

Birdwell Primary School

URN: 139471 | Inspected: 09 December 2025

Safeguarding

standards met

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

Achievement

Expected standard

Leaders are committed to improving outcomes for disadvantaged pupils. As a result, the most vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the wider curriculum. Consequently, pupils' achievement overall has improved. For example, pupils talk about their knowledge of the Second World War and describe the features of rainforests with confidence. Typically, pupils gain the foundations they need in language, communication and vocabulary. They develop fluency and accuracy in word reading and spelling. This helps them to become proficient readers and, overall, competent writers. However, there is some variability in the quality of work pupils present. Some expectations are not high enough. This hinders a minority of pupils from producing high-quality work across the curriculum. Despite this, over time, pupils' outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6 are consistently above national averages.

Curriculum and teaching

Expected standard

Leaders have a clear understanding of the quality of the curriculum and how it is taught. Recent improvements to the teaching of handwriting have had a positive impact on pupils' letter formation. If pupils fall behind, leaders ensure they receive timely support to catch up. For example, in phonics, pupils receive extra help to become fluent and confident readers. Staff use carefully chosen texts so that pupils encounter a rich range of authors and genres as they move through the school.

The curriculum is ambitious, and carefully sequenced so that pupils build knowledge in a logical order. Staff receive regular, research-informed training, which deepens their subject knowledge. This helps teachers deliver subjects across the curriculum effectively. They explain new ideas clearly and use questioning well to check understanding and adapt lessons where needed. Teachers promote the use of adventurous vocabulary across the curriculum. This helps pupils develop a deeper understanding of language, and apply it confidently in their spoken and written work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from appropriate adjustments that help them learn alongside their peers. Occasionally, the checks teachers make on pupils' understanding lack precision for a small number of pupils, and some errors in pupils' written work persist.

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Early years

Expected standard

Children in the early years get off to a positive start. Staff know children well and use this knowledge to shape learning experiences. They build successful partnerships with parents and carers. Leaders prioritise communication and language from the start. Consequently, from pre-school to Reception, children develop their language skills well. Staff promote children's communication through high-quality interactions across the school day. Children learn songs, stories and rhymes to help extend their vocabulary. The school places a sharp focus on reading. From the start of the early years, staff follow a well-structured phonics programme with consistency and fidelity. This means that children learn to read well. Children benefit from a well-planned curriculum that allows them to learn essential knowledge and skills, building gradually on what they already know and can do. Staff design purposeful activities that develop children's skills. For example, children develop fine motor skills by cutting with scissors, using pincer pegs and tracing. Leaders have strengthened the school's approach to supporting children's accurate letter formation and correct pencil grip. However, these changes are new and more time is needed for their impact to be fully seen. Despite this, a significant number of children reach the expected level by the end of the Reception Year and are ready for the Year 1 curriculum.

Inclusion

Expected standard

Leaders recognise the challenges for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They ensure that staff are suitably trained to support any additional needs that pupils may have. For example, staff in the 'Orchard' classroom support pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs to improve their readiness to learn. This enables pupils to integrate into mainstream classes successfully. The school uses its pupil premium funding effectively to ensure that disadvantaged pupils receive the support they need to thrive. Previous gaps in outcomes between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are closing quickly. Leaders foster positive partnerships with parents and carers and other professionals to help pupils with SEND. Leaders gather information to understand the specific barriers that pupils face, so pupils receive the right help at the right time. They use this information to remove any barriers to learning. Staff make thoughtful adaptations to the curriculum, including providing extra support and resources. For example, for pupils who fall behind in reading, staff pre-teach key words and sounds to help pupils succeed in phonics sessions. Leaders monitor the impact of any additional support carefully. They make changes where necessary.

Leadership and governance

Expected standard

Leaders and trustees know their school well. They understand its strengths and know where further work is needed to improve the school. Leaders work effectively with external agencies to make sure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, receive any

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additional support they need. Leaders provide staff with high-quality professional development opportunities that equip them well to carry out their roles. For example, staff appreciate the training they have had on supporting pupils to manage their emotions and behaviour successfully. Staff, including early career teachers, are extremely positive about the personal and professional support they receive. Trustees are dedicated to continuous improvement. They carry out their statutory duties effectively. Trustees use their expertise to provide appropriate support and challenge. For example, they challenge leaders on the impact of their use of the pupil premium funding, to ensure it is benefiting disadvantaged pupils. Leaders think carefully about staff workload and wellbeing in all their decision-making. Staff consider themselves fortunate to work at a school that puts pupils first. They appreciate the 'open door' policy of leaders and feel that they are listened to. Parents and carers overwhelmingly endorse and value the education their children receive. In their responses to Ofsted's Parent View questionnaire, many praised the caring ethos and the spirit of community that leaders have developed.

Personal development and wellbeing

Expected standard

Provision for pupils' personal development prepares them well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about equality. They know about the need to protect people from discrimination on the grounds of characteristics, such as age, gender, race and disability. While pupils are introduced to different religions and cultures, sometimes their understanding of these lacks depth. Pupils learn about fundamental British values through discussions and assemblies. For example, they understand the rule of law, and practise democracy by voting for roles, such as school councillor, eco-councillor, play leader and house captain. Pupils recognise the impact these roles have on school life. There is a well-structured programme for relationships, sex and health education. It supports pupils to understand the importance of consent and puberty. Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe online and how to stay fit, both physically and mentally. They learn about healthy relationships in an age-appropriate way, and know what it means to be a good friend. Initiatives like the 'Memory Café' help pupils build their understanding of citizenship. Through this, pupils share 'connection cards' with residents from the local care home, forming relationships with members of their community. During careers week, parents and carers visit school to talk about their professions. This develops pupils' economic awareness and builds their aspirations.

A range of educational visits to local places of interest enriches the curriculum. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils, have opportunities to stretch their talents and interests through extra-curricular clubs and music lessons. There is a wealth of sporting activities on offer, such as tennis, swimming and golf. Leaders track attendance at these clubs so that no one misses out. Residential visits are a highlight of the school year for pupils. They develop their independence and confidence through a range of outdoor, adventurous activities. Outdoor learning experiences, such as forest school and orienteering, build pupils' resilience and teamwork skills.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Birdwell Primary School is a place 'where everybody can be somebody'. Pupils develop a zest for lifelong learning. They want to come to school to spend time with their friends in the playground and in the classroom. This starts

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in the early years, where children run into the 'Saplings' class eager to engage in the exciting learning experiences. Pupils' attendance at school is higher than the national average. Pupils thrive both academically and socially, supported by the unwavering commitment of staff. High ambition for pupils means that, over time, pupils achieve very well. This is reflected in the school's published outcomes in national tests, which are generally higher than national averages. Guided by values, such as creativity, bravery and kindness, pupils learn to treat one another with fairness and respect. The school embraces diversity, fostering a strong sense of belonging that pupils wholeheartedly share. There are warm, supportive relationships between pupils and staff. These connections enable staff to break down barriers to learning. They provide support for disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) well. Pupils know and live up to the high expectations set by leaders and staff. Behaviour across the school is highly conducive to learning. Bullying is rare. Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and pupils with SEND, embrace leadership opportunities and enjoy playing an active role in school life. These include serving on the school and eco-councils. Pupils participate in a wide range of clubs, music lessons and sports activities throughout the year. These experiences prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain. Parents and carers overwhelmingly support and value the school. They appreciate the dedication staff bring to their roles and how they go 'above and beyond'.

Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that teachers have consistently high expectations in all subjects, so that all pupils' work is of a high quality.
- Leaders should further refine their systems for monitoring the attendance of particular groups of pupils, to ensure that their actions have the desired impact.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard

Leaders prioritise attendance and monitor it closely over the course of the academic year. They develop positive relationships with pupils and their families. Leaders take a caring approach to identifying barriers to attendance and work collaboratively with parents and carers to overcome these barriers. For example, the school offers places in the breakfast club for those pupils who need them. As a result, whole-school attendance is above the national average. Leaders respond quickly to attendance issues. However, a more forensic analysis of attendance information for some groups of pupils would further strengthen their approach. Leaders have high expectations for pupils' behaviour, and pupils meet these. In the early years, children respond well to routines and settle quickly. These routines continue throughout the school and are consistently applied so that pupils generally behave well. Pupils know the school rules of 'Be ready, respectful and safe'. Staff consistently model the behaviour they expect from pupils. Bullying is rare and staff tackle any instances of poor behaviour swiftly. For pupils who struggle with their behaviour, the school provides effective pastoral support. Overall, pupils have highly positive attitudes to school life and learning.

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For detailed performance data including disadvantage gap analysis, historical trends, and comparison tables, visit the school's profile on WhatSchool:

<https://whatschool.ai/en/school/birdwell-primary-school-bristol>