

Inspection of a good school: Lincoln Birchwood Junior School

Larchwood Crescent, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 0NL

Inspection dates:

10–11 December 2019

Outcome

Lincoln Birchwood Junior School continues to be a good school.

However, inspectors have some concerns that standards may be declining, as set out below.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school. They describe it as a welcoming and friendly place to be. They feel safe in school. They know that if they need help, an adult will be there for them. Relationships between staff and pupils are a real strength of the school. Staff care about pupils and support them well.

Pupils behave well. They are respectful and polite. They listen carefully to staff, take care with their work and try hard. Bullying is rare and pupils trust adults to sort it out quickly if it occurs.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils. They encourage them to do their best. Pupils told me that teachers help them to 'learn and remember'. Pupils told me that they learn something new every day.

Pupils value the wide range of visits and activities that their teachers provide. They enjoy the after-school clubs and they like taking part in sports with other schools. Older pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities and helping younger pupils.

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

Leaders have developed a strong sense of teamwork across the school. Staff share leaders' high ambitions for pupils. Leaders provide staff with training and support to help them improve their teaching. Teachers model new ideas to pupils well. This helps pupils to learn and understand.

Leaders have started to look closely at the curriculum and to set out the key knowledge and skills that they want pupils to learn. They have done this clearly in some subjects, such as science and geography, but not in all the others. Where leaders have not set out

clearly what pupils must learn and when they must learn it, pupils find it more difficult to make links in their learning and remember, in the long term, what they have been taught.

Teachers set clear routines and high expectations for pupils' behaviour in class. Pupils concentrate on their work. They behave well and listen to their teachers.

Mathematics is taught well. The mathematics leader has a clear plan of what she wants pupils to learn and be able to do. Teachers follow the detailed plan and ensure that pupils build up their mathematics knowledge each term and year-on-year. Pupils use what they already know and understand to help them grasp their next steps in their learning. This helps all pupils to achieve well.

Leaders want pupils to become confident readers. They have a plan in place to improve the teaching of reading. This includes developing pupils' vocabulary so that they will enjoy reading even more. However, leaders need to do more for pupils who are at an early stage of reading. Pupils who need to catch up are not consistently taught the phonics skills that they need to read words correctly. Teachers do not provide pupils with reading books that are matched to the sounds they have learned. For some pupils, this stops them reading accurately and confidently.

Teaching assistants provide sensitive support in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). However, in some lessons the level of work that teachers provide for these pupils is not quite right for them. This limits their ability to work independently and to achieve well.

Leaders have developed a 'Passport for Learning'. This sets out some of the experiences pupils can have during their time in school. These include: residential visits, raising money for charity and working with artists. Pupils can also learn to play a musical instrument and take responsibilities that help the day-to-day running of the school.

Leaders are mindful of staff workload. Staff appreciate the creative ways that leaders support their well-being. They feel they are valued in their work.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that safeguarding is a high priority for all staff. Staff know pupils well and provide them with a high level of care. Staff are well trained and aware of the signs that a pupil may be at risk of harm. They know how to report their concerns. Leaders act quickly to seek advice and support from other agencies. They make sure that pupils and families get help when they need it.

Pupils know that there is always a trusted adult in school that they can go to for help. They understand how to stay safe online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's curriculum is not yet sufficiently coherently planned and sequenced in some subjects. Leaders need to ensure that they identify the precise knowledge that they want pupils to acquire and remember at the end of each series of lessons across all subjects.
- Leaders have begun to improve the teaching of reading. They must now improve the teaching of phonics for pupils who are at an earlier stage of reading. They need to ensure that teachers receive the training they need to do this well. They should ensure that the reading books pupils are given match their level of phonics understanding so that they can catch up quickly and develop confidence and accuracy in reading.
- Leaders have ensured that pupils with SEND are identified. They provide staff with training and they work with external agencies and parents to put in place a range of support for pupils. However, although pupils receive support, it is not always consistently well tailored on a day-to-day basis to meet their needs effectively. Leaders should ensure that learning activities match pupils needs accurately, so that pupils with SEND can become more independent and achieve well.

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 a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged Lincoln Birchwood Junior School to be good on 24–25 February 2016.

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.

If you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

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

Unique reference number	120508
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10110143
Type of school	Junior
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	304
Appropriate authority	Local authority
Chair of governing body	Brian Main
Headteacher	Tracey Bowman
Website	www.birchwood.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	24–25 February 2016

Information about this school

- The school federated with Woodlands Infant and Nursery School and The Lancaster School in January 2019. The governing body oversees the work of all three schools.

Information about this inspection

- I met with the executive headteacher, the head of school, the deputy head, the SENCo, subject leaders and a range of other staff.
- I met with the chair and vice-chair of the governing body.
- Reading, mathematics and history were evaluated in depth. I spoke with subject leaders, pupils and teachers, looked at pupils' work and visited lessons. I also listened to three pupils read with a member of staff.
- I observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school.
- I held a telephone discussion with a local authority adviser.
- I spoke with parents informally at the end of the day. I took account of the 21 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, and the 28 responses to the staff survey. There were no responses to the pupil survey.

- I inspected a wide range of documents relating to safeguarding. I met with the designated safeguarding leaders and spoke with pupils, parents and staff.

Inspection team

Heather Hawkes, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates:
<http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019