

Birchfield Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	107863
Local Authority	Leeds
Inspection number	356253
Inspection dates	19–20 October 2010
Reporting inspector	Terry McDermott

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	263
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Janice Foster
Headteacher	Mr Phil Turner
Date of previous school inspection	21 February 2008
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed 19 lessons. All eight teachers were seen teaching, the large majority at least twice. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, representatives of the governing body, and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at reports from the School Improvement Partner, the school's procedures for tracking pupils' progress, the school's records of the monitoring of learning, and minutes of governing body meetings. They considered 88 questionnaire responses from parents and carers, responses by 29 pupils in Key Stage 2 to the pupils' questionnaire, and six responses by adults in the school to the staff questionnaire.

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

- Does teaching meet the needs of all groups of pupils, and provide enough challenge to enable them to make consistently good progress?
- How much has the Early Years Foundation Stage improved since the last inspection?
- Do leaders have sufficient knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and the necessary drive and ambition to improve pupils' progress over time?

Information about the school

This broadly average-size primary school has fewer girls than the large majority of other such schools. In some year groups boys outnumber girls by three to one. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below average. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including pupils with a statement of special educational needs, is well below average. A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. A new senior leadership team has since taken up their roles. The school holds several awards including Investors in People and Activemark. Nursery, Reception, and Year 1 are increasingly moving towards integration as a single unit. Before- and after-school clubs managed by the governing body were inspected as part of this inspection.

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?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a satisfactory school. It has strengths in its good and rapidly improving Early Years Foundation Stage, which gets pupils off to a brisk start in school, and in the good care, guidance and support it provides for pupils, which lead to several very strong personal development outcomes. Pupils say that they are safe and secure. They express total confidence that their teachers, 'look after us really well', adding that we are, 'a big happy family'. Their parents and carers overwhelmingly agree. Pupils readily adopt the values of tolerance and respect modelled by teachers. They become thoughtful, trustworthy and responsible young citizens, who fully understand how to stay healthy and how to avoid the dangers they may encounter. Pupils enjoy coming to school because it is a happy and welcoming place.

Relationships in lessons throughout the school are good because pupils are well behaved and want to learn. Their positive behaviour is a key factor in their good learning in the best lessons. The school's tracking system shows that pupils make satisfactory progress overall, though progress is not as good in Key Stage 2 as in the rest of the school. This is because teachers in Key Stage 2 often take too long to get pupils engaged in learning. Throughout the school, teachers' lesson planning is inconsistent, and does not always set challenging enough tasks for all pupils.

The curriculum is being reformed, linking subjects together around themes to allow pupils to practice newly learned skills in a range of different situations. A wide range of sporting and cultural activities are enthusiastically supported and enrich and extend pupils' learning opportunities. Good care, guidance and support for each individual are based upon close knowledge of pupils and their families. Well-planned actions successfully raise pupils' self-esteem, build their self-confidence, and help them to overcome their difficulties.

The new leadership team has identified the right priorities for improvement and the impact of recent improvements has already been seen in the much improved Early Years Foundation Stage and in the good progress in lessons of younger pupils. Adults in the school are dedicated and have the interests of pupils central to their work. However, some middle leaders have not moved with enough pace and rigour to implement improvements throughout the school. These middle leaders are now beginning to take on responsibility for pupils' outcomes, despite their monitoring of learning in lessons being limited until recently. School self-evaluation does not focus tightly enough on learning and is sometimes too generous. The school has satisfactory capacity to secure further improvements.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Accelerate progress and raise attainment in English, mathematics and science, particularly in Key Stage 2, by:
 - ensuring that pupils are actively engaged in learning from the earliest possible time in every lesson
 - ensuring that teachers make use of assessment information to plan consistently and accurately work which closely meets the learning needs of all pupils
 - ensuring that senior and middle managers check more often and much more objectively on the quality of the learning taking place in lessons in order to identify and support improvements needed.
- About 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Learning in lessons as observed by inspectors is satisfactory overall, though it is often better than this for pupils in Key Stage 1 and the Early Years Foundation Stage. In the majority of lessons, pupils learn at a satisfactory pace. In the best lessons, pupils show clearly that they can think things through for themselves when they are set challenging tasks. This was seen in a good Year 3 lesson when pupils had to estimate and measure lengths when given different levels of support. Pupils worked independently and could describe how they related their estimates to objects of known sizes.

Pupils reach close to average standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 6. This represents satisfactory progress when considering their broadly average starting points. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make progress at the same satisfactory rate as their classmates because of the well-planned and skilful support they receive from dedicated adults. This helps them to participate successfully in everything the school offers. Boys and girls make similar progress across subjects. There are no trends of underachievement in any particular group of pupils.

Pupils say they enjoy being in school because, 'we are all friends'. They describe rare incidents of challenging behaviour as 'bumps in the road'. This is borne out by parents and carers who overwhelmingly report that they are happy with their children's experiences. Pupils are polite, considerate to each other and their environment, and can be trusted to work and behave sensibly when not directly supervised. They have an excellent understanding of how to lead healthy lives, and clearly know the benefits that exercise brings to their bodies. They know where dangers might occur in the outside world, and how to avoid them. They are fiercely proud of their school community and compete to take up leadership positions as Playground Pals and as games leaders. They are very keen to represent 'our school' in sporting competitions and in public choral singing. Though they are active fund-raisers for charities, giving generously in aid of disaster relief, their experience and understanding of life in the wider communities of Great Britain and around the world is comparatively limited, and this restricts their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They are satisfactorily prepared as responsible young citizens for

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the next stage of their education because their attainment in English, mathematics and science is broadly average.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Some inadequate teaching was seen in Key Stage 2. Classrooms are well resourced and staffed, and set a welcoming and positive environment for learning. Teachers are beginning to group subjects together so that pupils can apply their skills in different and often 'hands-on' situations. Pupils report that they like this way of learning. However, teachers in Key Stage 2 often spend too long explaining to pupils what they are going to be learning instead of getting them started on learning for themselves. Throughout the school, lesson plans do not consistently ensure that the different learning needs of all pupils are met closely enough. In both of these cases the pace of learning inevitably slows.

A wide range of enrichment activities, including sport, vocal and instrumental music, visits and visitors, motivates pupils well and enriches the curriculum currently on offer. The school is in the process of reviewing and improving the curriculum but is not yet in a position to evaluate the impact the changes are bringing to the quality of pupils' learning.

Adults in the school know the pupils and their families well. This is the basis of the school's good pastoral provision that starts in Nursery and continues consistently on to

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Year 6. This is replicated in the school's excellent before- and after-school provision. The school is trusted by parents and carers who appreciate how focused the school is on helping their children, as reflected in the school's motto, "Where Children Come First", emblazoned on the Birchfield Grapevine'. Systematic recording and tracking of pupils' personal progress now gives accurate and clear information. This is used to identify and sympathetically address issues which might cause pupils to fall behind, or to help resolve any personal problems which may arise. Care and support for the school's vulnerable pupils are good and are crucial to these pupils' good personal development. The school is quick to recruit the help of outside professional and other agencies when circumstances arise which are beyond its own expertise to deal with.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	3
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The new senior leadership of the school has implemented some effective changes which have resulted in needed improvements, but these have yet to be applied to full effect throughout the school. Leaders at all levels are aware of the positive strengths and areas for development in the school. Subject leaders in English, mathematics and science have yet to take on full accountability for the school's performance in those areas for which they hold responsibility. The school's self-evaluation has some inaccuracies where it does not focus with sufficient clarity on the academic progress pupils are making. The school recognises this and has measures in place to speed the pace of pupils' learning, particularly at Key Stage 2.

Governance is satisfactory. Members of the governing body give generously of their time but they have not acted with sufficient rigour in holding the school to account for its recent performances. They are now in a position to challenge and support the school as it moves forward. Procedures for safeguarding the well-being of pupils are carried out well. The protection of pupils' interests is central to school's work. Current safeguarding requirements are fully met.

The school gives a high profile to ensuring that all types of inequality are addressed robustly and to maintaining a harmonious school community, free from harassment or discrimination. Pupils are active and generous charitable fund-raisers, but the school has yet to develop external links which will help pupils to learn more rapidly about the world around them. The school's contribution to community cohesion is satisfactory because pupils do not yet have sufficient opportunity to explore the richness of national and global communities. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children join the Nursery mostly at levels typically expected for their age, although some have restricted language development. They enjoy their learning and develop well. By the time they join Year 1, their literacy and communication skills are broadly average. In some areas, such as their personal development, their attainment is, in the main, above average. Their calculation skills are not as highly developed.

Good links with parents and carers through home visits prior to joining the Nursery help children to settle into school life easily. Children arrive each day eager to see what exciting activities are in store for them, and they are not disappointed. They are keen to learn, and they grow in confidence and independence as they move forward from watching others and from playing and learning together. Children have confidence that the adults will help them if needed, and seek assistance quite naturally when required. Children become self-sufficient by the end of the Reception Year.

Good and at times outstanding teaching is underpinned by questioning which inspires children's curiosity and also helps the staff to assess their progress accurately. At times, the skilful teaching assistants are under deployed when children are all seated together with the teacher. Nonetheless, recent improvements have led to good provision which ensures that children make good progress. This sets them up well for future accomplishments.

New and strong leadership is successfully encouraging consistent thoughtful practice, some of which has still to be fully established. There is a positive team spirit, focused on ensuring that children's well-being is paramount. Good curriculum planning links areas of learning together well and ensures that outside activities provide adventures for children, such as when a child turns a corner and discovers a large bucket of water with utensils to

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make pretend milk shakes, or when children hunt for fruit they have read about in Handa's Surprise'. Early Years Foundation Stage provision is a strength of the school.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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 Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Parents' and carers' written responses were overwhelmingly positive. Inspectors investigated the few concerns raised, including a very small minority about one particular aspect of safety, and this formed part of the evidence from which inspectors arrived at their judgements. They found safeguarding to be good. A small minority of parents or carers did not feel that unacceptable behaviour is dealt with effectively. The pupils with whom inspectors spoke did not confirm this. They felt that rare instances of challenging behaviour were dealt with quickly and firmly, and did not interfere with their learning. A few responses indicated that the school does not respond to parents' and carers' suggestions or concerns. Inspectors found no evidence to support this and judged that the partnership the school has with parents and carers is good.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Birchfield 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 263 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	60	68	25	28	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	51	58	32	36	4	5	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	45	39	44	5	6	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	39	44	41	47	3	3	1	1
The teaching is good at this school	47	53	36	41	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	35	40	41	47	5	6	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	58	35	40	1	1	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)	37	42	40	45	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	43	43	49	3	3	1	1
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	32	36	38	43	9	10	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	28	32	45	51	9	10	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	38	43	40	45	2	2	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	52	59	32	36	2	2	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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



21 October 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Birchfield Primary School, Leeds, LS27 7HU

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we inspected your school recently. We were impressed with your politeness and good manners, and particularly with how you all get on so well together at breaktimes. It was an enjoyable experience for us to be in such a pleasant environment for learning, where children are such good young citizens.

We found that Birchfield is a satisfactory school. The adults in the school make sure that you are safe and well looked after, just as you told us. We also found that the Early Years Foundation Stage (that's Nursery and Reception) is good, and helps younger children to get off to a good start in school.

However, we also found that there are some things which could be done better, and so we want the adults in the school to do the following things.

- Make sure that every lesson, particularly in Key Stage 2, gets off to a prompt start, so that you spend less time sitting listening and more time thinking for yourselves.
- Make sure that every lesson is properly planned, and takes full account of what each one of you already knows or can do.
- Check more often and more closely that you are learning as quickly as you could in English, mathematics and science.

You can help the school to become even better by continuing to be the happy, polite and hard working pupils you already are, and by letting the teachers know if the work you have been set is either too easy or too difficult.

Please accept my best wishes for your future success.

Yours sincerely

Mr Terry McDermott

Lead inspector

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