

Inspection of Birchwood Primary School

Birchwood Avenue, Dordon, Tamworth, Staffordshire B78 1QU

Inspection dates:	1 and 2 April 2025
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

The headteacher of this school is Neil Coleman. This school is part of Community Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer (CEO), Philip Hamilton OBE, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Atkins.

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding for overall effectiveness at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since September 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils flourish at Birchwood Primary School. Children receive an excellent start to their education from the moment they begin in early years. The school is highly aspirational for all pupils. Pupils display immense pride in being a part of this school community. They talk eagerly about their learning.

The school believes that there are no limits or barriers to what pupils can achieve. Staff hold very high expectations for all pupils. Pupils live up to these. They achieve exceptionally well across the curriculum. Pupils enjoy school and attend well.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. The school culture is driven by the school values of 'consideration and respect'. The school is a purposeful place in which to learn. Pupils are focused and respectful. They are polite to each other and to visitors. Pupils feel safe. They celebrate difference and socialise happily together.

Support for pupils' personal development is exceptional. The school goes beyond the expected so that pupils have access to a wide, rich set of experiences. One example is the BASE Skills Academy. The school council gather pupils' ideas for a wide range of enjoyable skills-based activities, led by school staff. These enhance the school's vision to provide pupils with rich opportunities and memorable experiences.

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

The school has developed an ambitious curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils exceptionally well. This starts in the early years. In each subject, the school clearly identifies knowledge so that teaching staff know precisely what pupils should learn. There are regular opportunities for pupils to recap on previous learning. This helps them to retain their knowledge and build on it over time. As a result, pupils develop a deep breadth of knowledge as they move through the school.

The school prepares pupils to be curious and enthusiastic learners. They develop a passion for learning. Children learn this from early years, where they develop excellent learning behaviours. They concentrate on tasks for sustained periods. As pupils move through the curriculum, the school helps them to make links between the curriculum's essential knowledge. For example, pupils learn about space in science and consider the importance of the space race in their history learning.

The expert implementation of the curriculum enables pupils to develop deep and rich knowledge over time. Learning is adapted well to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school acts quickly to identify pupils' needs. This means that pupils with SEND receive the support they need from the time they start school. As a result, pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. The school has created a highly nurturing environment where every pupil is welcome and accesses the same opportunities.

A love of reading is promoted all around the school and is inspired by the enthusiasm of staff. Reading is prioritised from the moment children start school. There is a strong focus on developing children's communication and language. Pupils get regular opportunities to practise and consolidate their phonics knowledge. Staff use assessment well to check pupils' phonics progress. If pupils fall behind, they receive the support they need to help them catch up quickly. Pupils develop their reading skills and fluency as they move through the school. Everyone is a reader at Birchwood.

Pupils have many meaningful opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility. They are elected to various leadership roles by their peers. For example, house captains organise regular competitions for pupils to take part in. They also nominate pupils for 'star of the week' in celebration assemblies. These roles help pupils to develop independence.

Enrichment opportunities are considered carefully to significantly enhance the curriculum. These include a wide range of extra-curricular clubs and trips. Older pupils learn about different career options during 'world of work week'. This helps to raise pupils' aspirations. The range of enrichment opportunities the school provides makes a tangible difference to pupils. One captured this well, stating that the school 'broadens my horizons'.

The school sits at the heart of the community. The senior leadership team, staff, trust, governors and parents share in the school's vision and direction. There is a collective drive to make the school the best it can possibly be. Trustees and governors know the school's strengths and ongoing priorities well. They provide appropriate support and challenge. Staff feel well supported and morale is high. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school.

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

Unique reference number	138934
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10343991
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Atkins
CEO of the trust	Philip Hamilton OBE
Headteacher	Neil Coleman
Website	www.birchwoodprimaryschool.com
Dates of previous inspection	10 and 11 September 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Community Academies Trust.
- The school does not use any provider of alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with a range of leaders, including those responsible for the curriculum, teaching and learning, behaviour, attendance, personal development and safeguarding.
- The lead inspector met with the CEO from the trust, the chair of the board of trustees and a member of the trust executive team.
- The lead inspector met with representatives from the local governing body.
- 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.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, science and history. 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.
- The inspectors also discussed the curriculum in a range of other subjects.
- The lead inspector listened to pupils in Years 1 and 2 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school site.
- The inspectors gathered parents' views by considering the responses to Ofsted Parent View and by talking to some parents before and after school. The inspectors also evaluated responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Matt Fletcher, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Darren Bishop

Ofsted Inspector

Patrick Amieli

Ofsted Inspector

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