

# Inspection of a good school: Birkdale Primary School

Matlock Road, Birkdale, Southport, Merseyside PR8 4EL

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Inspection dates: 16 and 17 April 2024

## **Outcome**

Birkdale Primary School continues to be a good school.

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

Pupils enjoy being part of this caring and welcoming school. They know that each member of staff cares about them as individuals. Many pupils, and their parents and carers, spoke of the loving Birkdale school family.

Pupils recognise that teachers put a spark into learning to make it fun and enjoyable. They particularly like the songs that teachers share with them across the curriculum, even more so when the staff band springs into action. The school has fostered a supportive learning atmosphere that enables pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to succeed.

Pupils understand the school's high expectations of their work. They achieve and behave well. They are polite and respectful towards each other and to staff. They enjoy playtimes with their friends and the many games that staff organise.

Pupils make a positive and real contribution to the development of the school's curriculum. For example, student ambassadors and staff work closely to enhance pupils' learning experiences. They have helped to raise the profile of their specialist areas. Pupil voice is a strong feature of this school. Each week, staff consult pupils on a topic and this feeds into the decisions that the school makes. This makes pupils feel that adults in the school listen to them.

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

Pupils, including those with SEND, benefit from an ambitious curriculum that is meaningful and interesting to them. Starting from the early years, the school has carefully considered what pupils will learn and when they will learn it.

Staff benefit from a well-designed programme of training and support. They are knowledgeable about the subjects that they teach. They explain information clearly and model subject-specific vocabulary well. They are adept at bringing lessons to life. In most

subjects, staff make sure that pupils remember previous learning. However, in a small number of subjects where the curriculum is newer, some pupils struggle to remember over time. As a result, in these subjects, some pupils cannot build on prior knowledge when they are learning something new.

During lessons, staff check to ensure that pupils understand recent learning before introducing new concepts. Staff identify and address pupils' misconceptions successfully. The school is adept at using information from assessments to make adjustments to teaching so that pupils learn well.

Reading is at the heart of the curriculum. Staff introduce children to high-quality texts in the Nursery Year. In the early years, children learn songs and rhymes that prepare them well for learning how to read words in the Reception class. The school provides regular training and support to ensure that staff implement the phonics programme to a consistently high standard. This high standard contributes to pupils building up secure reading knowledge. Pupils make the most of opportunities provided to practise reading and become competent readers. They value the wide range of literature that is available in their classroom or in the well-stocked school library. They are keen to try out books that their teachers recommend. Pupils are proud of their roles as librarians. They relish this opportunity to encourage others in their reading journey.

Skilled staff quickly identify the additional needs of pupils with SEND. When necessary, these pupils benefit from well-targeted adaptations to the implementation of the curriculum. This enables them to successfully follow the school's ambitious curriculum. Each term, the school holds coffee mornings for professionals and the parents and carers of pupils with SEND to meet and support each other.

Most pupils attend school regularly and punctually. Relationships between adults and pupils are warm and respectful. Pupils work conscientiously and understand the school's 'Be rules' well. This helps everyone to get on with their learning.

The curriculum to promote pupils' personal development is well thought out. Staff have carefully designed it to ensure that pupils have the knowledge and skills to become successful citizens of modern-day Britain. Staff provide pupils with a wide range of enrichment activities that broaden their horizons. They nurture and develop pupils' talents and interests in drama, sport and music. Pupils spoke particularly highly about being composers in the music-tech club.

Staff feel well supported. Their morale is high. Most are very proud to work at the school. They feel that the school values their hard work and takes into account their workload and well-being when making decisions. For example, changes to the curriculum have benefited staff greatly. The governing body understands and fulfils its statutory duties with diligence. Governors use their expertise to challenge and support the school successfully.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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

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

- In some subjects, there have been recent changes to the curriculum. In these areas, some pupils do not remember prior learning well enough. The school should ensure that staff design learning activities, which help pupils to remember more and build on what they have learned in the past.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in March 2014.

## 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>	104860
<b>Local authority</b>	Sefton
<b>Inspection number</b>	10321251
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	444
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Machalla McDermott
<b>Headteacher</b>	Nick Sheeran
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.birkdaleprimary.com">www.birkdaleprimary.com</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	6 November 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative provision for pupils.

## Information about this inspection

- 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. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in her evaluation of the school.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and physical education. She met with subject leaders and with teachers. She visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning.
- The inspector observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector considered the curriculum in other subjects. She met with leaders, spoke with pupils and reviewed pupils' work in these subjects.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector spoke with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors. She also spoke with a representative of the local authority.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being. She also took account of the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff.
- The inspector met with leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- The inspector looked at a range of policies and documentation relating to pupils' welfare and education. She observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and around the school.
- The inspector met with parents at the start of the school day. She took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.
- The inspector spoke with groups of pupils about their experiences at school. She took account of the responses to Ofsted's pupil survey, including the free-text comments.

### **Inspection team**

Helen Friend, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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