school. Equally, when pupils' learning is not improving quickly, leaders must consider what changes need to be made and make sure that those changes are carried out to good effect. New systems to manage teachers' performance support this process well and teachers know what improvements they need to make and receive appropriate support to get there. The role of middle leaders is the next focus for development.
- The school has clear guidelines to support good marking and feedback. While these are widely adhered to, these good examples of practice need to be used consistently across the school so that every pupil can understand what they are learning and what their next steps are.
- **The governance of the school**
  - Governance is effective. Governors are working hard as a team to challenge senior leaders to hold them to account for their actions and be sure that any decisions are making a positive difference to pupils.
  - The recently appointed chair of governors is very ambitious for the school and is passionate about making Birch Hill the very best that it can be.
  - The governing body fulfils all its statutory duties effectively and ensures that the budget is well managed. The impact of any additional funds is well documented and reported.
  - The governing body is aware of the systems used by senior leaders to monitor the performance of staff and is clear about where the best teaching can be found and that it is appropriately rewarded. They have set rigorous performance targets for the headteacher in line with the school improvement plan.
  - The governing body is actively raising its profile in the school community. Regular newsletters are published for parents, and governors run the refreshment stall at school information evenings so that parents are getting to know who the governors are and what they do.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Systems meet requirements and pupils' safety is a high priority. The Family Support Adviser works very effectively with pupils and their families to ensure pupils are in school ready to learn every day and that they are safe and can achieve the best possible outcomes.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment** is good

- Across the school, teaching in all subjects, including in mathematics and English, is usually good and includes some examples of outstanding practice. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs and those in receipt of the pupil premium, make at least good progress over time.
- Where teaching is consistently good, teachers have a deep understanding of and real enthusiasm for their subjects and pitch lessons appropriately to engage all pupils and support their progress effectively. They ask challenging questions to extend pupils' thinking and encourage pupils to extend their learning through research and investigation.
- Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively in lessons. This helps them to learn from, and value the ideas of others. For example, in a Key Stage 2 English lesson, pupils were working with a partner to identify the most powerful scientific vocabulary to use when they wrote about the life-cycle of their chosen creature. This resulted in a good debate around the words 'metamorphosis', 'transformation' and 'adolescence' in the life-cycle of the mayfly, the frog and other creatures.
- Most teachers have high expectations of pupils and use skilful questioning to move learning forward quickly. Leaders have a clear understanding of where support is needed to develop this further.
- Additional adults provide good support to individuals and groups of children. They are usually well briefed by the teacher and make a significant impact on pupils' progress and understanding.
- Teachers set homework in line with the school's policy to consolidate learning. It is not unusual for some pupils to ask for extra work in spite of the level of challenge and difficulty. For example, a Year 6 pupil asked for extracts of work to take home to learn more about the use of the colon in her writing.

## **Personal development, behaviour and welfare** is good

### **Personal development and welfare**

- Birch Hill's commitment to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- The school is a calm and friendly place where pupils feel safe and enjoy their learning.
- Pupils are proud of their school and their achievements. They say that most children are kind to one another, and if they do have a problem then an adult will help them.
- Most pupils understand different types of bullying and are confident in how to stay safe. They feel that there are very few incidents of bullying, but if there are concerns, they are addressed quickly. The school is currently reviewing its guidance about staying safe online.
- Pupils understand the importance of staying healthy and engaging in sport. They believe the school provides a good range of opportunities to help them to be fit and healthy.
- Some pupils need to develop their self-discipline to become more proactive learners and be less reliant on adults.

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and courteous and show respect for one another and school property. This reflects the school's efforts to promote high standards.
- The environment is attractive and inviting and supports positive behaviour. For example, the playground has been divided into zones. This is proving very popular and allows pupils to make choices about the activities they want to take part in at playtimes.
- The school takes clear steps to maintain high levels of attendance. If children are not in school, then quick and appropriate action is taken.

## **Outcomes for pupils** are good

- Pupils at Birch Hill make good progress in most year groups and in different subjects across the curriculum. In 2015, the number of pupils achieving the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics in Year 2 and Year 6 was higher than in 2014 and higher than national outcomes.
- Disadvantaged pupils are now making better progress in their learning. In most year groups in reading, writing and mathematics, the progress they make is typically in line with other pupils in the school. Pupils make good progress in reading and writing and gaps in attainment are closing significantly. This is because the school is monitoring the progress of this group of pupils closely to ensure that they get the support they need to make better progress over time.

- Pupils who speak English as an additional language, pupils with disability and those with special educational needs make good progress from their starting points to achieve levels that are broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics. Teachers and teaching assistants receive very high-quality support from the school's inclusion coordinator so they in turn are effective in supporting pupils' specific learning needs.
- Pupils enjoy reading and make good use of the school's attractive and well-resourced library as well as the books in classrooms. The school takes every opportunity to celebrate all types of reading material. For example, Year 3's home learning display shows their own research into volcanoes through the use of books, poems, newspaper clippings, labelled scientific diagrams and articles off the internet.
- Adults successfully promote the language development of the youngest children. This secure baseline ensures that pupils in Year 1 achieve above the national standard in the phonics check. Rapid action is taken to support those few pupils who do not reach the standard at the end of Year 1 to achieve it at the end of Year 2.
- Pupils need to have more opportunities to develop mathematical problem solving and reasoning, particularly at Key Stage 1. This will ensure that pupils are well prepared for more challenging mathematics at Key Stage 2.
- The number of pupils achieving higher levels than those expected for their age is too small. Leaders have identified this and are working hard to ensure that the most-able pupils across the school receive high-quality teaching to accelerate their learning.

## **Early years provision**

**is good**

- Children arrive happy at Nursery, excited about the day ahead. The range of equipment and resources invites positive and enjoyable play where children can investigate and explore in a secure and safe environment.
- Adults promote language development by talking to the children and asking them challenging questions about their learning. Related activities hold their attention and meet individual needs. For example, some children are given fine paintbrushes to use for painting their flowers, which enables those with good manipulative skills to achieve more detail.
- Children's starting points when they enter Reception are in line with those typical for their age. Good teaching ensures children make good progress, and by the end of early years they are ready for learning in Year 1.
- An early focus on routine has meant that children are very settled and safe. They engage enthusiastically in their activities and are very proud of their achievements. Parents are extremely positive about the early education that their children receive.
- Children interact well with one another and relevant and meaningful activities enable all children to make good progress.
- Additional funds to support disadvantaged children are used to good effect and help children to catch up more quickly.
- The staff are a strong team who are well led and managed on a day-to-day basis. They have high expectations of the children based on their knowledge of the children's starting points. However, senior leaders who oversee the provision and the outcomes for young children must develop their skills and understanding of the early years so that they can carry out their role to better effect.

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	109893
<b>Local authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	10002402

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Maintained
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	440
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Karen Bugg
<b>Headteacher</b>	Michael Dillon
<b>Telephone number</b>	01344 455815
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk">www.birchhillprimaryschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Email address</b>	<a href="mailto:head@office.birchhill.bracknell-forest.sch.uk">head@office.birchhill.bracknell-forest.sch.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	28–29 November 2013

## Information about this school

- Birch Hill Primary School is significantly larger than the average-sized primary school. The number on roll has not changed significantly over the last three years.
- Most pupils are White British but the number of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds has increased over the last three years.
- The proportion of pupils with disability and those with special educational needs is below average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the additional pupil premium funding is broadly in line with the national average. The pupil premium is additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, those who have been eligible for free school meals at any time in the last six years and children in the care of the local authority.
- There are currently two looked after children in the school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set out the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- There is a before-school club on the site. This is not managed by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed lessons in all classes and in a range of subjects, some of which were joint observations with senior leaders. Two learning walks took place to gather additional information about the school. In addition, inspectors visited one assembly and attended part of a performance from a theatre group.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the chair of governors and a representative from the local authority.
- The inspectors talked to pupils about their work, looked at books and listened to some pupils read. They also observed pupils at playtimes and lunchtimes.
- The inspectors looked at a wide range of documentation including the school's own assessment information – its check on its own performance, and records relating to governance, behaviour, attendance and safeguarding.
- The inspectors took account of 45 staff questionnaires. Fifty-eight responses to Ofsted's online parent survey (Parent View) were also considered alongside the outcomes from the school's recently completed parents' and pupils' surveys. The inspectors also held discussions with parents before and after school.

## Inspection team

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