

Inspection of Briar Hill Infant School

Coppice Road, Whitnash, Leamington Spa, Warwickshire CV31 2JF

Inspection dates:	20 and 21 May 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

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 February 2014. Since September 2024, schools have not been awarded an overall effectiveness grade.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at Briar Hill Infant School thrive academically, socially and emotionally. Staff have high ambitions for all pupils. These are realised, regardless of pupils' different starting points. Strong relationships between staff and pupils form the foundations of this remarkable and happy school. Staff invest time to get to know each child and they use this insight to nurture and meet their needs. Pupils are kind and respectful. They grow together and 'flourish as a family'. This sense of belonging helps pupils feel valued and helps them to immerse themselves into all aspects of school life.

Pupils are encouraged to share their views and staff actively respond. For example, some pupils show a keen interest for archery and dance-based fitness programmes which are now popular extra-curricular clubs. There are enrichment opportunities for pupils to supplement their learning beyond the classroom with visits to art galleries and theatres.

Pupils love to give back to the community. They visit a local care home where they play board games with residents. They raise money for charities and have strong links with a school in Africa. The 'global group' work hard to preserve bees, 'picture news pioneers' present current affairs with a child-friendly approach, and 'reading champions' listen to their peers reading. All of this provides pupils with positive experiences of this infant school where they make lasting memories.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils are at the heart of every decision they make. They are proactive in assessing and evaluating what is working well and what needs to be refined further to meet the growing needs of pupils. Leaders ensure that staff are equipped with professional development and subject-specific training to be highly effective in the classroom. Governors have an accurate view of the school. They are dedicated and committed professionals who adopt a range of strategies to understand precisely what the school does well. This includes listening to the views of pupils and their families to ensure that the school is effectively responding to need. As a result of this child-centred approach, every pupil shines.

Every opportunity is a learning opportunity and pupils relish in this. Staff are experts in the subjects they teach and use their knowledge to meticulously sequence the learning. Teachers introduce new learning in a highly effective way. They then use a range of effective pedagogical strategies, such as rhyme and action, to successfully help pupils remember what they have learned. Over time, teaching reinforces key knowledge. Pupils revisit ideas and deepen their understanding. As a result, pupils build on knowledge over time and apply their learning exceptionally well.

Staff have high expectations and high ambitions for what they want pupils to achieve, and pupils rise to this. In lessons pupils are keen, positive and demonstrate a love to learn. When pupils struggle or fall behind with the work, staff effectively help to diminish this gap. They re-teach the same content in an adapted way. This means all pupils produce high-quality work and achieve ambitious endpoints.

The school accurately identifies pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It works with families, external agencies, staff and pupils to develop strategies to help pupils overcome their barriers to learning. Pupils with SEND access the same learning as their peers in a way that meets their individual needs. This is highly effective. Both 'Blossom' and 'Bluebell' rooms supplement the experience for pupils with communication and interaction needs. The targeted support pupils receive in this provision provides pupils with the tools they need to be successful. They give pupils who need specialist support precisely what they need to become increasingly independent. All of this means that pupils with SEND progress exceptionally well.

There is a sharp focus on teaching pupils to read. As soon as children start in Reception they learn to read and write. Staff have the necessary expertise to instil a love of reading and to develop pupils into fluent readers. They support parents and carers with resources and online videos to equip them with tips to help develop their child's fluency. Pupils who are at the early stages of learning to read receive the necessary support to catch up with their peers. This is effective.

Pupils enjoy learning and behave impeccably during lessons and at social times. They engage well with learning and articulate the knowledge they have secured beautifully. Staff plan a vast range of activities in continuous provision for pupils in Reception that develop their interests, and literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills. This continues into break and lunchtime where there are further activities such as colouring and puzzles for pupils to participate in. This gives opportunities for pupils with similar interests to come together. The 'make a friend' bench enables pupils to make new friends.

The school's personal, social and health education is a golden thread that permeates through school life. The learning is taught in an age-appropriate way in Reception and is revisited and built on as pupils get older. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of topics such as understanding how to use medicines safely, online safety and the importance of an active lifestyle.

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	125563
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	10343893
Type of school	Infant
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4 to 7
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	298
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Serhan Wade
Headteacher	Sukie Owers (Executive headteacher) Kirstie Willis (Head of school)
Website	www.briarhillstmargarets.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 February 2014, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school and St Margaret's Church of England School form a federation with a single governing body. The schools share the same site.
- The before- and after-school clubs are run on the school site by an external provider.
- The school does not make any use of alternative provision.
- The school has a specially resourced provision for six pupils with communication and interaction needs.

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 provision) 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. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, art and science. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors held discussions with the executive headteacher, head of school, other senior leaders, the early careers teachers' tutor, the special educational needs coordinator, the chair of the governing body and other governors, and representatives from the local authority.
- Inspectors visited the specially resourced provision for pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors spoke to parents before school and after school.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils informally at break and lunch times.
- Inspectors reviewed and analysed responses to the staff and pupil surveys.
- 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.
- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey and the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Sultanat Yunus, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Darren Bishop	Ofsted Inspector
Dawn White	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 2025