

# Birkwood Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	106620
<b>Local Authority</b>	Barnsley
<b>Inspection number</b>	355986
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 October 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jim Alexander

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	239
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Glenis White
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Julie Allen
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	8 July 2008
<b>School address</b>	Darfield Road Cudworth, Barnsley South Yorkshire S72 8HG
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons taught by eight teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including policies for safeguarding and health and safety, the school's assessment records, reports to the governing body, development plans and curriculum plans. The 47 questionnaires returned by parents and carers were also analysed.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The rigor with which the school tracks the progress and attainment of all pupils.
- The consistency in the quality of teaching and pupils' progress across the school.
- Whether the curriculum is adjusted to meet the needs of all pupils, including the more able.
- Whether the inspection findings match the school's judgement that quality of care, guidance and support is outstanding.
- The impact of leaders and managers at all levels, including the governing body, on challenging and raising attainment across all aspects of the school.

## Information about the school

This is an average sized primary school. Almost all pupils come from White British backgrounds and those from minority ethnic heritage represent a very small part of the school population. The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is twice the national average. The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or a disability is also above the national picture. The school has gained a number of awards, including the Artsmark Silver Award, Activemark 2008 and Healthy School status.

A Children's Centre operates on the premises; it is not managed by the governing body and is, therefore, subject to a separate inspection and report. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection and took up the post in September 2009.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**2**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**2**

## Main findings

This is a good school, which provides well for its pupils. It is led by a good headteacher and deputy headteacher who, in a relatively short period of time, have developed effective leadership and staff teams. Attainment, by the end of Year 6 is broadly average and this represents good progress from pupils' individual starting points at school.

This is a happy school, where pupils feel safe and say that when on rare occasions problems do occur, they are confident that adults are 'there to help sort things out'. They understand the importance of staying fit and well, take plenty of exercise and eat healthily. Pupils very much enjoy the many opportunities to take part in the good number of after-school clubs, which cater for a wide range of interests.

Learning and progress are good because of good teaching and pupils' increasing desire to do well. The large majority of lessons are good and some outstanding, providing opportunities for pupils to achieve very well. During good and better lessons, activities are pitched at just the right level for each group, providing challenge and excitement. Pupils' enjoyment of learning in these lessons is high and they challenge and encourage each other to do their best. This practice, however, is not evident across the whole school, and in a small minority of lessons where teaching is satisfactory, work is not so accurately pitched and pupils are over- directed. As a result, some pupils either find the work too easy or over complicated; consequently their progress slows. Across the school, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make particularly good progress. This is due to the well targeted support, carefully tailored intervention programmes and the robust monitoring of provision by senior leaders.

With the strong leadership of the headteacher and deputy headteacher and commitment of the staff, the school is building on the already good curriculum. This new themed approach to the curriculum is having a positive impact in raising attainment, but is not yet used in every year group. The monitoring of lessons by senior leaders is well planned. However, it focuses mainly on the quality of teaching rather than on the quality of learning and progress made by pupils. The governing body knows the school well, plays an active part in day-to-day life and asks the right questions to challenge and support the school to further improve. The school has a drive and determination to succeed and this, coupled with the very accurate self-evaluation, provides a good capacity for it to further improve. The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily, and has organised a number of events, such as the enterprise initiative to raise funds for communities in Africa. Opportunities to weave religious and ethnic themes into the curriculum, however, have been missed and this impacts negatively on pupils' understanding of the rich cultural diversity of the United Kingdom.

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

- Improve all teaching to good or better, by:
  - providing learning activities that are suitably demanding for all pupils in every class
  - increasing the opportunities for pupils to make decisions about their own learning and work independently
  - embed the new thematic curriculum in all year groups so that all pupils' benefit from opportunities to develop skills learnt in one area across a range of subjects
  - monitoring lessons to observe what pupils learn and how much progress they make rather than on teachers' performance.
- Ensure that the school makes a strong contribution to promoting community cohesion, by weaving religious and ethnic opportunities through the new thematic curriculum, so that they become an everyday part of pupils' learning.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**2**

Pupils enjoy school and are enthusiastic about their learning. Year 3 pupils, for example, used genuine coins and items of shopping to bring to life their understanding of the correct change they should receive in shops. Year 6 pupils used talk-partners exceptionally well to help develop their use of complex sentences in their written work. Teachers and pupils use information and communication technology (ICT) well to support learning and this has become the accepted norm in lessons. Pupils take pride in their work and the quality of display around the school is good.

Pupils enter school with skills that are below those expected for their age. By the time pupils leave Year 6, their attainment is broadly average in English, mathematics and science. In a number of year groups, there is still some catch-up required from previous underachievement. School data, work seen in lessons and in pupils' books, however, demonstrate that the school is moving rapidly in the right direction. This can be seen, for example, by the increasing number of pupils in Year 2 that are now working at the higher levels. The good support offered to vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities ensures that they also make good progress as they move through school.

Pupils are helped to develop confidence and belief in their own abilities to succeed. Consequently, by the time they leave Year 6, they are caring and independent young people and well-prepared for the next stage in their education. Pupils across the school contribute to school life through, for example, the work of the school council. Play leaders ensure break and lunchtimes are happy and structured occasions. Behaviour in and around the school is good. Pupils are good ambassadors for their school when taking part in the many visits, residential trips or sporting and performing arts activities available. Attendance is satisfactory but improving rapidly. The school has made significant progress in reducing the persistent absence of a number of pupils. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is good overall, although the school recognises pupils need a greater appreciation of the rich ethnic and religious heritage within the country.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	3
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

Effective teaching enables pupils to make good progress as they move through school. In the best lessons, teachers make very good use of the time available. They plan a variety of activities to interest and engage the pupils, developing their knowledge and also enabling them to apply the skills they have learnt in a relevant way. In these lessons, teaching assistants and other adults are deployed very well so that not a moment of time is wasted. Lessons move on at a fast pace and pupils are confident to use ICT and other resources to support their learning appropriately. The level of challenge for all pupils is well matched to their individual ability and teachers make good use of what they know about the pupils to extend their understanding further. In a small minority of lessons, however, the work set is pitched at only one level and consequently, does not stretch the more able pupils and is beyond the reach of those who might need more support. In these lessons, teachers talk for too long and pupils become passive in their learning. Here too, pupils are not given the opportunity to work problems out for themselves and the activities are over-structured.

The good curriculum provides well for all pupils. Recent developments, such as teaching topics across a range of subjects, are further enhancing this aspect of provision and pupils are finding this new approach interesting and fun. In classes, where this style has been implemented the impact has been significant, helping to accelerate the progress made by

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pupils in their writing skills, for example. This is in a relatively early stage of development and not fully embedded across the whole school.

Good care, guidance and support contribute effectively to pupils' good personal development and sense of well-being. Pupils say that adults 'do lots' for them and 'there is always someone to go to' if they need help or encouragement. Good induction procedures and well-thought through transition arrangements help pupils not only as they move through school, but also as they transfer to secondary school. Pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable are supported well and helped to become confident young people. Those pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive the support and guidance they require through links with outside agencies and a range of strategies and timely interventions. This enables them to make increasingly good progress.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

Improvements in both provision and attainment have been driven by the good leadership of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and effective staff team. Together, they have effectively distributed leadership and management roles to ensure that everyone works to their strengths. There is a strong determination for the school to further improve. The school is inclusive, promoting equality of opportunity and access to educational entitlement well. It makes concerted efforts to ensure that there is no discrimination and that all groups achieve well. The governing body cares greatly about the success of the school and, therefore, supports and challenges it well. The school's accurate self-evaluation has enabled it to recognise where its strengths and weaknesses lie and to work well to improve further, as indicated by its progress since the time of the last inspection.

The school has made increasingly good efforts to engage well with parents and carers in the past year. Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities in the local area and also made links with communities in other countries. The school have evaluated its provision for community cohesion and recognises the need to further broaden pupils' appreciation of the multicultural society in which we live. Safeguarding practices have been reviewed in great detail by the headteacher and governing body and are good and meet requirements. Designated child protection staff and governors have up-to-date training and robust arrangements ensure the safety of all who work in the school. The school deploys its resources well and provides good value for money.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and are well prepared for Year 1. They are helped to settle quickly and confidently use all the indoor and outdoor spaces available. Children talk happily to visitors and explain what they are doing clearly. Relationships between staff and children are good and they are encouraged to behave well. This is a well organised and attractive learning environment, which provides a good range of activities, meeting the children's learning needs well. The outdoor area is very well developed and leaders have ensured that constructive learning opportunities are available. The assessment of children's progress is good and has identified that the children who left the Reception class in 2010 have made better progress in Year 1 than previous cohorts. Occasionally, opportunities are missed by adults, however, to move children's exploration and learning on to a higher level of understanding. Parents and carers appreciate the good communication and efforts made by staff to keep them informed of their children's progress. The leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage is good.

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation	2



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Stage	
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## Views of parents and carers

The great majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire expressed very positive views about the school. They, and those spoken to, had much praise for the new headteacher. All said their children enjoy school, make good progress and are helped to have a healthy lifestyle. Most stated that their children are well supported, but a few raised concerns about the effectiveness of the school's behaviour management systems. Parents and carers of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage greatly appreciate the efforts made to help their children settle into school. Taking suitable care to ensure confidentiality, the inspectors discussed with school leaders all the concerns that were raised. The inspection findings are broadly similar to the views expressed by the majority of parents and carers.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birkwood Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 47 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 239 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	30	64	17	36	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	27	57	19	40	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	43	25	53	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	40	27	57	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	27	57	20	43	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	22	47	22	47	3	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	55	21	45	0	0	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	20	43	25	53	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	40	27	57	1	2	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	27	57	14	30	5	11	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	36	26	55	4	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	26	55	20	43	0	0	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	57	18	38	2	4	0	0

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li><li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li><li>■ The quality of teaching.</li><li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li><li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li></ul>
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 October 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Birkwood Primary School, Barnsley, S72 8HG**

Thank you for the warm welcome received when we inspected your school recently. I would like to let you know our views of your school. Birkwood Primary is a good school. It is well led and the staff do their best for you and care for you well. The teaching is good and you make good progress in your subjects. As a result, your attainment is improving and is now broadly average by the time you leave Year 6. In classes where a topic approach has been introduced, you obviously enjoy the new approach to your lessons. You all use ICT well to support your learning. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, trips and residential visits help you become confident and enthusiastic learners. You behave well and are polite and courteous to one another. You told us you enjoying coming to school and that explains why your attendance is also improving.

We have asked your school to do a number of things to help your lessons become even more challenging, fun and rewarding. These are:

- to make sure that activities in lessons are planned so you can learn at a good and challenging pace, especially for those of you who find work easy or too tricky
- to provide you with more opportunities for you to work by yourself
- to use the new topic based approach to lessons in every year group
- to help you learn more about other religions and the wide cultural heritage we have in our country
- for leaders to keep a close eye on how much progress you are making in every lesson.

Thank you for completing the pupils' questionnaires and talking time to talk to us. Your contribution to the inspection was extremely helpful.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Jim Alexander

Lead Inspector

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